

# STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE SERVICE

## Your Guide to Fitness to Practise

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### **What exactly does Fitness to Practise mean?**

Fitness to Practise is a term used on professional Programmes of study such as Teaching, Social Work and Nursing where students come in to close contact with vulnerable adults and / or children. Fitness to Practise is associated with a student's suitability to practise in a particular profession and considers whether the student displays the required personal and professional qualities. The University has a duty to ensure that students meet the requirements of the relevant professional body attached to the individual Programme such as the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council).

### **What type of values do I need to display?**

The types of values that need to be displayed on professional Programmes include professionalism, honesty, commitment and integrity. It is important to note that these values need to be promoted both in your professional life (at the university / placement) and also in your personal life outside of the University. The University will investigate all issues that are brought to their attention.

### **Examples of Fitness to Practise issues that have arisen in the past include:**

Examples include dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, disputes with staff / patients on placement and non disclosure of driving offences.

### **I have been informed that I have an Investigative Interview. What will happen at this meeting and how can I prepare?**

- It is important to read the Fitness to Practise regulations in full before your meeting which are found at [www.gre.ac.uk/students/regs/ftp](http://www.gre.ac.uk/students/regs/ftp) to familiarise yourself with the procedure.
- Contact us for advice and guidance on how to prepare.
- Where the School has cause for concern regarding your Fitness to Practise, you will be invited to an Investigative Interview - this is basically an informal meeting to determine whether the allegations have any substance.
- Depending on the severity of the allegations, you might be temporarily suspended from your Programme / placement.
- There will usually be 2 members of staff from your School at the meeting who will ask you questions and about the alleged incident/s. This is your chance to put your case forward. It is important that you give an honest account of what has happened.
- If the matter cannot be resolved at the Investigative Interview stage, your case will be referred to Fitness to Practise Panel.
- The Fitness to Practise Panel is the more formal stage and usually has at least 5 members of staff, one of which should be a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer. You might be asked to prepare a written statement before the meeting.
- Before the meeting, the School should provide you with copies of any documents that will be considered.
- You have the right to bring witnesses to the panel meeting who can speak on your behalf. You will need to inform the panel of this, 7 days prior to the meeting.

### **Can I get representation for my meeting?**

Representation is provided at the Fitness to Practise Panel stage. The Students' Union has a team of elected Sabbatical Officers who can represent you. You may wish to bring a friend along to the Initial Investigative stage for moral support.

### **What are the possible outcomes?**

Please refer to the 'Powers of the Fitness to Practise' section in the plagiarism regulations for information.

### **What if I am not happy with the decision of the Investigative Interview / Panel stage?**

- Contact us for advice.
- There is an Academic Appeal procedure – the 2 grounds for appeal are that the procedure was not properly carried out or that substantial new evidence has come to light. Academic Appeal regulations are found at <http://www.gre.ac.uk/students/regs/appeals>.

### **What can I do to help to protect my place on the Programme?**

- Inform the University of any circumstances that may affect your position on the Programme.
- Read through the professional codes of conduct attached to your Programme – information on this should be in your Programme Handbook. Speak to an adviser for further information.
- Display the positive values (as mentioned above).

### **Useful websites:**

[www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org) (Nursing)  
[www.gsc.org.uk](http://www.gsc.org.uk) (Social Work)  
[www.gtce.org.uk](http://www.gtce.org.uk) (Teaching)

### **Want to know more?**

You are likely to have further questions about Fitness to Practise which are specific to your individual case and the Students' Union Advice Service is here to help!

You can book an appointment / attend a drop-in session (term- time only) / email [suugadvice@gre.ac.uk](mailto:suugadvice@gre.ac.uk) / phone us on 020 8331 8057. Drop-in times are available from SU receptions and online at [www.suug.co.uk/welfare/](http://www.suug.co.uk/welfare/). Medway students can either contact us (as above) or contact UMSA for advice – visit <http://www.umsa.org.uk/pages/advice>.

