

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

FITNESS FOR PRACTICE POLICY

Academic Year 2026-2027

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1. Introduction

1.1

In situations where there is a cause for concern regarding a student, the University has established a procedure known as **Care and Concern** to direct staff to the most appropriate route for consideration of further action:

[Student affairs – Care and Concern | Middlesex University Intranet](#)

1.2

The Care and Concern Procedure comprises three stages and acts as an overarching procedure directing staff, following referral, to the most appropriate University policy or procedure, namely:

- Support to Study Policy
- Fitness for Practice Policy
- Student Conduct and Discipline Rules
- Safeguarding Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy

1.3

The decision regarding the most appropriate route following a referral to the Care and Concern Procedure will be made with input from staff in the relevant academic area, where necessary and appropriate.

1.4

This document forms the University's **Fitness for Practice Policy** ("FfP Policy").

1.5

This FfP Policy applies to all Professional Courses delivered by the University and is to be read in conjunction with the discipline-specific guide applicable to each Professional Course, as set out in the Annexes to this FfP Policy. Schools and/or Faculties (as appropriate) are responsible for preparing their own discipline-specific guides, which must be approved by Student Administration.

1.6

The FfP Policy is intended to support students who are identified as experiencing difficulties that may impact their practice. Where proceedings are commenced under this FfP Policy, the student will be informed of the support and guidance available to them, including the role of the Students' Union (MDXSU), Student Success and Support Services, and any other relevant external sources of assistance associated with the student's Professional Course.

1.7

The presence of a physical or mental health condition does not, in itself, indicate that a student is not fit to practice. Health-related concerns will be considered in a proportionate and non-discriminatory manner, with a focus on support, reasonable adjustments, and any specific implications for professional practice.

1.8

The burden of proof determines whose responsibility it is to establish an issue. For the purposes of this FfP Policy, the burden of proof rests with the University. This means that the University must demonstrate, against the relevant standard of proof, that the student's conduct, health, or behaviour gives rise to the fitness for practice concern.

1.9

The standard of proof is the level of proof required. For the purposes of this FfP Policy, the relevant standard of proof is the balance of probabilities; namely, that it is more likely than not that the matter in question occurred.

1.10

Fitness for Practice procedures are distinct from the University's Student Conduct and Discipline Rules. The purpose of Fitness for Practice is not to impose disciplinary sanctions, but to consider whether a student's current fitness to practise is impaired, having regard to professional standards, public protection, and regulatory expectations.

2. What is Fitness for Practice?

2.1

The University has a responsibility to ensure that students on professionally recognised programmes meet certain expectations and are 'Fit for Practice' (FfP). This is particularly the case for programmes leading to registration or enhanced status with a professional body. For some disciplines there is a statutory obligation to consider FfP and in many subjects there is also a contractual responsibility to ensure that our students, on registration, are employable at an appropriate level of practice. Thus, there are occasions when we are required to exercise professional judgement, outside of the normal assessment and/or disciplinary processes of the University, on whether an individual meets FfP requirements. Such decisions need to be made either at recruitment, or during the programme when concerns might be raised and bring into question an individual's FfP.

2.2

There may be occasions when serious breaches of conduct or discipline expectations are referred for consideration to the FfP Policy directly. Such information is provided in the annexes to this Policy as relevant to each professional course. This may be in addition to another University process. For students on professional programmes, concerns will normally be considered under the Fitness for Practice Policy, with input from the relevant programme team. Where a concern also involves a potential breach of the Student Conduct and Discipline Rules, the University will decide whether it is most appropriately addressed under the Student Conduct and Discipline Rules, the Fitness for Practice Policy, or both. Where both processes are engaged, the University will determine the most appropriate approach and may take account of the outcome of one process when considering the other.

Where a student is found to have committed a breach of the University's Student Conduct and Discipline Rules or any other relevant University policy or procedure and it is subsequently determined that the matter needs to also be considered under this FfP Policy, the University will be entitled to rely on that finding in any subsequent FfP proceedings.

2.3

For students on programmes where Fitness for Practice is a consideration, concerns relating to a student's health or wellbeing will normally be addressed through the University's Support to Study policy, which is a supportive, non-disciplinary process.

Referral under the Fitness for Practice Policy may be appropriate where there are concerns that a student's health has a direct impact on their ability to meet professional standards, undertake placement or practice safely, or where there is a potential risk to service users, the public, or professional standards.

The decision as to which policy is most appropriate will be taken on a case-by-case basis, having regard to which aspects of the student's studies, placement, or university life are affected, or are likely to be affected.

2.4

In order to manage this process, the University has established three categories of panel within each relevant School/Faculty to consider FfP issues:

2.4.1

The Faculty Fitness for Practice Faculty Committee which considers strategic issues across the disciplines and receives regular reports of FfP cases.

2.4.2

Professional discipline Subject Sub-Committees which allow for interpretation of professional requirements and expectations at a discipline level.

2.4.3

Case-Panels which consider individual student cases.

2.5

This policy and associated procedures cover a diverse range of programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate, CPD and doctorate levels, including, but not exclusively:

- Education – Initial Teacher Training and Early Childhood Practitioners
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Social Work
- Veterinary nursing
- Psychology

2.6

It also cover partners and sub-contracted organisations engaged in delivering professional recognised programmes on behalf of the University.

2.7

It does not apply to issues of FfP for registered practitioners of a non-academic nature, including those of post-qualifying courses, which should be referred to be dealt with through the relevant employer professional body's procedures, where applicable.

3. Assessment of Fitness for Practice

3.1 In the context of this FfP Policy, the three main categories of FfP are:

3.1.2

Competence - this is, in the main, judged through the assessment process. If issues of competency and/or safety occur within a practice placement prior to, or after, the final point of assessment, then a FfP investigation may be required.

3.1.3

Conduct – if a student does not follow their professional code of conduct they may be guilty of misconduct – this may be reflected in a criminal conviction or caution, disciplinary action or complaint from service users, placement provider staff, University staff or their students.

3.1.4

Health - for some programmes, good health is necessary to undertake professional practice safely and effectively, with reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Typically professionally regulated programmes require students to undertake an occupational health assessment prior to commencing placements and in order to return to a placement in a scenario where this is paused for health reasons.

Concerns may be raised where a student has a physical or mental health condition that has a direct impact on their ability to practise safely or meet professional standards. This may include a long-term, untreated, unacknowledged or previously undisclosed condition; the misuse of, or dependence on, drugs or alcohol; or where a previously disclosed condition gives rise to concerns about practice that cannot be adequately managed through support or reasonable adjustments alone.

In exceptional circumstances, concerns may also arise in relation to an acute episode or high-risk situation where there is an immediate impact on a student's ability to practise safely, or where there is a potential risk to the student, service users, or others. Acute health or wellbeing crises will normally be addressed through safeguarding, emergency, or Support to Study processes. Consideration under this Policy will focus specifically on any implications for professional practice or placement.

3.2

FfP will be assessed on an on-going basis as an integral part of professional programme assessments. There will be specific requirements for the assessment of practice placements. Academic staff and information provided in the programme handbooks will clarify the precise requirements as practice assessments are usually built into the normal assessment process. Information provided to students will identify the circumstances where assessment issues may lead to referral on FfP issues.

3.3

When concerns are raised about a student's FfP that lead to termination of their placement by the placement provider, this may result in an investigation in order to collate evidence for any FfP proceedings. (Please see the relevant annexes for more discipline related information).

3.4

It should be noted that breaches of relevant professional programme codes of conduct related to assessment will be reported to the appropriate FfP panel (Subject Sub-Committee) for a decision

regarding whether there is an issue of professional suitability of the student for continuation on their programme.

Where a finding is made against a student on a regulated course under another University policy or procedure, consideration may be given as to whether that finding gives rise to a concern regarding the student's fitness for practice. Such consideration will be limited to cases where the nature, seriousness or pattern of the behaviour identified raises a substantive concern in relation to professional standards, professional values, or the student's ability to practise safely. Where it is determined that a fitness for practice concern has arisen, the student will be notified of the referral to this Fitness for Practice Policy for any consequential issues to be addressed.

4. Key Principles

The Faculty Fitness for Practice Committee has a strategic overview of all FfP issues raised across the professional course portfolio. Given that there are many specific, discipline and profession related requirements within that portfolio, it delegates responsibility to investigate and determine referrals on its behalf to FfP Subject Sub-Committees who will consider FfP issues at an operational level specific to each particular professional area. The Subject FfP Sub-Committees will establish 'Case-Panels' in order to consider individual referred cases. Subject FfP Sub-Committees and Case-Panels will be chaired by a suitably senior member of staff. Membership will include appropriate professional expertise to ensure decisions are informed by relevant professional standards.

4.2 The purpose of the FfP Policy is to:

- Allow a proper investigation of any FfP concerns that may be raised.
- Promote, uphold and ensure compliance with appropriate codes of conduct for students.
- Provide the opportunity for referral of a student to an established FfP process or for the provision of advice and guidance from the relevant Subject FfP Sub-Committee.
- Protect users within clinical/practice settings (and users of the future).
- Maintain public confidence in the profession.

4.3 The Subject FfP Sub-Committee and Case-Panels will operate to the following principles in that they will:

- Operate in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
- Be transparent, fair and consistent in the way in which professional judgements on FfP are made.
- Work in conjunction with the Regulations of the University.
- Make judgements with the assistance of representatives of the academic community and stakeholder partners where possible.
- Make judgement on the basis of any externally published guidance on professional conduct for students from specific professional bodies.
- Consider all relevant evidence and allow all parties to have access to the same information upon which the decision will be made.
- Allow all parties the opportunity to have their say and respond to the evidence.
- Utilise as a standard of proof 'balance of probability' in that a fact will be established if it is more likely than not to have happened.
- Enable decisions to be made in a timely manner.
- In normal circumstances allow any disciplinary processes to be complete before considering FfP issues.

- Allow for students to receive appropriate advice and guidance throughout any FfP proceedings and, where appropriate, allow for an appropriate appeals process. (See student guidance in Appendix 2).
- Taking notes of all meetings and hearings held and ensuring that copies of those notes are provided to all relevant parties for agreement.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled students in accordance with the Universities duties and obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Records relating to FfP proceedings will be stored in accordance with the University's duties and obligations under Data Protection Legislation, for the benefit of the parties and also in case the decision is subject to challenge at a later date.

5. Membership of the Faculty FfP Committee

- Deputy Dean, or nominee as Chair
- Chair of each Subject FfP Sub-Committee (a designated professional lead)
- At least 1 and no more than 3 stakeholder partner representatives
- Student Appeals, Complaint and Conduct Officer
- Responsive Student Support Lead (Student Life)
- MDXSU Representative

5.1

The Faculty Fitness for Practice Committee will meet twice per year to review the work of the Subject FfP Sub-Committees and their Case-Panels, discuss policy issues and make policy decisions.

6. Membership of FfP Subject Sub-Committees and Case-Panels

6.1

The Subject Sub-Committees will be required to reflect the needs of a professional area, including the requirements of professional bodies if these are specified. Each Subject Sub-Committee will appoint a Chair and at least one Deputy Chair. The appointment of the Chair may be determined by the requirements of a professional body. Membership of Subject Sub-Committees and Case-Panels will vary according to professional requirements. Details of such membership can be found in the attached annexe for each subject area.

6.2

As a matter of principle, investigators and referrers to a FfP Case-Panel will not be part of any further decision-making process, save for their report, statements and recommendations submitted as evidence.

7. Panel Terms of Reference

7.1

With the support of key colleagues with responsibility to professional bodies for student FfP, the Faculty FfP Committee and Subject FfP Sub-Committees together are responsible for:

- 7.1.1** Providing professional judgements on applicants'/students' fitness for practice where issues falling outside of existing assessment and disciplinary procedures are identified.
- 7.1.2** Recording and monitoring the cases.

7.1.3 Advising on policy and/or procedural amendments as appropriate.

7.1.4 Providing professional advice on FfP issues to Faculty staff.

7.2

Additionally, the Subject FfP Sub-Committee will be required to report and review on their activities to the Faculty FfP Committee. The Faculty FfP Committee will then use these reports to undertake a review of the appropriateness of their subject annexes, normally for September of each year.

7.3

As an annexe to this document, each Subject FfP Sub-Committee shall provide a separate document which clarifies further:

7.3.1 Details of membership of the Subject FfP Sub-Committee and how Case-Panels are constituted.

7.3.2 Any additional Terms of Reference required by relevant professional bodies (as approved by the Faculty FfP Committee).

7.3.3 Any specific modes of operation as required by professional bodies.

7.3.4 Arrangements for reporting and review of activities, as required by professional bodies or internal good practice.

7.3.5 Who within the professional area is responsible for determining whether a referral falls under the FfP Policy and guidance as to how such decisions are made.

7.3.6 Any particular additional requirements of the professional body in assessing FfP.

8. Mode of Operation

8.1

Students may be referred to the FfP process from a variety of sources (academic staff, clinical staff, administrative support staff, members of the public, fellow students etc.).

8.2

Information alleging a FfP matter will not normally be accepted if made on an anonymous basis, although could be a trigger to undertake an investigation in finding alternative ways in which to verify the anonymous claim.

8.3

FfP matters will be considered according to a number of phases (*see Appendix 2 for a flow chart of the process*).

8.4 Screening

8.4.1 Initial screening will be undertaken by the Care and Concern team of the University. The Care and Concern team is made up of representatives from the

University support services and the Faculty FfP Committee who will make a holistic assessment of the FfP referral. As part of this screening, they will review the FfP referral to assess whether there is **1.** alternative action required (for example, a referral to Support to Study or another University policy or procedure) and/or **2.** if there are any safeguarding or support needs contained within it.

The decision will be informed by the information from the programme team.

- 8.4.2** If a FfP matter is not confirmed, the Care and Concern team, in conjunction with the Programme Leader (PL) will advise the student of the matter and provide any guidance in terms of, for example, future conduct, as appropriate or invoke the alternative action as agreed by the Care and Concern team. If it is agreed it should be handled under a different policy, e.g. Support to Study, the student will be advised of this. Any written informal guidance that has been provided will be retained for the duration of the student's studies.
- 8.4.3** Students should be aware that where concerns are raised about their FfP, they may not be permitted to attend any professional placement until the conclusion of the University's FfP proceedings. This includes where students are on placement at the time that the concerns are raised. This decision will be made by the relevant staff within the Faculty in conjunction with any other relevant parties, including the placement provider where appropriate. The student will be notified of this by the Chair of the FfP Committee. This is separate from any decision to suspend the student from their studies.
- 8.4.4** Dependent on the nature of the concern raised and the information available, a decision may be made by a panel of appropriate senior staff on whether to suspend the student from their studies pending further investigation. A risk-based approach may be used to inform the decision.
- Suspension from the University means that the student will not be permitted to engage with their studies or access University facilities for the duration of the suspension. This may be in addition to any restriction on placement, where considered necessary and appropriate.
- 8.4.5** Where possible, and where a student is not suspended, the University will seek to ensure students can remain engaged in their taught studies whilst FfP proceedings are ongoing.
- 8.4.6** Suspension is most likely to be used only if the seriousness of the case warrants it.
- 8.4.7** A student who is suspended pending further investigation will have the opportunity to make representations or request a review of the decision at any stage, if there is a material change in circumstances.
- 8.4.8** Where a student is suspended from placement or study pending Fitness for Practice proceedings, the University will ensure that the student is offered appropriate support from Student Success and Support.

8.5 Investigation

- 8.5.1** If a FfP matter is confirmed and an investigation has not already taken place the PL will undertake a full investigation (or allocate a named individual to do so), obtaining appropriate statements and other forms of evidence as appropriate.
- 8.5.2** The PL will seek advice from the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct team and Chair of the Subject FFP Sub-Committee

- 8.5.3** Prior to the commencement of the investigation, a Raising Concerns notification will be sent to the student advising them that a concern has been raised regarding their FfP. This will outline the concern and/or concerns and how they relate to the relevant professional standards and student's fitness for practice. It will also include next steps and guidance and support that will be available to the student (see Appendix 2).
- 8.5.4** The investigation may include interviewing of students and witnesses. A written record of any meeting or interview will be made and shared with the student for agreement. Students will be given reasonable time to agree to the content of the notes of any meeting/interview. A nil response will be taken as acceptance that they are a true record.
- 8.5.5** Students may be accompanied at any interviews by a friend, family member, representative of a professional body or a representative of MDXSU.
- 8.5.6** As part of the investigation, any statements obtained must include the full name of the witness, their role, a concise but detailed explanation of their evidence and be signed and dated. A pro-forma Statement of Evidence is provided in Appendix 4 and guidance on a useful investigative approach is provided in Appendix 5 (a).
The investigator will then supply an evidence report to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (SACC) Officer.
- 8.5.7** The University will aim to complete the investigation stage within 20 working days of notifying the student of the concern, after which the student will be informed of the next steps. Some cases may take longer where they are complex or where there are circumstances beyond the control of the investigator. In such cases, the student will be notified in writing of the expected timeframe for completion.

8.6 Referral

- 8.6.1** Where a decision has been made to refer a case to a Fitness for Practice Case-Panel, the SACC Officer will liaise with the relevant Subject FfP Sub-Committee Chair to establish a suitable Case-Panel. The SACC Officer will collate the evidence to be reviewed, normally within 5 working days before sending a notification letter to the student which will clearly state the matters that constitute the FfP referral linked to the appropriate professional codes and guidance and will request:
- A reflective statement and any evidence that the student wishes to be considered.
 - Identification of any evidence that will be challenged.
 - Identification of any supporting witnesses that could give evidence.
 - Confirmation of acceptance of any evidence that is not being challenged.
- 8.6.2** The student has 10 working days in which to submit their reflective statement and any evidence. In certain circumstances a student may request an extension to this deadline, which will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 8.6.3** If a student does not submit their reflective statement within the permitted timeframe and has not requested an extension to the deadline, the Case-Panel may be arranged and proceed without their statement.
- 8.6.4** Once the evidence from both parties has been collated it will be sent electronically to the student. The evidence will also be sent to the members of the Case-Panel but only once their details have been shared with the student and the student has 5 working days to object to the appointment of any of the proposed Case-Panel members.

- 8.6.5** Where a student withdraws from their programme during Fitness for Practice proceedings, the University will normally discontinue the process. However, the University reserves the right to continue consideration of the case where it is appropriate to do so, including where there are safeguarding concerns, potential risks to others, or requirements of relevant professional or regulatory bodies.

8.7 Hearing

- 8.7.1** The Chair and any other member of any Case-Panel will not have been involved in the investigation process. The investigator will set-out the University's position in terms of the FfP matter. The investigator will then be available for factual evidence enquiries but will not be part of any deliberations nor the decision-making process.
- 8.7.2** If the facts have not already been established (for example in criminal proceedings or disciplinary proceedings), the hearing should be a two-step process. The Case-Panel must first establish the facts and allow the student an opportunity to put forward their defence.
- 8.7.3** Once the facts leading to the fitness for practice concerns have been proven, either through a separate internal procedure or a criminal conviction, or during the fitness for practice hearing, the panel will need to consider whether the established facts lead to a genuine fitness for practice concern, and if so, what action should be taken as provided for under this FfP Policy.
- 8.7.4** The Case-Panel will consider the evidence provided against the standards, Codes of Practice and any additional guidance as indicated in the annexe to this document which might be professional/discipline specific.
- 8.7.5** The student will be invited to attend and may wish to be accompanied by a friend, a family member, a representative of a professional union or a representative of the MDXSU in a supportive capacity. Legal representation may only be permitted in cases which potentially may result in serious consequences for the student.
- 8.7.6** Any request from a student to be legally represented will need to be agreed in advance of the FfP Case-Panel. Where permission is given, consideration will also be given as to whether or not the Case-Panel may also require a legal advisor to be present.
- 8.7.7** A date will be set for the student to respond, not less than 10 working days from the notification letter as sent to their University e-mail account. A Case-Panel will not normally accept further evidence from the student following this date.
- 8.7.8** A student can apply for a deferral of the hearing by providing reasons to the SACC Officer at least 48 hours prior to the hearing. It will be at the Chair's discretion whether to grant a deferral. If a student does not give notice of non-attendance and chooses not to attend a hearing it will normally proceed to a conclusion in their absence.
- 8.7.9** For all panels, members and students will be provided with the same information and documentation which will be circulated in advance of any hearing. The hearing will consider evidence provided related to the referral but may also consider new evidence that emerges and that has a bearing on the FfP of the student. The student will be given an opportunity to address any such emergent evidence.

- 8.7.10** It will not be expected for witnesses to an alleged FfP issue(s) to attend the Case-Panel hearing, unless there has been notification that their evidence has been challenged. Normally, their signed statements will suffice. However, where the facts leading to the FfP concern(s) is/are disputed, both the student and the University may be permitted to call witnesses. Where it is necessary for witnesses to be questioned, any questioning will usually be undertaken through the Chair of the Case-Panel. Where a witness is not able to attend in person, the University will permit the attendance of a witness by alternative electronic means.
- 8.7.11** A Case-Panel hearing will be held within 15 working days of their receipt of the case documents but this is subject to member availability and witness management arrangements, should the student contest the case. Students will be advised if this period needs to be extended.
- 8.7.12** Following a Case-Panel hearing, a formal outcome letter will usually be issued to the student within 5 working days.
- 8.7.13** The Chair will retain a casting vote should the Case-Panel be unable to agree a unanimous or majority decision.
- 8.7.14** All case outcomes are reported back to, and monitored by, the Faculty FfP Committee to aid consistency of approach.

9. Outcomes of Fitness for Practice Case-Panels

9.1

Panels will follow the general principle of proportionality for decision making, imposing sanctions on the basis of the nature of the FfP determination.

9.2 A FfP Case-Panel who are considering:

- Whether the FfP of a student who has been referred to the Case-Panel is impaired on the grounds of inappropriate conduct and/or competence or other reasonable grounds such as are covered by this policy and accompanying annexes,
- If a student's fitness to practise is affected by a health condition or disability that has been independently verified, decisions will be made based on proportionality. Any sanctions will follow a stepped approach, increasing in severity depending on the circumstances.

May make one of the following decisions:

- 9.2.1** That the student may continue without any further action.
- 9.2.2** To recommend that the student is allowed to continue on the professional programme with specified conditions and review dates.
- 9.2.3** To suspend the student from their studies, or to interrupt their studies, pending specified conditions being met within a defined timeframe To recommend that the student is withdrawn from the professional programme. In this case the applicant/student will be invited to discuss their options for transferring to another non-professional programme.
- 9.2.4** In certain circumstances, when conditions have been attached to continuation on the

programme, students may be asked for their permission to share these conditions with a placement provider. If such permission is not granted, the student should be aware that they may not be able to continue on the programme at the discretion of the placement provider.

9.3

In the instance where a student is allowed to continue on the programme with specified conditions and the student does not fulfil this and/or the specified conditions are not met satisfactorily, a student will normally be given one further opportunity to complete the specified conditions. If one or more conditions are still not met by the required deadline, the case will be referred back to the original FfP Case-Panel in order for the Case-Panel to consider appropriate next steps in terms of non-compliance. The student should be aware that this may vary (including increasing the sanction of) the original outcome.

9.4

Where it is in the student's interest, following completion of the panel procedure, the Chair of the Case-Panel may choose to provide a brief verbal summary of the determination of the hearing but is not obliged to do so. A determination letter will follow, normally within 5 working days of the Case-Panel hearing which will provide detail of the Case-Panel's findings related to the relevant professional codes and guidance, providing reasons for their judgements.

9.5

Case-Panel Chairs should provide a summary of the outcome of their deliberations to the Chair of the relevant Subject FfP Sub-Committee. The SACC Officer will notify all necessary parties within the University as appropriate, particularly in the case of discontinuation (e.g. Student Administration).

9.6

Where the Case-Panel recommends that the student be withdrawn, notification of this will not be made and the withdrawal will not be activated until after the deadline for the submission of an Appeal has passed (15 working days). If a student does submit an appeal, the withdrawal will not be activated until after the appeal has concluded.

9.7

The SACC Officer should also keep the due records of all decision and actions taken. The Subject FfP Committee will be required to provide a formal annual report to the Faculty FfP Committee on the number, nature and decisions made by Case-Panels under its remit.

9.8

Students will have the right of appeal against any determination of FfP (in accordance with guidance in section 10 below).

9.9

The letter sent to the student advising them of a Case-Panel decision should provide further information regarding rights of appeal. It should also set out what record(s) will be kept by the University and the purpose for which any record(s) will be used including any referral to any relevant external bodies with whom the University may need to share details of the FfP outcome with. The letter will also advise the student that they may need to disclose the FfP outcome if they apply for other regulated courses in the future.

10. Appeals

10.1

A student has the right to appeal against a decision of a FfP Case-Panel. The Chair of the Faculty FfP Committee will determine if the grounds for appeal are justified. All appeals must be made through the SACC Officer. An appeal must be submitted within 15 working days of the date that the outcome letter was e-mailed/sent to the student.

10.2

An appeal against a decision of a FfP Case-Panel decision can only be made on the grounds that:

10.2.1 There has been a serious administrative or procedural error (whether of this FfP Policy or the requirements of natural justice) or other irregularity when the concerns were investigated and the decision reached that makes the decision unfair;

10.2.2 There is additional and relevant evidence that was not, for good reason, available at the time the decision was made;

10.2.3 The decision is not supported by the evidence; or

10.2.4 No reason(s) for the decision was given.

10.3

Upon an appeal being submitted, it will be reviewed by the Chair of the Faculty FfP Committee. They may dismiss the appeal as invalid, if:

10.3.1 It is received late (beyond the 15 working days timeframe) and there is no good reason given why it was not submitted on time;

10.3.2 It seeks only to challenge matters of academic judgement;

10.3.3 It does not clearly state the grounds on which the appeal is being made; or

10.3.4 Does not otherwise fall within the scope of the grounds of appeal set out in the FfP Policy

10.4

In the case of the appeal being allowed to proceed, the relevant Subject Sub-Committee will convene an Appeals Panel to review the original decision in the light of the appeal grounds set out.

10.5

The Appeals Panel will comprise of:

- The Chair of a Case-Panel for a different professional programme to act as Chair;
- An external member with appropriate professional knowledge;
- At least two other members which may include a service user.

10.6

No member of the Appeals Panel will have had any previous involvement in the case.

10.7

The student will not be given less than 10 working days' notice of the meeting of the Appeals Panel and will be invited to attend if they wish to do so.

10.8

The student may wish to be accompanied by a friend, a representative of a professional union or a representative of the MDXSU in a supportive capacity. Any request from a student to be legally represented will need to be agreed in advance of the Appeal Panel. Where permission is given, consideration will also be given as to whether or not the Appeal Panel may also require a legal advisor to be present.

10.9

A member of the original Case-Panel will attend the hearing to be questioned by the Appeals Panel for clarification purposes but they will not play any role in the Appeals Panel's deliberations or decision-making process.

10.10

After reviewing the decision of the Case-Panel, the appeal and hearing from the student (if in attendance), the Appeals Panel may:

10.10.1 Affirm, set aside or vary any decision reached (including the imposed sanction); or

10.10.2 Refer the matter, or any part of it, or any decision back to the original Case-Panel for further consideration.

10.11

The student will be advised of the decision of the Appeals Panel within five working days of the date of the meeting. There is no further internal right of appeal against that decision.

10.12

Under the Higher Education Act 2004, the University subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may be able to apply for a review of the appeal decision to the OIA.

Following the outcome of the appeal, unless there are further outstanding matters to consider under other of the University regulations, a Completion of Procedures letter will be provided as required by the OIA.

11. Appendix 1 – Guidance for Students: Fitness for Practice

What this means for you

If a concern is raised about your fitness for practice, the University will:

- consider the concern carefully and proportionately
- ensure you are informed at each stage of the process
- provide you with opportunities to respond and present your account
- make sure you are aware of, and able to access, appropriate support

The process is designed to be fair, transparent and supportive, while maintaining professional standards and protecting the public.

1. Introduction

This appendix provides guidance for students on programmes that are subject to Fitness for Practice (FfP) requirements.

These programmes lead to professional registration or practice and include, but are not limited to:

- Nursing and Midwifery
- Social Work
- Initial Teacher Training (ITT)
- Veterinary Nursing
- other programmes with Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements

Students on these programmes are required to meet both University expectations and the standards set by the relevant professional body.

The Fitness for Practice process enables the University to:

- protect the public
- uphold professional standards
- maintain confidence in the profession
- support students to successfully complete their programme wherever possible

2. What is a Fitness for Practice concern?

Fitness for Practice concerns may relate to one or more of the following:

Competence

Concerns about a student's ability to meet the required professional standards in practice. This may include issues identified during placement or practical assessment.

Conduct

Concerns about behaviour, including whether a student is meeting the expectations of the University and their professional body. This may arise from disciplinary matters, complaints, or behaviour in practice settings.

Health

Concerns where a student's physical or mental health may affect their ability to practise safely or effectively. This may include situations where support or reasonable adjustments are required.

3. Initial consideration of concerns

Concerns are initially considered through the University's Care and Concern (C&C) process.

At this stage:

- the concern will be reviewed
- any immediate risk will be assessed
- appropriate support will be identified
- a decision will be made on how the concern should be managed

Where it is determined that the matter should be considered under the Fitness for Practice Policy, the student will be notified in writing.

The notification will explain:

- the nature of the concern
- the next steps in the process
- the support available
- Information will be provided in an accessible format where required

4. Investigation

Where an investigation is required:

- it will normally be undertaken by a Programme Leader or a nominated investigator
- the student will be given the opportunity to:
 - respond to the concern
 - provide a statement
 - submit relevant evidence

Where appropriate, this may include referral to Occupational Health.

The student will be provided with a copy of the investigation report.

Students will normally be able to continue their studies during this stage.

However, where necessary and proportionate, interim measures may be applied. Any information shared as part of this process will be proportionate and limited to what is necessary to support safe practice. This may include:

- temporary restriction from placement
- or, in more serious cases, suspension from studies

Students will be informed of any such measures and the reasons for them.

5. Outcome of investigation

Following the investigation, a decision will be made as to whether:

- no further action is required
- the matter can be addressed through support or conditions
- the case should be referred to a Fitness for Practice Case-Panel

The student will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and the reasons for the decision.

6. Referral to a Case-Panel

Where a case is referred to a Case-Panel:

- the student will receive formal written notification outlining:
 - the concerns to be considered
 - the evidence to be reviewed
 - the next steps

Students will be given a specified timeframe (normally not less than 10 working days) to:

- submit a reflective statement
- provide evidence
- confirm whether they wish to attend the hearing

Students may attend the hearing:

- in person or online
- or request that the case is considered in their absence

Students may be accompanied by:

- a friend or supporter
- a representative of MDXSU
- a representative of a professional body (where appropriate)

7. Case-Panel hearing

At the hearing:

- the Case-Panel will consider the evidence presented
- the student will have the opportunity to present their account
- panel members may ask questions to clarify the issues

Decisions are made on the balance of probabilities and in line with the principle of proportionality.

8. Outcome

The outcome of the Case-Panel will be confirmed in writing, normally within 5 working days.

Outcomes may include:

- no further action
- continuation on the programme, with or without conditions
- temporary interruption or suspension from studies
- withdrawal from the professional programme

Where conditions are applied, these will be clearly explained, including any review arrangements.

In some cases, it may be necessary to share relevant conditions with placement providers. Where consent is required, this will be discussed with the student.

9. Support

The University will ensure that students are supported throughout the process.

Students may:

- access University support services
- seek advice from MDXSU
- be accompanied at meetings or hearings
- request reasonable adjustments where needed to support their participation in the process

Students will be kept informed of progress and next steps throughout the process. The University will take account of individual circumstances and ensure that the process is applied fairly and in line with equality and diversity requirements.

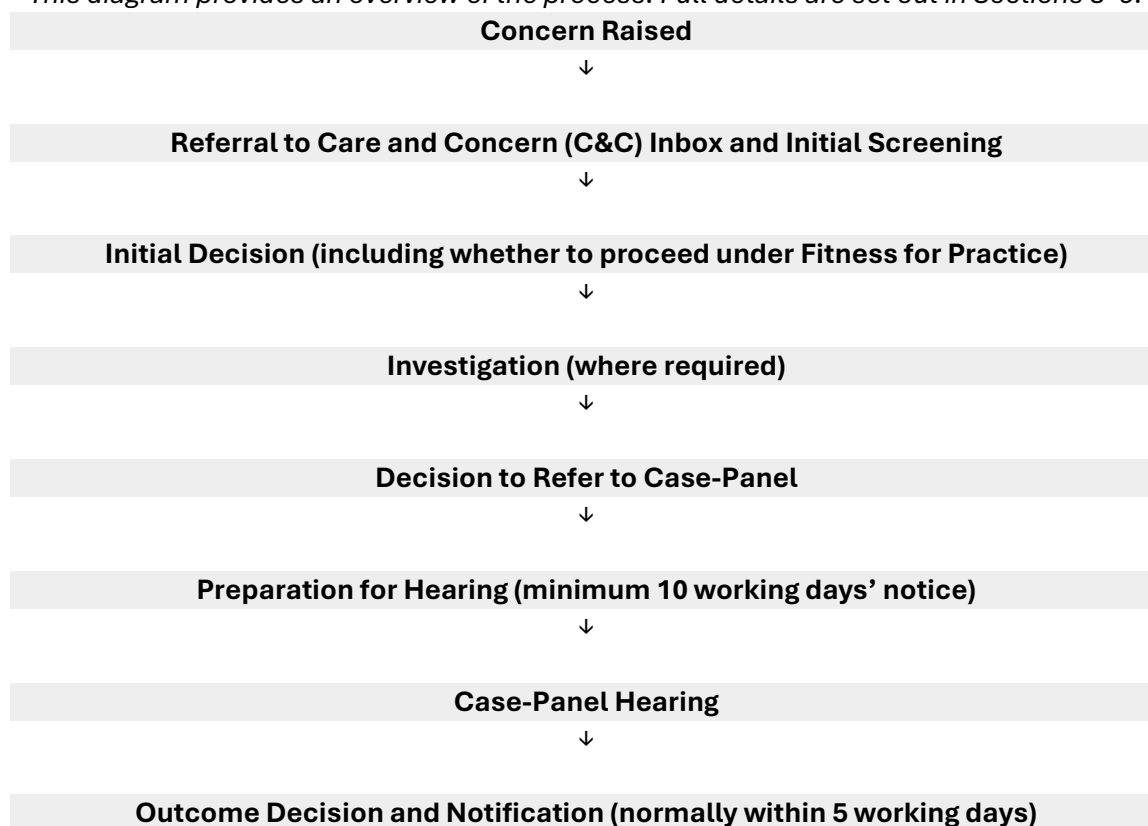
10. Timeframes

The University aims to progress Fitness for Practice cases in a timely manner. Timeframes will be communicated to students at each stage and may vary depending on the complexity of the case.

Where there are delays, students will be kept informed.

12. Appendix 2: Fitness for Practice Process Flow Chart

This diagram provides an overview of the process. Full details are set out in Sections 8–9.



Possible Outcomes

- No further action
- Continue with conditions
- Suspend from studies and/or interrupt studies
- Withdrawal from programme
- Other outcomes (e.g. referral to professional body)

Options Beyond Outcome

- Appeal
- Review of conditions
- Complaint (separate process)

13. Appendix 3

Fitness for Practice – Statement of Evidence

Student name to which this evidence refers:

Middlesex University Student Number (if known):

Full name of witness making statement:

Position/role:

Contact e-mail and telephone number:

The ‘Statement’

(Please provide a concise statement of your evidence focusing on the Fitness for Practice issue of concern. Please be aware that this statement could be used in any Fitness for Practice case).

Signature:

Date:

14. Appendix 4

5 (a) Investigative approach (With acknowledgement to Manchester University and Fieldfisher law firm)

The following key stages of **ASPIRIN** are recommended as part of any investigation:

A – Assess the situation and gather initial evidential materials

S – Subject interviews – establish first hand evidence if possible

P – Pose appropriate questions – seek to establish both evidence for and against the matters being of relevant for a FfP referral

I – Information collection

R – Review the information that has been collected and re-investigate as needed

I – Initiate a referral

N – Notify relevant people in the organisation

5 (b) – Investigation Report Template

The following headings could be used to create an investigation report;

1. An outline of the student, their programme stage of study, past results, attendance and other relevant academic background.

2. Details of the alleged Fitness for Practice matter

3. A review of the evidence collated, witnesses interviewed and statements received with a summary of the key elements

4. Contributory and mitigating factors on behalf of the student which may be considered as part of any determination.

5. The implications for the student's study pathway

6. Recommendations to the case-panel

7. Suggested communication process to all interested parties

15. Annexe A – Education Department

Annexe A.1 – Education Fitness for Practice Sub Committee

Annexe A.2 – Suitability To Teach/Practice Panel Terms of Reference

Annexe A.3(a) – Code of Conduct for Initial Teacher Trainees

Annexe A.3(b) – Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Student Practitioners

Annexe A.4 – Dress Code for Professional/Educational Settings

Annexe A.5 –The School-based Training (SBT) panel

Annexe A.1 – Supplementary Information relevant to the operation of the Education Fitness for Practice sub-panel

The operation of the Education Fitness for Practice sub-panel is informed by the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education document

1.0 Standards of professional conduct

Programme	Conduct guidance
Primary ITT (QTS)	Teachers' Standards
BA Primary	http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards
PGCE	
Primary	Code of Conduct and link to Fitness for Practice Policy and Education Annexes can be found in Programme Handbooks and on UNIHUB
Salaried ITT	
PG Teacher	
Apprenticeship	
Secondary ITT (QTS)	Teachers' Standards
	http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards
PGCE Secondary (all subjects)	Code of Conduct and link to Fitness for Practice Policy and Education Annexes can be found in Programme Handbooks and on UNIHUB
Salaried ITT	
PG Teacher	
Apprenticeship	
BA Early Childhood Studies	Early Childhood Studies Degree Network Graduate Practitioner Competences https://www.ecsdn.org/competencies/
	Code of Conduct and Fitness for Practice can be found in Programme Handbooks and UNIHUB
Early Years Professional Practice	Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage Section 3.9 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

2.0 Education Professional Programmes - Fitness for Practice sub-committee membership. A case panel would be convened from this membership to consider a case identified as a FfP matter.

- Head of Education (Chair)
- Head of ITT or DoP Early Years Practice (Deputy Chair)
- 2 members of academic staff from professional programmes (minimum) and/or

member of the Education Leadership team

- Partnership representative (in attendance where possible)
- SACC Officer – Officer to sub-committee

3.0 *Arrangements for reporting and review of activities*

A report of the activities of the Education Fitness for Practice sub-committee will be undertaken at the end of each academic year and reported in the relevant quality monitoring reports and to the Partnership Steering Group. Reports will also be submitted to the School of Health and Education Fitness for Practice Committee. A summary report will be extracted from the various reports and held in readiness for notice Ofsted Inspections.

4.0 *Authority for determining whether a referral falls under the auspices of the FtP arrangements*

Students will be recommended for referral to the Fitness for Practice sub-committee following a referral to the Care and Concern Team by either an Assessment Board or by a Director of Programmes / Programme Leader if the concerns arise in between assessment periods.

5.0 *Requirements of the Department for Education (DfE) in assessing Suitability to Teach*

For ITT, the DfE ITT Criteria and Supporting Information provides the statutory guidance for assessing suitability to teach.

Annexe A.2 – The Suitability to Teach/Practice (DBS/Health and Disability) Panel Terms of Reference (Education)

1.0 *Introduction*

The Suitability to Teach Panel functions as a sub-panel of the Education Fitness for Practice sub-committee and is established to provide a consistent approach across the programmes with regard to the management and support for students with a disability or health issue (as identified by Occupational health) and for consideration of any recorded information on a DBS certificate.

2.0 *Principles of Operation*

The Health and Disability Panel aims to ensure that:

- The University complies with its duty of care to students and to those with whom they come into contact.
- The University complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Students / prospective students with health and disability issues are not disadvantaged, nor put at risk.
- Students/ prospective students health and disability issues are treated with transparency and fairness.
- The University complies with its duty of care and considers any recorded information on a student / prospective students sensitively and confidentially with due regard to DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education.

3.0 *Terms of reference*

- To ensure that students with health and disability issues are given appropriate support and all reasonable adjustments are made to support them on their programme.
- To regularly review students with health and disability issues affecting their programme, and maintain confidentiality of such discussions.
- To support programme leaders with the monitoring of individual students.
- To ensure parity and fairness of approach to all students
- To consider occupational health reports that make recommendations and require adjustments in their programme, including practice placements, taking Fitness for Practice into consideration.
- To refer cases to the Fitness for Practice Panel where occupational health report recommendations cannot be accommodated.
- To refer student cases to the Fitness for Practice Panel where recorded information on a DBS is a concern and continuation on the programme is at risk. Prospective students are not referred for a Fitness for Practice investigation.

4.0 *Mode of Operation*

The Chair convenes a sub-panel of members of the Education FfP sub-committee to review any Occupational Health and DBS Reports that require consideration. The panel meets as required to review all cases but the majority of the work will happen as part of the recruitment cycle, during induction and following annual re-affirmation for (undergraduates only). If suitability for teaching/practice is in doubt as a result of consideration of information on DBS or OH related matters, then offers might be withdrawn.

Membership (Chair)

- Head of ITT
- A Director of Programmes
- Programme Leaders of the person(s) concerned
- A member of the Education Leadership Team (in addition to the Chair)
- Members may also be co-opted for specific advice, e.g. from the University Disability Support Unit.

Annexe A.3(a) - Code of Conduct for Initial Teacher Trainees

1.0 Code of Personal and Professional Conduct for Trainee Teachers:

Excellence in Professionalism

This Code of Conduct covers school and university-based training for all trainee teachers within the Middlesex University ITT Partnership. It is underpinned by and supplements Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2012).

This code of conduct has been agreed across the University in consultation with the partnership and it sets out the standards that you are expected to work to during your training programme.

This code is based on the guiding principle of protecting pupils and it mirrors the standards that are expected of all the teachers that you will work alongside.

All trainee teachers within the Middlesex University ITT Partnership are expected to demonstrate **consistently high** standards of personal and professional conduct by:

1. Becoming familiar with, respecting and adhering to all relevant statutory frameworks, university policies and documentation and the policies and practices of partnership schools in which they teach;
2. Prioritising the health, welfare and education of the pupils in their care;
3. Demonstrating respect for others: including pupils, colleagues, all school and university staff, staff from other agencies, parents and carers;
4. Promoting equality of opportunity, challenging stereotypes, opposing prejudice and respecting individuals regardless of age, disability, gender identity, parental status, marital status, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, social class, or sexual orientation;
5. Acting with honesty and integrity and ensuring that any activity in one's personal life, including use of any social networking sites, does not risk bringing the teaching profession or the ITT partnership into disrepute;
6. Maintaining high standards of attendance, punctuality and engagement in both school and university-based training and strictly adhering to procedures for informing the university and partnership schools of any absences;
7. Maintaining high professional standards of dress and appearance whilst working in schools;
8. Maintaining appropriate professional relationships with pupils, parents, carers and all staff working in schools and to work effectively with colleagues in professional teams;
9. Taking responsibility for their own learning and responding positively to and acting upon advice and feedback from university tutors, mentors and school-based staff;
10. Reporting information honestly and accurately at entry on the Suitability Self-Declaration Form, Fitness to Teach declaration and Occupational Health questionnaire and notifying the university promptly if there are any changes to this information during the programme.

2.0 Teachers' Standards Part Two: Personal and Profession Conduct

Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

3.0 *What this code means for you*

All trainee teachers must do their utmost to comply with this code, and any breach of this code whilst training will be investigated and dealt with by the Programme Leaders and partnership school staff who are required to deal with this under the University Regulations (section on student conduct and discipline) and where appropriate under the Fitness for Practice Policy for the Faculty of Health, Social Work and Education.

Annexe A.3(b) - Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Student Practitioners

1.0 Code of Conduct for Professional and Personal Early Childhood Student Practitioners

This code of conduct covers all placements for student practitioners within Middlesex University. It is underpinned by and supplements the Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Early Childhood Studies Degree Network (ECSDN) Graduate Practitioner Competences.

This code is based on the guiding principle of protecting children and it mirrors the standards that are expected of all the early years practitioners that you will work alongside.

All student practitioners following the Middlesex University BA Early Childhood Studies programme are expected to demonstrate **consistently high** standards of personal and professional conduct by:

1. Becoming familiar with, respecting and adhering to all relevant statutory frameworks, university policies and documentation and the policies and practices of early years settings in which they practice;
2. Prioritising the health, welfare and education of the children in their care;
3. Demonstrating respect for others: including children, colleagues, all setting and university staff, staff from other agencies, parents and carers;
4. Promoting equality of opportunity, challenging stereotypes, opposing prejudice and respecting individuals regardless of age, disability, gender identity, parental status, marital status, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, social class, or sexual orientation;
5. Acting with honesty and integrity and ensuring that any activity in one's personal life, including use of any social networking sites, does not risk bringing early years sector or settings into disrepute;
6. Maintaining high standards of attendance, punctuality and engagement in early years settings and strictly adhering to procedures for informing the university and settings of any absences;
7. Maintaining high professional standards of dress and appearance whilst working in early years settings;
8. Maintaining appropriate professional relationships with children, parents, carers and all staff working in early years settings and to work effectively with colleagues in professional teams;
9. Taking responsibility for their own learning and responding positively to and acting upon advice and feedback from university tutors, and workplace supervisors and staff;
10. Reporting information honestly and accurately at entry on the Suitability Self-Declaration Form, Fitness to Teach declaration and Occupational Health questionnaire and notifying the university promptly if there are any changes to this information during the programme.

2.0 ECSDN Graduate Practitioner Competences

An Early Childhood Student Practitioner is an advocate for young children's rights and participation and recognise that young children are active co-constructors of their own learning. They critically apply high-level academic knowledge of pedagogy and research evidence, to the holistic development of infants and young children (0-8), in a practice context that is respectful of the child, their family and community.

Professional conduct is embedded within these competencies:

1. Listen to and work in collaboration with young children;
2. Support children to respect others;
3. Enable the voice of young children to be heard;
4. Work with others to safeguard and promote the well-being of infants and young children;
5. Communicating and working in partnership with families;
6. Work at creating successful, respectful professional relationships with colleagues and other professionals inside and outside the setting;
7. Demonstrate self-awareness and knowledge of anti-discriminatory practice;
8. Promote social justice and valuing difference including gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation and sexual orientation;
9. Work professionally within the remit of Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Annexe A.4 - Dress Code for Professional/Educational Settings/Early Years Settings

Policy: Middlesex University imposes no dress code on its students. It welcomes diversity of appearance in general terms. However, education students and trainee teachers do need to consider the teaching context in which they will work in terms of health and safety and professional appropriateness.

Guidance for trainees on Initial Teacher Training Programmes: Trainee teachers are required (within reason) to follow the dress code of the school setting where they are placed.

Guidance to ensure health and safety

Trainees are expected to change their clothing and footwear in accordance with school Health and Safety guidance for teaching subjects with particular requirements. This could include Physical Education, Science and D & T.

If there is any reason why you may not feel able to comply with any of the above you must discuss this with your Programme Leader immediately. Students or trainees who breach this dress code should be aware that they may be referred to the Fitness for Practice Panel should they refuse to comply.

Guidance for students on BA Early Childhood Studies or other Early Years Professional Programmes.

Early Years Student Practitioners are required (within reason) to follow the dress code of the setting where they are placed.

Guidance to ensure health and safety

Whilst in practice Early Years students are expected to align their clothing and footwear in accordance with school Health and Safety guidance for the setting and appropriate to any required activities.

If there is any reason why you may not feel able to comply with any of the above you must discuss this with your Programme Leader immediately. Students or trainees who breach this dress code should be aware that they may be referred to the Fitness for Practice Panel should they refuse to comply.

Annexe A.5 – The School-based Training (SBT) panel

The SBT panel is convened to discuss progression during and in-between placements in the event of a trainee failing a placement module – or failing to make the expected progress for progression.

The SBT sub-panel is comprised of:

- Chair (Head of ITT)
- Programme Leaders (at least two)
- Phase Leads
- Partnership Member (where possible)

The SBT panel will discuss

1. Placement module fails

If a trainee fails a placement module, either because they have failed to make the response required during the Cause for Concern process or because a school has terminated the school placement, the panel would convene to discuss and agree the outcome. The outcomes could be:

- Extend the placement module with additional weeks subject to whether the timing will allow this and availability of a suitable school setting. The length of extension and timing of it will be at the discretion of the SBT panel.
- Retake the placement module during the next academic year.
- No retake of placement. This outcome would result in discontinuation for the QTS component of the programme. This is a likely outcome if the ITT code of conduct has been persistently breached resulting in a failed placement. The student might have an opportunity for an exit award without QTS depending on their profile.
- If the placement has been terminated before the trainee reached the end of the module, and an alternative placement was not considered a suitable option due to breaches of the ITT code of conduct, the case would be referred to the Education FfP sub-committee and Care and concern. A decision about a return to training would depend on the FfP case investigation outcome.

2. Lack of progress during a Professional Practice module

If a trainee is not making expected progress at an assessment review point (see context statement below) that occurs before the Assessment Board, there are two possible outcomes:

- Trainee continues with support plan in place – or an action plan for rapid response if the trainee is within 4 weeks of the end of the placement module.
- No progression. In this situation, the panel would recommend either
 - Interruption of studies with return following academic year to complete the full module or Stage 2 (only) of the Professional Practice module. This decision will depend on the timing and is at the discretion of the panel
 - No return, if the trainee is not responding to additional support or has persistently breached the ITT code of conduct
 - Referral for FfP if the placement has been terminated by the school or a serious concern about professional and personal misconduct.

Context

Trainees on postgraduate programmes undertake one long module of Professional Development (60 credits @ L6). The module includes 24 weeks of school-based training and will take place in a minimum of two main school settings (Stage 1 and Stage 2). If a trainee is not making expected progress by the end of Stage 1, the school and university might agree that the trainee is not ready to progress to Stage 2 in a different school setting.

16. Annexe B

Annexe Relevant to Nursing, Midwifery and Veterinary Nursing Students

1.0 Standards of Professional Conduct

Students are required to comply with the professional standards applicable to their programme of study.

- Nursing and Nursing Associates / Midwifery:
Students must adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code:
<http://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/read-the-code-online/>
- Veterinary Nursing:
Students must adhere to the professional standards and Fitness to Practise guidance set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), available at:
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/students-and-careers/current-students>

2.0 Fitness to Practise (FtP) Membership

2.1 Nursing, Midwifery and Veterinary Nursing Fitness to Practise Committee

Chair (registered Nurse or Midwife and academic staff; one to be appointed to act as Deputy Chair)

Placement Provider representatives

Membership will ensure appropriate professional, academic, and practice expertise.

The Committee oversees Fitness to Practise matters relating to Nursing, Midwifery and Veterinary Nursing students, which are administered through the same sub-committee structure.

2.2 Nursing, Midwifery and Veterinary Nursing Fitness to Practise Case-Panel Membership

Chair or Deputy Chair of the case-panel

Minimum of four (4) panel members

Normally at least one member will reflect the area of practice of the student

At least one Placement Provider representative

Where a case relates to a Veterinary Nursing student, the panel will include at least one Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN).

The panel will operate in accordance with the principles of fairness, proportionality, transparency and natural justice.

3.0 Arrangements for Reporting and Review of Activities

A report of the activities of the Nursing, Midwifery and Veterinary Nursing Fitness to Practise Committee will be produced each academic term.

This report will be presented to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee via the relevant Annual Monitoring Report.

A separate report relating specifically to pre-registration Nursing and Midwifery students will be provided to the NMC, as required, by the Faculty NMC Lead.

4.0 Authority for Determining Whether a Referral Falls Under Fitness to Practise

Decisions regarding whether a concern should be referred under Fitness to Practise arrangements will be made by the Programme Team in conjunction with the referrer.

5.0 Additional Requirements of the Professional Body in Assessing Fitness to Practise

Discontinuation due to a Fitness to Practise Panel decision will mean the academic exit award reflects the academic credit achieved but will have a non-professional title:

Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE) – Health, Social Care and Education or Healthcare Practice

Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) – Health, Social Care and Education or Healthcare Practice

BSc Combined Studies

BSc (Hons) Combined Studies

Exit awards do not confer eligibility for professional registration with the NMC or RCVS.

17. Annexe C

Social Work Fitness for Practice Sub-Committee and Case-Panel Guidance

NB. This document is an annexe to Middlesex University's Fitness for Practice Framework, and it should be read alongside.

1.0 Social Work England Professional Standards

Qualifying programmes are required to ensure that students are able to meet the suitability and conduct requirements for registration at completion of their studies. This requirement applies to the admission of students, and throughout the programme (Education and Training Standards 1.4; 1.6; 5.3).

The relevant professional standards are:

Social Work England Professional Standards

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>

The relevant education and training standards are:

Social Work England Education and Training Standards 2021

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/education-and-training-standards>

2.0 Functions of the Social Work FfP Sub-Committee and Case-Panels

Social Work qualifying programmes are required to carry out Fitness for Practice investigations where there are concerns relating to the conduct, character or health of a student, to ensure that they remain suitable for the practice of social work and that they can interact safely with people with lived experience of social work and others (Education and Training Standard 5.3). The Social Work FfP Panel undertakes this function via case-panels, which are constituted when a referral of a FfP concern is received.

Social Work FfP case-panels operate under the auspices of the Middlesex University Fitness for Practice Framework in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

3.0 Social Work Fitness for Practice Sub-Committee membership

- Chair- Professional Lead for Social Work
- 3 members of Social Work academic staff (minimum) including one appointed as Deputy Chair
- 4 qualified social workers from practice partners (minimum)
- Placements Academic Lead
- Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct administration officer.

3.1 Social Work Fitness for Practice Case-Panels

The professional lead for Social Work is responsible for determining whether a referral falls under the FfP Policy and guidance. Case-panels may be constituted when a referral of a FfP concern is received. The procedures involved are detailed in the University FfP Framework.

Matters that may be sent to the panel for review include possible breaches of Social Work England Professional Standards.

- Referrals to the panel may be as a result of placement fail/termination reviews, recommendation from a duly constituted Practice Quality Assurance Panel, or as a result of information shared by a placement staff member e.g a practice supervisor, practice educator, service user carer and/or the student's programme leader.

Membership of the case-panels:

- Chair or Deputy Chair of the sub-panel
- Minimum of 3 panel members, including the chair
- At least one member will be an external registered social worker
- Panel administered by Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer.

4.0 Arrangements for reporting and review of activities

The Social Work FfP Sub-Committee meets termly, with minutes taken. The Sub-Committee chair attends HSCE Faculty FfP Committee meeting to report on activities as required.

5.0 Conduct of Case-Panels

Reviews will be undertaken in person.

6.0 Social Work FfP Case-Panel activities and outcomes

Please see Middlesex University Fitness for Practice Framework for further details on case-panels, including appeals process.

The following outcomes may be reached by the Social Work FfP case-panel.

- That the student may continue on their social work programme without any further action;
- Recommend that the student is allowed to continue on their social work programme with specified conditions and review dates;
- To suspend and/or interrupt the student pending the satisfaction by them of specified conditions within a defined timeframe; or
- Recommend to the Chair of the relevant Assessment Board that the student is discontinued from their social work programme with immediate effect. In this case, the student will be invited to discuss their options for transferring to another non-professional course within the University.

18. Annexe D

Annexe D.1 - BSc Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation

1.0 Standards of professional Fit to Practice

Programme	BASRaT Fit to Practice guidelines
BSc Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation	https://www.basrat.org/member/fitnesstopractise BASRaT Standards of Ethical Conduct and Behaviour (SECB) Role Delineation

2.0 Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation Fitness to Practice Committee membership

- Chair, Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation and academic staff (1 to be appointed to act as Deputy Chair).
- Placement Provider representatives.

Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation Fitness to Practice case-panel membership

- Chair or Deputy Chair of the case-panel
- Minimum of 4 panel members
- Normally at least one member will reflect the area of practice of the student
- At least one placement provider representative

3.0 Arrangements for reporting and review of activities

A report of the activities of the Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation FfP Committee will be undertaken each term and presented to the Faculty FfP Committee in the relevant AMR. A separate report dealing only with pre-registration Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation students will be reported to BASRaT by the Sport & Exercise Rehabilitation programme lead as required by BASRaT.

4.0 Authority for determining whether a referral falls under the auspices of the FtP arrangement

Referrals to FfP will be determined by the Chair of Care and Concern panel.

Given that the majority of cases follow proven plagiarism or a disciplinary hearing, and in order to support an efficient facilitation of the appeals process so that students are notified of the result in a reasonable timeframe, the review may be carried out electronically and there is no requirement for the student to attend a meeting as the University may well have already made a determination on those matters through other procedures. The student will be informed that they have the right to attend a meeting in person, should they so choose. In cases where the student has not already had an opportunity to present in person, a full hearing will be arranged for that purpose in order to consider the evidence.

In cases where the case-panel chair and the student agree to an electronic review the case-panel will normally be expected to complete the review and notify the FfP Officer of their recommendation within 5 working days of receipt of the case documents. The feedback from the case-panel will be reviewed by the Chair and, within not later than 5 working days, a letter will be sent electronically and in hard copy to both the student and the referrer detailing the outcome of the panel's determination.

5.0 Additional requirements of the professional body in assessing FtP

In accordance with BASRaT code, plagiarism after year 1 upheld by the Academic Registry, should be reviewed by the Director of Programmes and Programme Leader and reported to the FfP committee via the SACC Officer.

Discontinuation due to a Fitness to Practice Panel decision will mean the academic exit award made will reflect academic credit achieved, but have a non-professional title of:

- Generic Sport Science Cert HE
- Generic Sport Science Dip HE
- Generic Sport Science BSc

Annexe D.2 - Annexe Relevant to Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Approved Programmes and National School of Healthcare Science Accredited Programmes

1. Standards of professional conduct

Programmes	Conduct guidance
Health and Care Professions Council Approved Programmes (Applied Biomedical Science)	https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/guidance-on-conduct-and-ethics-for-learners.pdf https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/consultations/2021/health-and-character-guidance/revised-guidance-on-health-and-character-for-applicants-and-registrants.pdf
National School of Healthcare Science Accredited Programmes (Healthcare Science Programmes)	https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/wpfd_file/ahcs-good-scientific-practice-2021/ https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/consultations/2021/health-and-character-guidance/revised-guidance-on-health-and-character-for-applicants-and-registrants.pdf

2. Subject Fitness for Practice Committee membership

- Chair (Head of Department or a senior academic (professor or associate professor) appointed by the Head of Department)
- Deputy Chair: Directors of Programmes
- Subject Programme Leaders
 - Placement providers
 - At least 1 service user representative

Fitness for Practice Case-Panel membership

The Subject Fitness for Practice Committee will appoint the case-panel, which will be drawn from the Committee, and typically will comprise:

- Chair or Deputy Chair of the sub-panel
- Up to 2 Programme Leaders
- 1 senior practitioner from a placement provider
- 1 service user representative
- 1 health and disability support representative may be co-opted as necessary

3. Arrangements for reporting and review of activities

A report of the activities of the Biomedical and Healthcare Sciences FfP Committee will be undertaken each term and presented to the Faculty FfP Committee in line with the Faculty's monitoring process. A summary of the report, excluding information about students, will also be considered at either the

Biomedical Science Liaison Group or the Healthcare Science Partnership Board meetings with service users, placement providers and employers.

Authority for determining whether a referral falls under the auspices of the FfP arrangement.

In consultation with the Director of Programmes, the Chair of Care and Concern Team will determine whether the student has a case to answer and refer the case, if deemed necessary, to the Subject FfP committee, in line with the Fitness for Practice Policy and Procedures.

4. Additional requirements of the statutory body in assessing FfP

A professional conduct and clinical competence are assessed continually throughout the programme as part of the practice-based module. Students, who fail to achieve the required standard for professional conduct or competence, will fail the practice-based module without any further opportunity to be reassessed or to repeat it. It should be noted that the student will not be referred to the Care and Concern Team.

The HCPC expects students to maintain a high standard of conduct, including academic honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct, therefore, is considered to be a serious breach of this standard, so all cases of academic misconduct that have been upheld by Academic Registry will be reviewed by the Director of Programme and Programme Leader and then reported to FfPP by SACC Officer.

If the Fitness for Practice Panel's decision is for the student to discontinue their studies on the professional programme, the student is eligible for a non-professional exit award that reflects the number of academic credits achieved. Below is the list of the non-professional exit awards available to students.

Professional Awards	Non-professional Exit Awards
BSc Applied Biomedical Science	Cert HE Biomedical Science DipHE Biomedical Science BSc Biomedical Science
BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology) BSc Healthcare Science (Cardiac Physiology) BSc Healthcare Science (Neurophysiology)	Cert HE Healthcare Science DipHE Healthcare Science BSc Healthcare Science

Annexe D.3 - Annexe Relevant to The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Accredited Programmes for the Environmental Health (Apprenticeship) BSc (Honours)

1. Standards of professional conduct

Programmes	Conduct guidance
The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Accredited Programmes	code-of-ethics-for-members-and-ftp.pdf (cieh.org)

2. Subject Fitness for Practice Committee membership

- Chair (Head of Department or a senior academic (professor or associate professor) appointed by the Head of Department)
- Deputy Chair: Directors of Programmes
- Environmental Health academics
- Apprentice professional work employers

Fitness for Practice Case-Panel membership

The Subject Fitness for Practice Committee will appoint the case-panel, which will be drawn from the Committee, and typically will comprise:

- Chair or Deputy Chair of case panel
- Up to 2 academic staff
- 1 senior EHP, or employer may be co-opted as appropriate
- 1 health and disability support representative may be co-opted as necessary

3. Arrangements for reporting and review of activities

A report of the activities of the Environmental Health FfP Committee will be undertaken each term and presented to the Faculty FfP Committee in line with the Faculty's monitoring process. A summary of the report will also be considered at the Environmental Health Partnership Board meetings with employers. A summary report will be held in readiness for Ofsted Inspections.

Authority for determining whether a referral falls under the auspices of the FfP arrangement.

In consultation with the Director of Programmes, the Chair of Care and Concern Team will determine whether the student has a case to answer and refer the case, if deemed necessary, to the Subject FfP committee, in line with the Fitness for Practice Policy and Procedures.

4. Additional requirements of the statutory body in assessing FfP

The CIEH expects professionals to maintain a high standard of conduct, including honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct, therefore, is considered to be a serious breach of this standard, so all cases of academic misconduct that have been upheld by Academic Registry will be reviewed by the Director of Programme and Programme Leader and then reported to FfPP by SACC Officer.

If the Fitness for Practice Panel's decision is for the student to discontinue their studies on the professional programme, the student is eligible for a non-professional exit award that reflects the

number of academic credits achieved. Below is the list of the non-professional exit awards available to students.

Professional Awards	Non-professional Exit Awards
BSc Environmental Health (Apprenticeship)	Cert HE Environmental Health Diploma HE Combined Studies

Annexe D.4 - Annexe Relevant to Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
Accredited Programmes for the Professional Risk and Safety Management (Degree Apprenticeship) MSc

1. Standards of professional conduct

Programmes	Conduct guidance
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Accredited Programmes	COR4569 The Code of Conduct, Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure v2.indd (iosh.com)

2. Subject Fitness for Practice Committee membership

- Chair (Head of Department or a senior academic (professor or associate professor) appointed by the Head of Department)
- Deputy Chair: Directors of Programmes
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) academics
- Apprentice professional work employer

Fitness for Practice Case-Panel membership

The Subject Fitness for Practice Committee will appoint the case-panel, which will be drawn from the Committee, and typically will comprise:

- Chair or Deputy Chair of the case-panel
- Up to 2 academic staff
- 1 senior OSH practitioner, or apprentice professional work employer may be co-opted as appropriate
- 1 health and disability support representative may be co-opted as necessary

3. Arrangements for reporting and review of activities

A report of the activities of the Occupational Safety and Health FfP Committee will be undertaken each term and presented to the Faculty FfP Committee in line with the Faculty's monitoring process. A summary of the report will also be considered at either the Occupational Safety and Health Partnership Board meetings with professional work employers. A summary report will be held in readiness for Ofsted Inspections.

Authority for determining whether a referral falls under the auspices of the FfP arrangement.

In consultation with the Director of Programmes, the Chair of Care and Concern Team will determine whether the student has a case to answer and refer the case, if deemed necessary, to the Subject FfP committee, in line with the Fitness for Practice Policy and Procedures.

4. **Additional requirements of the statutory body in assessing FfP**

IOSH expects professionals to maintain a high standard of conduct, including honesty and integrity. Academic misconduct, therefore, is considered to be a serious breach of this standard, so all cases of academic misconduct that have been upheld by Academic Registry will be reviewed by the Director of Programme and Programme Leader and then reported to FfPP by SACC Officer.

If the Fitness for Practice Panel's decision is for the apprentice to discontinue their studies on the professional programme, the student is eligible for a non-professional exit award that reflects the number of academic credits achieved. Below is the list of the non-professional exit awards available to apprentices.

Professional Awards	Non-professional Exit Awards
MSc Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management	Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Management
MSc Occupational Health, Safety and Well-Being Management	Postgraduate Certificate in Occupational Health, Safety and Well-Being Management Postgraduate Diploma in Occupational Health, Safety and Well-Being Management

Annexe D.5 – Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Psychology Programmes – Placement and Experiential Learning

5.1 – Applicable Programmes & Modules

BSc Psychology (PSY3004, PSY3215)

BSc Psychology with Criminology (PSY3004, PSY3215)

BSc Psychology with Counselling Skills (PSY1021, PSY2019, PSY3004, PSY3215)

BSc Psychology with Neuroscience (PSY3004, PSY3215)

MSc Clinical Health Psychology & Wellbeing (PSY4160, PSY4170)

MSc Psychological Therapies & Interventions (PSY4120, PSY4130, PSY4150)

5.2 – Relevant Professional Standards

Students are expected to uphold ethical and professional standards consistent with:

-British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

-Placement partner policies, safeguarding protocols, and data confidentiality procedures.

5.3 – Subject FfP Committee Membership

Head of Department of Psychology (Chair)

Directors of Programmes

Programme Leaders

Relevant Module Leaders

5.4 – FfP Case-panel Membership

HoD

Relevant Programme Leader

One additional academic staff member

One placement partner representative (if appropriate)

5.5 – Referrals

Referrals may arise from university staff, placement providers, or students.

Concerns typically relate to conduct, health, or competence.

5.6 – Exit Awards

Where a student is discontinued or excluded from modules on the grounds of FfP, they may be eligible to change award track or module choices.

Annexe D.6 – Doctorate in Counselling Psychology & Psychotherapy (DCPsych)

6.1 – Applicable Programme

Doctorate in Counselling Psychology by Professional Studies (DCPsych) joint programmes with Metanoia Institute and New School for Psychotherapy & Counselling

6.2 – Relevant Professional Standards

HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/>

British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

6.3 – Subject FfP Committee Membership

DCPsych Programme Leader (Co-Chair)

University Link Tutor (Co-Chair)

Two programme staff with HCPC registration or equivalent status

External placement supervisor representative (where possible)

6.4 – FfP Case-panel Membership

Chairs

One academic who is a registered Counselling Psychologist

One external placement supervisor (if needed and feasible)

6.5 – Additional HCPC Requirements

Health concerns must be assessed via Occupational Health when relevant.

Serious misconduct or breach of professional boundaries must be reported to HCPC if continuation is recommended.

Students discontinued for FfP reasons may be eligible for an exit award (where appropriate) or a transcript of credits.

6.6 – Reporting and Review

A summary will be included in the programme's external reporting to HCPC and BPS.