

## **Fitness to Practice**

Courses such as Nursing, Teaching and Social work prepare students for entry into professions which demand that certain behavioural and health requirements are met in order to practise. The University has to be confident that students are 'fit to Practise' in their chosen careers, before giving a recommendation to allow the student to join the professional register for that career.

The fitness to practice of students on professional courses is assessed throughout the duration of their course. The University will investigate all potentially relevant issues that are brought to its attention. **The University's 'Fitness to Practice' regulations give full details of the process by which concerns are investigated and adjudicated and these are available on shuspace** via a link at the foot of the page under the 'University life' tab.

### **What does Fitness to Practice mean?**

Being fit to practise means you have the skills, knowledge, good health and good character to do your job safely and effectively without supervision. Your fitness to practise will be assessed throughout your pre-registration course and if there are concerns these will be investigated by the university. Issues relating to both health and behaviour can affect your fitness to practice.

If you are a student on a professional course, then you should familiarise yourself with the professional body's code of conduct and with the university's fitness to practice regulations; not just at the start of your course but throughout the course.

### **Good Health**

Good health is necessary to undertake your role as a professional nurse, social worker, teacher, etc. Good health means that a person is capable of safe and effective practice without supervision, as bad health can pose a risk to service users.

This does not bar disabled people or those with long term health issues from professional practice. Many illnesses and disabilities do not affect fitness to practice and, where concerns do exist, adjustments to support practice should be implemented. However, if adjustments cannot bring about safe practice a student will not be permitted to continue their training.

Areas of concern could include:-

- ❖ failure to seek medical treatment or other support
- ❖ failure to recognise limits and abilities
- ❖ Refusal to follow medical advice or care plans

### **Good Character**

Good character is based on your conduct, behaviour and attitude. It also takes into account any convictions and cautions that are not considered to be compatible with professional registration and which may bring the profession into disrepute. It is important that you can show that you are honest and trustworthy

### **Be Aware that Your Personal Life Counts Too!**

Make sure that you think about how your behaviour and conduct may raise concerns about your fitness to practise. This is important, not just whilst on placement or in University, but outside of university- in social situations, in halls, and on line. If concerns are raised this may affect your ability to complete your course and ultimately could prevent you from entering your chosen profession.

### **Examples of areas of concern for fitness to practise:-**

- **Unlawful conduct**

You have a duty to report to the university if you have been cautioned, charged or found guilty of a criminal offence at any time before starting or during your course. Specific offences such as those involving drugs, violence, dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation etc. are likely to raise questions about your fitness to practise. However, a criminal record is not an automatic bar to professional practice and action under the fitness to practice regulations will depend on the nature and circumstances of the offence.

Students have to complete an Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) form when starting a professional course and the information will be disclosed every time you apply for a job in that profession, so it is important that you disclose any convictions.

Areas of concern would be:-

- ❖ Child pornography/indecent images, including of yourself

- ❖ Theft
- ❖ Financial Fraud
- ❖ Possession of illegal substances
- ❖ Child abuse or any other abuse, including bullying
- ❖ Physical violence, including fights on nights out
- ❖ Drink driving

- **Academic Misconduct**

Plagiarism- This is usually dealt with under the university's disciplinary procedure, if found guilty it may be referred to the fitness to practice procedure.

Areas of concern could include:-

- ❖ Cheating and other forms of dishonesty- this could include falsifying documents, placement books, forging a mentor's / supervisor's name, misrepresentation of qualifications and work experience, etc. This is taken extremely serious by the university.

- **Unprofessional Behaviour**

Many students are unaware of how important this is for fitness to practise.

Students must also be aware of their responsibility to maintain their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.

Being 'unprofessional' encompasses many different things such as:-

**Misuse of the Internet and Social Networking Sites.**

Most people use the internet or social networking sites, however, you must be careful of how you use sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Internet relationships create the illusion of anonymity, which tempts people to do and say things that they would otherwise not say face to face. As a result people post things on these sites that they later regret. **BE WARNED: - it may come back to haunt you!** What's on Facebook does not necessarily stay on Facebook. - remember that patients, pupils and their parents are also on these sites and searching the internet.

The Internet is a part of everyday life but it is important to be careful about how you use social network sites

- ❖ Inappropriate pictures (nudity, over-drinking, kissing, dancing, etc.
- ❖ Don't use foul language
- ❖ Don't slag off your course tutors, placement mentors or course, as it may get back to the university
- ❖ Remember to be professional, don't behave like you did at school
- ❖ Review your privacy settings so only certain friends or groups can see certain applications, photos or the wall.
- ❖ Understand what happens to your profile when you add an application
- ❖ When you 'become a fan' or join a group, understand some may not get your inner circle's inside jokes or may think you are endorsing certain ideas/services/products
- ❖ If you wouldn't show it to your mum, you probably don't want your placement mentor to see it. Represent who you are, but be mindful to what may be misunderstood or controversial

### **Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour**

During your course or whilst on placement, you should conduct yourself in a professional manner. Areas of concern relating to a student's fitness to practice could include:-

- ❖ Uncommitted to work
- ❖ Poor time management both at University and on placement
- ❖ Non-attendance
- ❖ Failure to accept and follow educational advice
- ❖ Neglect of administrative tasks
- ❖ Breach of confidentiality
- ❖ Sexual, racial or other forms of harassment
- ❖ failure to keep appropriate boundaries in behaviour
- ❖ Rudeness to patients, colleagues or other students

If you are having issues on your course or placement, then the university expects you to deal with it professionally and use the correct channels to discuss the issues. If you have issues whilst on placement, speak to your mentor or the university's placement co-ordinator. If you feel you need time out always speak to your faculty, try to speak to your student support officer and if you need more help, contact the advice centre.

### **What if concerns are raised about me?**

If your fitness to practise is being investigated, we strongly recommend that you seek advice from the Advice Centre as soon as possible.

We also recommend that you read the university's fitness to practice regulations to familiarise yourself with the process.

**The Fitness to Practise Regulations apply to the following Programmes of study:**

**Faculty of Development and Society**

BA Primary Education with QTS  
BA Early Years Education with QTS  
BA Teaching & Learning in Primary Education with QTS  
BA Teaching & Learning in Early Years Education with QTS  
PGCE Primary Education with QTS  
PGCE Early Years with QTS  
PCE: Primary Education with QTS (Modular)  
PGCE English (1 yr)  
PGCE Modern Foreign Languages (Modular)  
PGCE Design & Tech (Modular)  
PGCE ICT (Modular)  
PGCE Science (Modular)  
PGCE Business Education (Modular)  
PGCE English (Modular)  
PGCE Citizenship (Modular)  
PGCE Citizenship (Modular)  
PGCE Physical Education (1 yr)  
PGCE Modern Foreign Languages (1 yr)  
PGCE Design & Technology (Food Tech)  
PGCE Design & Tech (1 yr)  
PGCE Design & Tech (2 yr)  
PGCE Design & Technology (Textiles)  
PGCE Design & Technology (Engineering)  
SKE Subject Knowledge Enhancement Scheme Design& Tech  
BSc Design & Tech with Ed & QTS (2 yr)  
BSc Design & Tech with Ed & QTS (3 yr)  
PGCE Religious Education (1 Year)  
PGCE Mathematics (1 yr)  
PGCE Mathematics (2 yr)  
PCE Mathematics (Modular)  
PGCE Mathematics (Modular)  
SKE Subject Knowledge Enhancement Scheme Maths  
BSc Mathematics with Education and QTS (2 yr)  
BSc Mathematics with Education and QTS (3 yr)  
PGCE 14-19 ICT (1 yr)  
PGCE ICT (1 yr)  
PGCE Business Education (1 yr)  
PGCE Science (1 yr)  
PGCE Science (2 yr)

SKE Subject Knowledge Enhancement Scheme Science  
BSc Science (2 yr)  
BSc Science (3 yr)  
Cert Ed: Learning & Skills Sector - SHU  
PGCE Learning & Skills Sector FT - SHU  
Cert HE for ESOL Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
Cert HE for Literacy Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
Cert HE for Numeracy Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
PgC for ESOL Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
PgC for Literacy Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
PgC for Numeracy Specialists: Learning & Skills Sector  
BA Childhood Studies  
BA Early Childhood Studies  
Graduate Diploma in Youth Work

## **Faculty of Health and Wellbeing**

BA(Hons) Nursing Studies  
Advanced Diploma in Nursing Studies  
PgDip Nursing Studies  
BA(Hons) Applied Nursing and Social Work (Learning Disabilities)  
Advanced Diploma in Midwifery Studies  
BSc(Hons) Midwifery Studies  
DipHE in Operating Department Practice  
DipHE in Paramedic Practice  
BSc(Hons) Diagnostic Radiography  
Certificate in Assistant Radiographic Practice  
BSc(Hons) Physiotherapy  
BSc(Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology  
PgDip Radiotherapy and Oncology in Practice  
BSc(Hons) Occupational Therapy  
MSc Occupational Therapy  
BA(Hons) Social Work Studies  
MA(Hons) Social Work Studies  
Foundation Degree in Youth and Community Work  
Foundation Degree in Working with Children, Young People and Families

### **Useful Links**

#### **NHS**

<http://www.nmc-uk.org/> (For general information on nursing and midwifery)

<http://www.nmc-uk.org/Documents/Guidance/NMC-Guidance-on-professional-conduct-for-nursing-and-midwifery-students.PDF> (the code of conduct)

#### **Paramedic Practice students**

<http://www3.shu.ac.uk/HWB/placements/Paramedicpractice/conduct.html>

### **Social Work**

<http://www.gsccl.org.uk/> (For general information on Social Work)

<http://www.gsccl.org.uk/cmsFiles/Education%20and%20Training/Student%20advice.pdf> (code of conduct)

[http://www.gsccl.org.uk/cmsFiles/Education%20and%20Training/Student\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://www.gsccl.org.uk/cmsFiles/Education%20and%20Training/Student_Factsheet.pdf) (student factsheet on registration with the GSCC)

### **Teacher Training**

<http://www.gtce.org.uk/>

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/>

[http://www.gtce.org.uk/documents/publicationpdfs/code\\_of\\_conduct\\_1009.pdf](http://www.gtce.org.uk/documents/publicationpdfs/code_of_conduct_1009.pdf) (code of conduct)

### **Criminal Records Bureau**

<http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

## **CONTACTS**

### **Advice Centre**

The HUBS

Paternoster Row

Sheffield

S1 2QQ

Tel: 0114 225 4148

Fax: 0114 225 4943

Email: [advicecentre@shu.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre@shu.ac.uk)

Web: [www.hallamunion.org/advice](http://www.hallamunion.org/advice)