

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO

FITNESS TO

PRACTISE

GET IN TOUCH

0121 204 4848

advice@aston.ac.uk

10:00am - 4:00pm

DROP IN

10:30am - 12:30pm weekdays

No appointment needed at this time

LOCATION

Ground floor of Students' Union building



FITNESS TO PRACTISE



University programmes that involve close interaction with patients and the public are covered by Fitness to Practise regulations.

WHAT IS FITNESS TO PRACTISE?

Programmes in the College of Health and Life Sciences that involve close interaction with patients and the public are covered by Fitness to Practise regulations to safeguard everyone involved. Students on these accredited courses sign a Code of Professional Conduct, undergo Occupational Health screening, and Enhanced Level DBS checks.

This means you must uphold professional standards at all times (including outside of University) and ensure your conduct and health meet expectations to guarantee your safety around clients, colleagues, patients, staff, and the public. Failure to do so may result in the University investigating concerns about your fitness to practise and suitability for the health profession.

THE REGULATIONS

Programmes subject to Fitness to Practise regulations demand adherence to professional conduct and health standards. Conduct or health issues that question a student's fitness to practise may prompt investigation and disciplinary actions. Regulations apply to enrolled students on the listed programme, covering various conduct, health, or performance concerns.

REGISTRATION WITH PROFESSIONAL BODIES

It's crucial to note that Fitness to Practise determinations during academic enrolment don't bind regulatory bodies for professional registration.

Each decision relates solely to a student's ability to practise during the course.

VALID CONCERNS

Various issues may trigger a Fitness to Practise investigation, including:

- Criminal convictions, cautions, or penalty notices (e.g. failing to disclose police cautions or investigations).
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Aggressive, violent, or threatening behaviour.

- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (including frequent lateness and absences).
- Cheating or plagiarism.
- Dishonesty or fraud (including actions outside the professional role, like covering up mistakes or claiming more hours than worked).
- Unprofessional behaviour or attitudes (including harassment or posting inappropriate material on social media).
- Health concerns and lack of insight or management (e.g. failure to seek medical treatment, follow medical advice, or a treatment-resistant condition affecting fitness to practise).

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Facing fitness to practise concerns can be overwhelming, but proactive steps can help:

- Familiarise Yourself with Professional Standards:**
Read the Professional Standards relevant to your programme and profession, paying close attention to key aspects. Understand the expectations outlined and their application to your conduct and practise.
- Draft a Reflective Statement:**
Begin drafting a reflective statement addressing concerns raised by the school. Follow provided guidelines: include an introduction, timeline of events, reflections on behaviour and attitudes, lessons learned, feelings about professional standards, a proposed action plan, and a conclusion. Ensure the statement covers all incidents comprehensively.

THE FTP COMMITTEE

- **Role:** Decides on Fitness to Practise (FTP) cases referred by the FTP Officer and School, reviews University Discipline Boards actions and Admission Concerns referrals, and considers appeals against warnings issued by the FTP Officer or School.
- **Composition:** Typically consists of a Chair and two Aston University members with relevant professional registration, two external representatives (potentially from the NHS or related fields), and additional members or consultants as necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Strict confidentiality is maintained throughout the FTP Committee proceedings.

WE CAN HELP...

Please visit: astonsu.com/support

EXPLAIN FITNESS TO PRACTISE REGULATIONS. HELP YOU UNDERSTAND CONCERNS RAISED BY UNIVERSITY. PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON ANY STATEMENT YOU WISH TO SUBMIT. AND MORE.

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PROTOCOL FOR FTP COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- Students are invited at least 15 days before the hearing date with relevant paperwork.
- The Committee may proceed even if the student leaves the University.
- Cases are presented by the FTP Officers or a designated Presenter.
- Students are informed of their rights (e.g. to representation and calling witnesses).
- Mitigating circumstances are considered.
- A decision is made regarding the establishment of facts, impairment of fitness to practise, and sanctions.

POSSIBLE SANCTIONS

- **No sanction required:** Committee determines no further action is necessary.
- **Written Warning:** Issued to formally notify the student of concerns about their fitness to practise.
- **Conditional Continuation:** Continuation on the programme is conditional upon specific requirements (e.g. close supervision, professional help, or meeting academic/professional standards).

- **Exclusion:** Temporary removal from the programme until specified conditions are met.
- **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the programme

APPEALING DECISIONS

Students have the right to appeal decisions within a specified timeframe, with grounds including procedural irregularities or new evidence.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

We can offer support in various ways:

- Explain Fitness to Practise regulations.
- Help you understand concerns raised by the University.
- Provide feedback on any statement you wish to submit.
- Accompany you to meetings or hearings and provide representation.
- Advise on options available if you are unhappy with the outcome of your case.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

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