

# Brighton Students' Union Support

Fitness to Practice Guide (2020/21)  
University of Brighton

# Fitness to Practice

Concerns arising from academic, behavioural or health problems may lead to an investigation, to ensure that you are suited to your chosen career. The Fitness to Practice process is in place to determine if you are a fit to continue studying and practice in the profession you've chosen.

- Academic misconduct allegations (plagiarism, exam cheating *etc.*) can sometimes be considered as fitness issues if they are judged to call into question your ethics or character.
- Remember that your activity on social media can reflect your ethics, practice & character just as much as what happens in university or on placement. The fact that you may have intended postings to be private will not absolve you from responsibility if these accidentally become public.

## Examples of concerns leading to FTP

Concerns can be raised for a variety of reasons including lack of professionalism, lack of honesty/integrity, not disclosing cautions or convictions, allegations of misconduct including academic misconduct, lack of competence and poor health. This also covers a student's conduct outside their programme and placements. Here are some typical examples:

- Inappropriate comments on a social media and networking websites
- Lapses in confidentiality
- Substance misuse
- Inappropriate behaviours
- Repeated unprofessional behaviour
- Timekeeping issues
- Failure to report concerns about safety
- Failure to meaningfully engage with placement supervision opportunities
- Falsification of placement supervision documents

- Failure to take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to service users, carers and colleagues.

## FTP Procedures

A copy of the University of Brighton's Fitness to Practice procedure can be found [here](#).

## What happens if Fitness to Practice concerns or allegation are raised about my conduct?

- You should be notified in writing of the allegation or concerns being investigated.
- You should be invited to attend a meeting or hearing to discuss any allegations or concerns raised.
- The purpose of the initial meeting will be to discuss the allegations and find out the facts. It is also to provide you with an opportunity for you to respond.
- You can bring an adviser from our Union Support team for support, but you will need to inform the University who will be accompanying you to the meeting.
- You may be temporarily suspended if your conduct is considered to represent a potential immediate, serious and significant threat to your own safety or that of others or the university.
- We strongly advise you to take any concerns raised about your fitness to practice very seriously and contact our Union Support team as soon as possible because the consequences can be significant. The earlier you contact us, the better position we will be in to provide advice.

## Some words of advice....

We understand that if you are facing allegations that might lead to Fitness to Practice proceedings you may be feeling anxious about what will happen or why you are being investigated, so we've put together some words of advice.

- Firstly, don't panic! Many students who are affected by fitness to practice issues go on to successfully complete their course and qualify for their chosen profession.
- Secondly, do not delay getting in help.
- Have a look in detail at the relevant professional Codes associated with your course (for example, the [HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics](#)
- of relevant concepts covered in your Code and that you can appreciate how they may relate to your situation.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand, or do not agree with, in the information you are given. If you feel that this gives an incomplete picture of the circumstances surrounding the fitness issue, or if it somehow misrepresents things from your perspective, then think about what additional information you would like to be considered.
- Be honest- remember that the university doesn't expect you to be perfect, particularly if you are a first or second-year student, but they do expect you to demonstrate honesty and integrity regarding your practice & learning.
- Don't be tempted to try to 'hide' aspects of your situation. If you are anxious about disclosing something, remember you can discuss this with us in confidence first.
- Above all, you need to be showing in your response to the fitness proceedings that you understand what your profession expects from you, that you have insight, and that you can meaningfully and appropriately reflect on the situation and what you might learn from it.
- Try not to think of your fitness issue purely in terms of who may be 'at fault' for what happened. Remember, the expectation will be that you can dispassionately reflect on any situation you encounter, and treat it as a learning experience for you, even if you feel that you have not really done anything wrong. It is OK to highlight instances where other peoples' practice may have fallen short of what could be expected, and even possible organisational failings on the part of the University or placement provider if you feel that these are relevant to the fitness issue. **However**, always try to combine this with consideration of the part that your actions or conduct may have played in the situation, for example:
  - How do you imagine these may have made others feel?

- How did the situation make **you** feel? In hindsight, how far might this have coloured your perception or influenced your decisions?
- What can you take from the situation which could help you become a better practitioner?
- If you were faced with the same circumstances again, what might you do differently to ensure that your (and other peoples') practice & conduct best reflects your profession's standards and ethics?

## Getting help

### We can:

- Advise you on the Fitness to Practice procedure.
- Assist in putting statements together.
- Accompany you to any meetings that arise from the allegation.
- Advise on gathering evidence.

If you are facing allegations that might lead to Fitness to Practice proceedings, we strongly recommend that you take a BSU Support Advisor with you to meetings.

## Useful University links

- [Bullying and harassment procedure](#)
- [Drugs & Alcohol Policy](#)
- [Data protection policy](#)
- [Fitness to practice procedure](#)
- [Health and safety policy](#)
- [Student disciplinary procedure](#)
- [Student privacy notice](#)
- [Whistleblowing policy](#)