



ICHAS

Section 2 (a) – Terms of Reference for Decision-Making Structures

Subject:	Terms of Reference for the Fitness to Practice Committee		
Date Approved by Academic Council:		June 2022	
Policy Version	1/2022	Date due for Revision	February 2024

PURPOSE (including Scope of Functioning/ Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities)

The College deals with ‘Fitness to Practice’ issues within the context of its ethos as a College which aims to provide a supportive learning environment, with due cognisance of the principles of natural justice.

MEMBERSHIP

The Fitness to Practice Committee comprises three voting members as follows:

- The Chair of the Committee will be nominated by the Vice President (Academic Affairs).
- Member of the Programme Board, nominated by the Chair
- Practice Placement Director
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Relevant other member of Faculty (not involved in the Programme of study being undertaken by the student concerned).

Co-opted Members

The Fitness to Practice Committee have the option to co-opt additional members to provide expertise or specific representation and advice to the Committee. Members may be co-opted on a case-by-case basis and this requires the agreement of the Vice President (Academic Affairs). Co-opted members act in a strictly advisory capacity and are non-voting members of the Committee. The presence and attendance of co-opted members is noted in the record of the meeting and in the Committee’s report to the Programme Board.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee acts with full delegated powers of the relevant Programme Board and makes decisions on behalf of this board regarding the Fitness to Practice cases referred to it. The responsibilities of the Fitness to Practice Committee are principally to:

- Consider student Fitness to Practice matters referred to it in line with the Policy on Fitness to Practice.
- Ensure a fair, clear and consistent approach to dealing with student Fitness to Practice matters.
- Advise the relevant Director of Studies and Programme Board on matters relating to Fitness to Practice.

- Provide reports to the relevant Programme Board, Academic Council or its nominated committee, as required with due consideration to any confidentiality issues.
- Meetings will be convened as required by the Chair of the Committee at the request of the relevant Director of Studies.
- Decisions of the sub-committee shall be taken by a simple majority.
- Proceedings shall be recorded.
- Reports and recommendations are drafted as soon as possible after the meeting and submitted to the relevant Director of Studies via the Chair.
- A member of the administrative staff shall be appointed as a non-voting secretary of the committee.

Role of the Chair of the Fitness to Practice Committee

On receipt of a Fitness to Practice Concern/Complaint, and having decided that the matter requires the initiation of a formal procedure, the relevant Practice Placement Director along with the Registrar and in agreement with the Vice President (Academic Affairs) or their nominee arranges for the Fitness to Practice Committee to be convened as soon as practicable. A copy of the Fitness to Practice Concern/Complaint and any other relevant documentation are circulated to the members of the committee in advance of the meeting.

Role & Expectations of Members of the Fitness to Practice Committee

Members of the Committee can seek the attendance of other relevant parties, including the Placement Officer, Clinical Supervisor or others to provide a verbal account of incidents or behaviour that have called into question the student's Fitness to Practice.

When investigating a cause for concern the Committee will weigh the interests of the clients, other students and staff against those of the student involved with proportionality.

The Committee considers:

- The specific facts of the case, including but not limited to, in particular:
- The seriousness of the behaviour in question;
- Whether it is part of a pattern of behaviour; and,
- The year of study of the student and their experience of higher education and/or professional Practice.
- The risk factors involved, including but not limited to, in particular:
- How likely a repeat of the behaviour may be.
- How well the student might respond to support

Operating Procedures

The Chair of the Committee convenes meetings with adequate notice.

- At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair outlines the procedures of the meeting.
- Meetings are held in a timely and efficient manner.
- Minutes are recorded and made available to any internal Committee or if necessary, to the Academic Awarding Body.

The Fitness to Practice Committee at all times have due regard to the principles of Fair Procedure and Natural Justice. In that regard:

- Students are informed in writing that the Fitness to Practice procedure has been initiated and that the Committee has been convened. The student is given appropriate notice of the date / time of the meeting.
- A copy of the preliminary Fitness to Practice Report and any other relevant documentation that has been supplied in respect of the case is provided to the student in advance of the meeting.
- The student must confirm their availability to attend the meeting and to advise if they intend to be accompanied by a friend, parent, student advisor or Student representative.
- At the meeting the Chair of the Committee outlines the procedures of the meeting.
- Members of the Committee are generally restricted to questions relating to the concerns raised in the Fitness to Practice Concern/Complaint Form and other relevant documentation.
- The student has to receive copies of all documents relating to the matter and is given the option to make their own written submission in advance of the meeting.

Appointment to the Fitness to Practice Committee

The Fitness to Practice Committee is a Sub Committee of the Programme Board on which a student referred to it is studying. Appointments to the Committee are made by the Vice President (Academic Affairs).

Meetings of the Fitness to Practice Committee

Frequency of Meetings: The Fitness to Practice Committee meets on an 'as required basis' drawing on appropriate expertise.

Quorum: The Fitness to Practice Committee comprises 3 voting members and should not convene unless three such members are present.

Powers of Decision Making: The Fitness to Practice Committee is decision making in nature. It will make decisions collectively regarding issues relating to 'fitness to practice' and reports on relevant courses of action to the Programme Board.

Reporting Relationships

The Fitness to Practice Committee reports to the relevant Programme Board.