

Fitness to Practise Procedure

Document Summary

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The City College: Fitness to Practise Policy

1: Introduction

1.1 The City College recognises that academic success alone may not be sufficient for a student to enter a profession. The College must ensure students are safe and suitable for their chosen career, considering their physical health, mental health, and professional conduct.

1.2 Students who accept a place on a professional programme (see 1.4) are required to comply with all academic regulations and College policies, both on and off-site.

1.3 This procedure applies to students whose behaviour or conduct, even after standard College policies have been applied, is deemed damaging, dangerous, or creates an unacceptable risk to themselves or others.

1.4 The Fitness to Practise procedure exists to ensure students adhere to strict professional standards on the following programmes:

- Licentiate in Acupuncture
- Licentiate in Tui Na

1.5 Where references are made to "working days" in this policy, these are considered to be Monday to Friday (inclusive).

2: Fitness to Practise

2.1 For programmes accredited by a professional body, students must follow the professional norms and UK law. Any behaviour that would render them unfit to be admitted to that profession may be subject to this procedure.

2.2 Concerns about a student's fitness to practise may be raised by any source, including staff, students, placement partners, or the public. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Any circumstances that question a student's fitness to practise their profession.
- Offences against or exploiting vulnerable individuals.
- Chronic drug or alcohol misuse.
- Violent behaviour.
- Conviction of a relevant criminal offence.
- Intimidation or harassment of others.
- Falsification of records or serious academic malpractice.
- Severe or relapsing mental illness or being a carrier of a serious communicable disease that poses a risk to others.
- Breaching the professional code of conduct.

This list is not exhaustive, and the examples do not guarantee withdrawal. However, a student may be withdrawn if a Panel finds them unfit to practise.

3: Initiating the Procedure

3.1 Where an allegation about a student's fitness to practise requires immediate action to safeguard relevant parties, a temporary exclusion from study and/or placement for up to five working days may be imposed.

3.2 The decision to temporarily exclude is a neutral act, made by the Managing Director or Director of Student Records. It is not a sanction and does not imply guilt.

3.3 A student who has graduated may still be subject to this procedure if an alleged incident occurred during their period of study. The outcome of the Panel will determine whether support for professional registration can be provided.

4: The Process

4.1 Once a written allegation is received, an investigation will commence.

4.2 An appointed impartial Investigating Officer will gather all relevant evidence, including documents and interviews with the student, staff, and placement partners. They may also obtain a professional opinion on the student's fitness to practise.

4.3 The Investigating Officer will then prepare a report for a Fitness to Practise Panel.

4.4 The Fitness to Practise Panel, which includes academic staff and a representative of the profession, will hear the case. The Panel will base its decision on the 'balance of probability'.

4.5 The student will be given the opportunity to present their case and may be accompanied by a 'Friend' who is a member of the College community (not a lawyer).

4.6 If the Panel finds the concern is proven, it has the power to:

- Permit the student to continue with or without adjustments.
- Issue a formal warning.
- Discontinue a placement.
- Require the student to temporarily or permanently withdraw from the College.

4.7 The Panel's decision will be communicated to the student within five working days.

5: Appeals

5.1 A student may appeal the Panel's decision to the Managing Director or Director of Student Records (whoever has not been involved). The appeal must be made in writing within 10 working days of the decision letter.

5.2 An appeal can be made on the grounds of procedural irregularity, new evidence, or a disproportionate sanction.

5.3 The appeal will be reviewed by a Fitness to Practise Appeals Panel, which includes a senior practising member of the relevant profession from outside the College.

5.4 The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and concludes the College's internal procedures.

6: External Review and Professional Bodies

6.1 Once the College's internal appeal process is exhausted, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter.

6.2 If a student is not satisfied with the final outcome, they may apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for a review of their complaint, provided it is eligible under the OIA's rules.

6.3 The College may be required to report the outcome of a fitness to practise case to the relevant professional or regulatory body, as applicable. The student will be informed if such a report will be made.

7: Useful Links

- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): This is the independent body for student complaints in England and Wales.
- <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC): A regulator for health and care professions.
- <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>
- Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC): The UK regulator for complementary therapies.
- <https://www.cnhc.org.uk/>
- UK Government - Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs): A list of bodies that may have a role in professional qualifications.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/professional-and-statutory-regulatory-bodies>