



STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Approving Authority:	Academic Council				
Responsibility:	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Heads of School				
Consultation undertaken:	Academic Heads Forum Careers and Employability Service				
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	Student Code of Conduct Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children				
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Category:	Student-Centred Learning Teaching and Assessment				

Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment(s)
1	19/02/2021	Academic Council (Meeting No. 172; AC:DOC:172:12:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From September 1st 2021 this policy and the accompanying Fitness to Practise Statements replace the DkIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure for BA (Hons) in Social Care and the Social Care Fitness to Practise Statement (2019).
2	24/02/2023	Academic Council (Meeting No. 185; AC:DOC:185:07:02)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of the programme Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Applied Youth Work (full-time and part-time).

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Numerous professions are regulated by professional registration bodies tasked with upholding the integrity of the profession and protection of the public. Such bodies are responsible for ensuring that registered individuals are fit to practise. Dundalk Institute of Technology (hereinafter referred to as DkIT) is committed to ensuring that students¹ who are enrolled in programmes that lead to a professional qualification and/or programmes that include a work placement element that brings them into contact with the general public, service users, children, vulnerable adults and animals, act in a manner that upholds professional and ethical standards. The health and safety of the public and animals are paramount. DkIT also wants to maintain the trust of our placement sites and the public in the professionalism and integrity of our programmes. We, therefore, have a duty to ensure that our students are deemed fit to practise. Programmes that this policy applies to are referred to as relevant programmes throughout this policy (Appendix 1).
- 1.2. ***Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practise, experiential learning or clinical work.***
- 1.3. Students enrolled on such relevant programmes shall be informed of conditions attached to enrolment including adherence to the Garda Vetting Policy, DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy, the Student Code of Conduct and the Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children. DkIT shall ensure that students on relevant programmes are made aware of the fitness to practise requirements specific to their discipline, including the Fitness to Practise Statement specific to their programme.
- 1.4. Students on relevant programmes are required to confirm that they meet the fitness to practise requirements particular to their programme at the beginning of each academic year and/or upon returning from a leave of absence. A student is required to declare on this form if they have previously been before a Fitness to Practise Committee at another third level institute or appeared before a professional Fitness to Practise Committee. A copy of this form is available in Appendix 2.
- 1.5. DkIT endeavour to provide students with a holistic experience extending beyond academic support through the provision of pastoral care supports including counselling, disability and student support services.

¹ Student is defined as a current registered student on a DkIT programme.

2. Purpose of Policy

2.1. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practise in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1. This policy applies to all students enrolled on relevant programmes in DkIT. DkIT specifies relevant programmes in its prospectus and in handbooks for individual relevant programmes. Programmes which are covered by this policy are included in Appendix 1. Additional programmes may be added as necessary upon ratification by Academic Council.
- 3.2. This policy applies to students' conduct both on and off-campus and throughout the duration of their enrolment on a relevant programme at DkIT, insofar as that conduct relates to their fitness to practise in their chosen course of study.
- 3.3. In addition to being subject to this Fitness to Practise Policy, students may also be subject to the Fitness to Practise Policies of the relevant regulating professional body and to the Human Resource and Fitness to Practise Policies of the placement partner. At all times, a student's continuation on placement is subject to the agreement of the placement provider.
- 3.4. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documentation: DkIT Student Code of Conduct, Garda Vetting Policy for Students, Placement Office Common Procedures, Code of Conduct for Student Work Placement and the specific handbook for the programme that the student is enrolled on. There may be other documentation relevant to the particular programme, for example specific attendance policies and professional body regulations. These will be referred to in the relevant programme's handbook.
- 3.5. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (hereinafter referred to as 'the Registrar') has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of this policy.

4. Fitness to Practise and interaction with other Institute policies

- 4.1. Concerns or issues raised under Fitness to Practise may also fall under other DkIT policies such as the Student Code of Conduct, the Garda Vetting Policy, Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children or Assessment and Standards. When a concern is raised that falls under the jurisdiction of more than one policy, the Head of Department, in consultation with the Registrar, shall decide which of the Institute's policies shall take priority in the context of the particular circumstances of the case. It is possible that more than one policy may be invoked in relation to the same matter. Under no circumstance shall proceedings be invoked against a student in relation to a single matter under both the Student Code of Conduct and Fitness to Practise policy.

5. Fitness to Practise and Student Health

- 5.1. Students on relevant programmes may be required to undergo health screening, as a condition of their enrolment. This does not mean that students who have a disability will be precluded from such programmes. The Institute will comply with the Equal Status Acts 2000- 2015 and other relevant DkIT policies, and will make reasonable accommodations for students with a disability.
- 5.2. If a Fitness to Practise concern is raised regarding a student's health, the student may be required to attend a specific healthcare professional as part of the Fitness to Practise process. This will be at the expense of DkIT. Should the student fail to engage with the healthcare professional, the Fitness to Practise process can be reinstated.

6. Notification to Third Parties

- 6.1. Issues dealt with under with this policy will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 - 2018 and the ePrivacy Regulations (S.I. No. 336 of 2011) and in a sensitive manner, insofar as possible.
- 6.2. Issues that fall under the policies relating to child protection and Garda vetting, or pending criminal prosecutions, will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant law and/ or policy. Such issues may also raise a concern about a student's Fitness to Practise and, where warranted, this Policy may also be invoked.
- 6.3. DkIT may consider it appropriate/ be obligated to disclose information to a third party, such as the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or An Garda Síochána. DkIT retains discretion to notify the relevant regulatory body and/ or placement site where appropriate, and in accordance with data protection obligations.
- 6.4. Students should be aware that DkIT retains discretion to disclose matters that have been dealt with by the Fitness to Practise Committee, where the student has been

found to have impaired fitness to practise, to a potential employer/ educational provider in the form of a reference. Issues dealt with informally under Level 1 of this Policy will not ordinarily be disclosed in a reference.

7. Fitness to Practise Concerns

- 7.1 Fitness to practise concerns may relate to a serious single act/ omission, a pattern of behaviour/misconduct or a series or sequence of events.
- 7.2 General examples of issues of concern include, but are not limited to, the use of threatening language; inappropriate, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour; substance misuse; abuse of animals; failure to adhere to directions and/or advice from placement/ clinical supervisors; lack of competence; failure to recognise limits; failure to follow health and safety requirements.
- 7.3 The Fitness to Practise Statement for each relevant programme provides further details of the standards and conduct required for students on a particular programme, in addition to any professional Codes of Conduct that may be applicable. Examples of areas of concern that may be raised under this Policy are also referred to in the Fitness to Practise Statements.

8. Levels of Response under the Fitness to Practice Procedure

- 8.1 Concerns about a student's fitness to practise on a relevant programme may be raised by the student, Institute staff, other students, members of the public or the placement providers.
- 8.2 All concerns regarding a student's fitness to practise should be directed to the relevant Head of Department, in the first instance.
- 8.3 Upon receiving the complaint, the Head of Department may (1) consider that the matter should be dealt with in accordance with another Institute policy, (2) decide that the matter can be resolved informally under Level 1 in accordance with Section 9 of this Policy, or (3) where warranted, they may invoke the Level 2 response in accordance with Section 10.
- 8.4 If the Head of Department is of the reasonable opinion that the student poses an immediate threat to the life or safety of any person, property or animals, the Registrar following consultation with the Head of Department, may temporarily exclude the student from the relevant programme, placement and/ or related activities and premises pending the outcome of a Fitness to Practise hearing. A temporary exclusion must be kept under review by the Head of Department and be dealt with as expeditiously as possible. A decision to temporarily exclude a student should not prejudice the decision as to whether a formal Fitness to

Practise hearing is warranted, nor should it prejudice the findings of the Committee.

8.5 There are three levels to the Fitness to Practise procedure. The first is an informal stage and is dealt with at Departmental level, by the Head of Department, as laid out in Section 9.

8.6 At the second level, a Fitness to Practise Investigator is appointed by the Head of Department to undertake an investigation into the matter. Upon receiving the Investigator's report, the Head of School may refer the matter to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

8.7 The Appeals procedure is the third level and it is convened at Institute level.

9. Level 1- Informal Procedure

9.1. As all concerns regarding fitness to practise are directed to the Head of Department in the first instance, it may be appropriate at this stage for the issue to be dealt with on an informal basis by the Head of Department. The Head of Department may advise the student on how they might address the issues and offer support of appropriate services, such as the student counselling, student health or student disability services.

9.2. At this stage, it may also be appropriate for the Head of Department to convene a meeting with the relevant Institute staff and/ or the host placement supervisor and the student. The student shall be given reasonable notice of this meeting. The student has the right to be accompanied to this meeting by a person acting in a supportive capacity such as a family member, friend or Student's Union representative.

9.3. Should the student fail to attend the meeting, a second meeting shall be organised by the Head of Department. Should the student fail to attend the second meeting the matter may be referred for investigation to the Fitness to Practise Investigator.

9.4. An outcome of this meeting may warrant an action plan being drawn up detailing how the concerns raised may be resolved. The action plan (Appendix 3) shall be agreed by the parties at the meeting. The action plan must be in writing and the student must consent to fulfilling their obligations under the plan, with the necessary supports in place. The action plan should be reviewed by the Head of Department, in conjunction with other relevant staff and/or host placement supervisor, in accordance with the timeframe agreed at the meeting.

9.5. Failure to complete the agreed actions under the plan may mean that the Fitness to Practise procedure will be reinstated.

10. Level 2- Fitness to Practise Investigation

- 10.1 Where the Level 1 procedure failed to resolve an issue on an informal basis, or where the issue was serious enough to invoke Level 2 in the first instance, the Head of Department shall refer the matter for investigation to a Fitness to Practise Investigator. The Head of Department must inform the student in writing of the following: - that the matter has been referred for investigation, the name of the investigator appointed to the investigation, an outline of the investigation procedure and the potential outcomes of referral.
- 10.2 The Fitness to Practise Investigator shall be an experienced member of staff of the Institute, or an external person, appointed by the Registrar. The Investigator shall not be familiar to the student.
- 10.3 The role of the Investigator is to undertake an investigation into the matter and prepare a report to furnish to the Head of School.
- 10.4 The Fitness to Practice Investigator shall:
- Carry out the investigation in a transparent and fair manner and shall do so as expeditiously as possible given the circumstances;
 - Conduct interviews, where possible, with relevant parties or seek written submissions from relevant parties;
 - Conduct the investigation in a confidential and sensitive manner, having regard to data protection obligations;
 - Prepare a report based on supporting evidence and furnish the findings to the Head of School; and
 - Present the case before the Fitness to Practise Committee, if convened.
- 10.5 Upon receiving the Investigator's report, the Head of School shall decide whether there is no further case to answer, or whether the matter shall be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee to convene a hearing into the student's fitness to practise.

11 Composition and Terms of Reference of the Fitness to Practise Committee

- 11.1 A Fitness to Practise Committee shall comprise of at least three members and shall be appointed by the Registrar. The Registrar shall nominate a Head of Department/ Section external to the Department from which the student is, or Head of Function, as Chair. A second member shall be an academic staff member, external to the Department from which the student is. The third member shall be a representative from the profession from which the student is associated and external to DkIT. The Committee will have an appropriate gender balance. A non-voting secretary may also be appointed to the Committee.

11.1 The Fitness to Practise Committee shall:

- Consider the matter referred to them by the relevant Head of School;
- Be guided by the rules of natural justice and fair procedures, ensuring that a clear, fair, and consistent approach is taken when dealing with Fitness to Practise matters;
- Hear a Fitness to Practise case as required and make a finding as to whether the student's practise is impaired or not;
- Prepare a contemporaneous report of each hearing and furnish finding(s) to the Heads of Department and School, and
- Furnish findings to the student concerned.

12 Procedures for the Fitness to Practise Hearing

- Upon the appointment of a Fitness to Practise Committee, the Committee shall notify the relevant student in writing of its appointment. The student shall be given ten days' notice of the date and time of the Committee hearing. The details of the concerns relating to the student will be outlined to the student at this point.
- The student must be given the following information at least five days prior to the hearing:
 - The documentation to be considered by the Committee at the hearing, including the report from the Fitness to Practise Investigator;
 - A list of named persons who will be called to the hearing, including witnesses, placement supervisor, etc;
 - A copy of this policy;
 - Their right to be accompanied to the hearing by a person of their choice; and
 - Notice of the student's right to respond.
- Three days prior to the hearing the student must confirm whether they will attend the hearing, notify the Chairperson of the names of witnesses that they propose to call, any documentation or evidence they propose to submit at the hearing and advise whether they will be accompanied by a named person of their choice.
- Where a student fails to attend the Fitness to Practise hearing, a second hearing will be convened. Should the student fail to attend the second convened hearing, the hearing will proceed in the absence of the student and a decision will be taken on the evidence to hand. No inference of guilt shall be drawn from the student's failure to attend the hearing.

- At the outset of the hearing, the Chairperson shall introduce each member of the Committee and outline the procedures to be followed. The possible outcomes and sanctions shall be explained to the student.
- The Fitness to Practise Investigator shall present the case to the Fitness to Practise Committee. This shall be based on the report prepared by the Fitness to Practise Investigator.
- The Committee may invite the Investigator to answer questions of fact or to clarify a statement.
- The Committee may ask the student questions regarding their fitness to practise.
- The student has a right of reply.
- Witnesses may be called to give oral evidence to the Committee. Witnesses must be given reasonable notice requesting their attendance at a Fitness to Practise hearing. Written evidence may be requested from witnesses and/ or relevant persons, such as medical professionals, which shall be considered by the Committee.
- During the proceedings, the Chairperson may adjourn the proceedings to seek clarification/ examine evidence in further detail or for any other purpose.
- The standard of proof to be satisfied during the hearing is that, on the balance of probabilities, the student's fitness to practise is impaired.
- Upon completion of the presentation of oral evidence and relevant documentation, the Committee, on the basis of a simple majority, shall make a determination as to the student's fitness to practise. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson has the casting vote.
- A report of the proceedings shall be prepared by the Committee.
- A copy of the Committee's decision, the reason(s) for its decision and details of any sanction imposed shall be sent to the student no later than five days following the hearing by registered post. The student shall also be notified of their right of appeal.
- A copy of the decision must be retained on the student's file.
- The student has ten days from the date of postage of the decision to appeal the decision to the Registrar as outlined at Section 15.

13 Possible Outcomes of the Fitness to Practise Hearing

- 13.1 The Committee will determine whether the student's practise is/ is not impaired or may become impaired, and whether further action is necessary. Actions may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:
- A finding of no case to answer;
 - No further action to be taken;
 - Dismissal of the case due to allegations based on vexatious, false or malicious claims;
 - The matter be referred for consideration under another Institute policy;
 - The student provides an undertaking that they will engage with appropriate services. If these services are external to DkIT, the student will be responsible for the cost of engaging with such services;
 - The student and other relevant parties consent to mediation;
 - Reasonable accommodation can be made for the student to repeat/ undertake certain aspects of the programme;
 - Pending further review of the case by the Committee, the student has permission to continue on the course, subject to some or all of the following conditions:
 - The student provides an undertaking that they will engage with an action plan as set out by the Committee. Failure to successfully engage with the action plan may mean that the student will be suspended or expelled from the relevant programme;
 - That the student consents to being mentored by a named member of the academic staff for a specified period of time;
 - That the student agrees to specific conditions or restrictions being placed on their practise pending review;
 - Withdrawal of the student from placement;
 - The student receives an exit award, where appropriate, with no opportunity to continue on the programme;
 - Suspension of the student from the programme; □ Expulsion of the student from the programme.

14 Composition of the Appeals Committee

- 14.1 An Institute Standing Appeals Committee, from which members of the Appeals Committee will be appointed, comprises Heads of School, Heads of Department/Section and two lecturers from each School. When an Appeals Committee is convened, an appropriate external professional will be appointed.
- 14.2 As required, the Registrar shall appoint three members of the Appeals Committee to hear an appeal from the Fitness to Practise Committee. The Chair shall be a Head of School other than that which the student is from. The second member shall be an academic representative (Head of Department/Section or lecturer), not from the

same Department as the student. The third member shall be external to DkIT, but shall be a member of the profession to which the student concerned is affiliated. This person must not have sat on the Fitness to Practise Committee which originally heard the case.

- 14.3 An administrative member of staff may be appointed as a non-voting secretary to the Committee.

15 Level 3- Fitness to Practise Appeals Procedure

- 15.1 A student can appeal the decision of the Fitness to Practise Committee on stated grounds within ten working days of the date upon which the Fitness to Practise Committee issued its decision. The Appeal should be in writing and addressed to the Registrar of DkIT. Supporting documentary evidence must be included with the Appeal.
- 15.2 An appeal can be made on the following grounds:
- **Procedural irregularity:** the student has submitted evidence that the decision may have been impacted by a failure to adhere to the procedures outlined in this policy.
 - **New evidence:** information has been presented which is of relevance to the decision, but which was not available for a legitimate reason at the time of the Fitness to Practise hearing.
 - **Disproportionate outcome:** having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, and the evidence presented at the hearing, the outcome is disproportionately severe.
- 15.3 An appeal may be allowed to proceed if it is submitted outside of the time limit where extenuating circumstances exist but this is at the discretion of the Appeals Committee.
- 15.4 Where a student has been suspended or expelled from their programme by the Fitness to Practice Committee, or by the Appeals Committee, the case must be referred to Academic Council for confirmation. The decision is deferred until it is confirmed by Academic Council.
- 15.5 When an Appeal is granted, any decision from the Fitness to Practise Committee is deferred until the Appeals Committee make a determination.
- 15.6 If a decision has been made to temporarily exclude the student where they pose an immediate threat to the life or safety of any person or property, in accordance with section 8.4, that decision stands until the case has been dealt with by the Fitness to Practice Committee and/or the Appeals Committee.

- 15.7 Once an appeal has been lodged, the Registrar shall appoint a Committee, in accordance with section 14 to review the appeal. The Committee must reflect a gender balance.
- 15.8 The Committee shall initially ascertain whether there are grounds for an appeal. If they are of the opinion that no grounds for appeal have been established, the student and the Fitness to Practise Committee shall be notified without delay.
- 15.9 Should the Committee confirm that there are grounds for an Appeal, the Committee may request further information from the Fitness to Practice Committee, the Fitness to Practise Investigator and/or the student.
- 15.10 A date for an oral hearing should be set without delay. The Fitness to Practice Committee and the student shall be notified of the decision to hold a hearing.
- 15.11 The same procedures outlined in section 12 will apply to the Appeal Hearing. The Appeals Committee shall be guided by the principles of fairness and due process.
- 15.12 A decision by the Appeals Committee is reached by a simple majority. The decision is made based on the civil standard of proof, on the balance of probabilities.
- 15.13 The Appeals Committee has the power to do any one of the following:
- uphold the decision of the Fitness to Practise Committee (in whole or in part),
or
 - reject the decision of the Fitness to Practise Committee (in whole or in part),
or
 - substitute the Fitness to Practice Committee's outcome for one of the other outcomes available to the Committee as outlined in section 13.
- 15.14 The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding.
- 15.15 A record of the hearing and the outcome must be maintained.
- 15.16 The decision of the Appeals Committee must be communicated to the student and relevant Offices and staff within five working days of the hearing. The Registrar and Academic Council must also be notified of the decision.
- 15.17 The Appeals process should ordinarily take no longer than 28 working days from the date upon which the Registrar receives the appeal.

16 Return to study

- 16.1 If a student wishes to return to study following either a leave of absence or suspension implemented under this policy, they must first contact their Head of Department in writing. The Head of Department may convene a meeting with the student and relevant staff to determine whether any obligations and/ or conditions previously imposed on the student (either following informal or formal Fitness to Practise proceedings) have been satisfied. Supports, where available, to assist the student to re-engage in the Programme will be put in place.
- 16.2 In cases where students are seeking to return following a leave of absence or suspension implemented under this Policy on health grounds, the Institute reserves the right to request the student to furnish supporting evidence from an independent medical professional, or a treating medical professional, to certify the student as fit to return to study. The Institute may request the student to undergo a medical examination by a medical professional nominated by the Institute, at its expense.
- 16.3 If the student is not deemed to be fit to return to the programme, the student shall be given the final opportunity to avail of an exit award if it is available, or to voluntarily withdraw. If the student doesn't avail of one of these, Academic Council may terminate the student's registration.
- 16.4 Where a student was expelled from a programme under this Policy, they will not be eligible to return to that programme. Should they subsequently apply to another programme to which this policy applies, they must declare that they have been expelled from a relevant programme on their Fitness to Practise confirmation form.

17 Complaints to the Office of the Ombudsman

- 17.1 Following completion of the Appeals process, if a student feels dissatisfied with the Fitness to Practice process or the decision, a complaint can be made to the Office of the Ombudsman. A complaint must be made within 12 months of the action or decision that is being complained of. Further information is available at <https://www.ombudsman.ie/>.

Appendix 1: Relevant Programmes

The programmes to which this policy applies are:

School of Health and Science

- **BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Studies**
- **BA in Applied Early Childhood Studies**
- **BSc in Veterinary Nursing**
- **BSc (Honours) in General Nursing**
- **BSc (Honours) in Intellectual Disability Nursing**
- **BSc (Honours) in Mental Health Nursing**
- **BSc (Honours) in Midwifery**
- **Higher Diploma in Midwifery**

School of Business and Humanities

- **BA (Honours) in Social Care**
- **BA in Community Youth Work**
- **BA (Honours) in Youth Work**
- **BA (Honours) in Applied Youth Work**

Appendix 2: Fitness to Practise Confirmation Form

This form shall be completed at the start of each academic year, or following a leave of absence, by students on relevant programmes in DkIT. A list of relevant programmes is found in Appendix 1 of DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures. This form will be amended to reflect the details of each relevant programme.

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practice, experiential learning or clinical work.

Having read the following documents:

DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures (2021), and

Statement for Fitness to Practise for (insert relevant programme) and any supporting Code of Conduct,

I _____ (BLOCK LETTERS) confirm that in my opinion I have the ability to practise safely and effectively, and in accordance with the standards of competency required by the Statement of Fitness to Practise for x (e.g. BA Hons in Social Care).

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Student Number: _____

Appendix 3: Action Plan for Level 1- Informal Procedure



Student Fitness to Practise

(Level 1: Informal Procedure)

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Action Plan – Fitness to Practice

Student Name:

Programme Title:

Stage:

I have read this action plan and understand the contents:

Student Signature:		<u>Date:</u>
Head of Department Signature		
Signature of third party (if required)		

Action Plan – Addressing Fitness to Practise

The purpose of the Action Plan is to identify, for the student area(s) of concern which require attention. An Action Plan is initiated by the Head of Department in consultation with the student. It is intended that the area(s) identified for action will support all parties involved in addressing the named concerns.

Please provide information below as to the reasons why an Action Plan was initiated.

Reasons for Initiating an Action Plan

--

Areas for Action

Issues Identified

--

Actions to be Taken

--

Intended Outcome(s) of Action Plan

--

Agreed Review Period:

Review Date:

Record of Review Meeting(s)

Review Meeting

Date:

		Action Area	Achieved/Not Achieved
1			
2			
3			
4			

Evidence of Action Areas achieved / not achieved

Action Area	Evidence provided on achievement / non achievement
1	
2	
3	
4	

Please detail specific information relating to this incident:

Please attach any documentation relating to this incident

Student Signature:		Date:
Head of Department Signature		
Signature of third party (if required)		

Appendix 4: Statements of Fitness to Practise

Fitness to Practise Statement for BSc (Hons) in General Nursing, BSc (Hons) in Midwifery, BSc (Hons) in Intellectual Disability Nursing and BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing Programmes

School of Health and Science

Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practise, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practise in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

General Nursing, Mental Health Nursing, Intellectual Disability Nursing and Midwifery and Fitness to Practise

A registered student on a BSc (Hons) in General Nursing or BSc (Hons) in Midwifery or BSc (Hons) in Intellectual Disability Nursing or BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing programme must be fit to practise within their future profession as a registered nurse/midwife. Students will be required to participate in clinical placements in each year of their programme, and therefore will be interacting with members of the profession and the public as nursing/midwifery students. The School

of Health and Science expects each student to act in a manner that does not bring their profession into disrepute.

In considering any case regarding a student's fitness to practise, the School of Health and Science will be guided by the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011, Nurse Registration Programmes Standards and Requirements (NMBI 2016), Midwife Registration Programme Standards and Requirements (NMBI 2016), the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014) and the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework (NMBI 2015). The following principles provide guidance to nursing and midwifery students regarding their responsibilities in caring for patients in a safe, ethical and effective way.

- Nursing and midwifery students respect each person as a unique individual and respect and defend the dignity of every stage of human life.
- Nursing and midwifery students are expected to show high standards of professional behaviour.
- Nursing and midwifery students should be safety conscious and act with kindness and compassion when providing safe, high-quality care, under the supervision of a registered nurse/midwife, within their scope of practice.
- Trust is a core professional value in nursing and midwifery student's relationships with patients and colleagues.
- Confidentiality and honesty form the basis of a trusting relationship between the nursing/midwifery student and the patient. Patients have a right to expect that their personal information remains private.
- Nursing and midwifery students, under the supervision of a registered nurse or midwife, work together with their colleagues to achieve the best possible outcomes for patients.

In cases where there is a reasonable belief that a student's fitness to practise has been called into question, the School of Health and Science will follow the DkIT Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodations can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due

to the nature of nursing/midwifery activities, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's ability to practise at a level required of a nursing/midwifery student or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of a registered nurse/midwife.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

The following is a list of some issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise as a nursing/midwifery student:

- Professional misconduct;
- Poor professional performance/lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor time-keeping, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by health and safety regulations;
- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and/or clinical placement support staff;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management
- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/ matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of a nursing/midwifery student.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the BSc (Hons) in General Nursing, BSc (Hons) in Midwifery, BSc (Hons) in Intellectual Disability Nursing and BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing Programmes shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise and the NMBI Standards and Requirements (2016) for each nursing and midwifery education programme. Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

NMBI (2014) The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives. Available from:

<https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Code>

NMBI (2015) Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework. Available from:

<https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Scope-of-Practice>

NMBI (2016) Nurse Registration Programmes Standards and Requirements.

Available from: <https://www.nmbi.ie/Publications/Education>

NMBI (2016) Midwife Registration Programme Standards and Requirements.

Available from: <https://www.nmbi.ie/Publications/Education>

Nurses and Midwives Act 2011. Available from:

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2011/act/41/enacted/en/html?q=nurses+and+midwives+act>

Fitness to Practise Statement for BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies and BA in Applied Early Childhood Studies

School of Health and Science

Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practise, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practise in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

Early Childhood Studies and Fitness to Practise

Early years practitioners work primarily with young children. A core aim of regulation of professionals is to uphold the integrity of the profession, and ultimately, protection of the public. Early years practitioners, therefore, must be fit to practise. This Statement of Practise should be read in conjunction with the Code of Professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics (2020) and with DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and the Programme Handbook.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodations can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due to the nature of early childhood studies activities, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's

ability to practise at a level required of an early childhood studies student or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of an early years practitioner.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

The following is a list of some issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise as an early childhood studies student:

- Lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor time-keeping, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by health and safety regulations;
- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and/or clinical placement support staff;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management
- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of an early childhood studies student.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies programme shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise and the Code of Professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics for Early Years Educators (2020). Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

Professionalisation Sub-Group of the Early Years Forum (2020). Code of professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics for Early Years Educators.

S.I. No.221/2016 Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Available at:

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/si/221/made/en/print>

Fitness to Practise Statement for BA (Hons) in Social Care Programme School of Business and Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practice, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practice in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

Social Care and Fitness to Practise

Social Care Workers work primarily with vulnerable client groups. A core aim of regulation of professionals is to uphold the integrity of the profession, and ultimately, protection of the public. Social Care Workers, therefore, must be fit to practise. When dealing with a Fitness to Practise concern involving a social care student, regard will be had to the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 and the Social Care Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 2019. This Statement of Practise should be read in conjunction with the aforementioned Code and with DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and the relevant Programme Handbook.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodation can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due to the nature of Social Care Work, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's ability to practise at a level required of a Social Care Worker or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of a Social Care Worker.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

Concerns around fitness to practise in social care work are wide-ranging. The following is a non-exhaustive list of issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise:

- Professional misconduct²;
- Poor professional performance³ /lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor timekeeping that impacts on the client, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by Health & Safety regulations;
- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and or placement site;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- A contravention of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), the rules or byelaws;
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management

² Professional misconduct, as defined by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), by a registrant means any act, omission or pattern of conduct that:

- is a breach of the [Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics](#) adopted by the Registration Board with which the person is registered, or
- if the registrant is licenced, certified or registered with a body outside the State, is a breach of a standard of conduct, performance or ethics that applies to a person holding that licence, certificate or registration and that corresponds to a standard contained in the code referred to in the *point above*.

³ Poor Professional Performance, as defined by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended), means any failure of the registrant to meet the standards of competence that may reasonably be expected of registrants practising that profession.

- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/ matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of a professional Social Care Worker.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the Social Care Degree Programme shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise and their obligations under the Social Care Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)
(<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/27/enacted/en/html>) (2 February 2021)

Social Care Workers Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (Dublin, 2019) (<https://www.coru.ie/files-codes-of-conduct/scwrb-code-of-professional-conduct-and-ethics-for-social-care-workers.pdf>) (2 February 2021)

Fitness to Practise Statement for BA in Community Youth Work and BA (Hons) in Youth Work School of Business and Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practice, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practice in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

Youth Work and Fitness to Practise

Youth Workers work primarily with young people between the ages of 10 to 24. A core aim of the regulation, and endorsement, of professionals is to uphold the integrity of the profession, and ultimately, protection of the public. Youth Workers, therefore, must be fit to practise. Under the terms of National Occupational Standards for Youth Work, youth workers are expected 'demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, equality and diversity and importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice'.² Moreover, Youth Workers hold firm to a set of values that includes: 'work with young people and others'; 'facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people' ; 'promote inclusion, equity and young

² *NSETS Professional Endorsement: criteria and procedures for the professional endorsement of higher education programmes of study in youth work* (Belfast, 2013), p. 10.
(<https://www.youth.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-Professional-Endorsement-Criteria.pdf>) (2 February 2021)

people's interest and wellbeing'; 'develop youth work strategy and practice' and 'develop, lead and manage self and others'.³ This Statement of Practise should be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct, DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and the relevant Programme Handbook.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodation can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due to the nature of Youth Work, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's ability to practise at a level required of a Youth Worker or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of a Youth Worker.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

Concerns around fitness to practise in youth work are wide-ranging. The following is a non-exhaustive list of issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise:

- Lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor timekeeping that impacts on the client, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by Health & Safety regulations;
- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and or placement site;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management
- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

³ *Youth Work National Occupation Standards*, p. 6

(<https://www.nya.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/National-Occupation-Standards-for-Youth-Work.pdf>) (2 February 2021).

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/ matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of a professional Youth Worker.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the Youth Work Programmes (BA in Community Youth Work and BA (Hons) in Youth Work) shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise. Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

NSETS Professional Endorsement: criteria and procedures for the professional endorsement of higher education programmes of study in youth work (Belfast, 2013).

(<https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-ProfessionalEndorsement-Criteria.pdf>) (2 February 2021)

Youth Work National Occupation Standards
(<https://www.nya.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/National-Occupation-Standards-for-Youth-Work.pdf>) (2 February 2021).

Fitness to Practise Statement for BA (Hons) in Applied Youth Work School of Business and Humanities Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practice, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practice in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

Youth Work and Fitness to Practise

Youth Workers work primarily with young people between the ages of 10 to 24. A core aim of the regulation, and endorsement, of professionals is to uphold the integrity of the profession, and ultimately, protection of the public. Youth Workers, therefore, must be fit to practise. Under the terms of National Occupational Standards for Youth Work, youth workers are expected 'demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, equality and diversity and importance of choice, freedom, responsibility and justice'.⁴ Moreover, Youth Workers hold firm to a set of values that includes: 'work with young people and others'; 'facilitate the personal, social and educational development of young people' ; 'promote inclusion, equity and young people's interest and wellbeing'; 'develop youth work strategy and practice' and

⁴ *NSETS Professional Endorsement: criteria and procedures for the professional endorsement of higher education programmes of study in youth work* (Belfast, 2013), p. 10.
(<https://www.youth.ie/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-Professional-Endorsement-Criteria.pdf>) (2 February 2021)

'develop, lead and manage self and others'.⁵ This Statement of Practise should be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct, DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and the relevant Programme Handbook.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodation can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due to the nature of Youth Work, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's ability to practise at a level required of a Youth Worker or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of a Youth Worker.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

Concerns around fitness to practise in youth work are wide-ranging. The following is a non-exhaustive list of issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise:

- Lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor timekeeping that impacts on the client, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by Health & Safety regulations;
- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and or placement site;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management
- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

⁵ *Youth Work National Occupation Standards*, p. 6

(<https://www.nya.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/National-Occupation-Standards-for-Youth-Work.pdf>) (2 February 2021).

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/ matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of a professional Youth Worker.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the Youth Work Programmes (BA (Hons) in Applied Youth Work (full- and part-time)) shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise. Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

NSETS Professional Endorsement: criteria and procedures for the professional endorsement of higher education programmes of study in youth work (Belfast, 2013).

(<https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-ProfessionalEndorsement-Criteria.pdf>) (2 February 2021)

Youth Work National Occupation Standards
(<https://www.nya.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/National-Occupation-Standards-for-Youth-Work.pdf>) (2 February 2021).

Fitness to Practise Statement for BSc in Veterinary Nursing. School of Health and Science Dundalk Institute of Technology

DKIT Student Fitness to Practise Policy Definition

Fitness to practise means having the necessary skills, knowledge, health and character to undertake and complete, safely and effectively, a programme that includes elements of professional practise, experiential learning or clinical work.

Purpose of Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) Student Fitness to Practise Policy

The purpose of DkIT's policy is to:

- Ensure the protection of the public when students engage with them in a professional or educational capacity;
- Instil in students the qualities and competencies required as part of their professional practise in a relevant programme in DkIT;
- Provide a support system for students enrolled on a relevant programme should challenges arise that affect their ability to practise in a professional and ethical manner;
- Provide an appropriate procedure through which Fitness to Practise concerns about students on relevant programmes can be raised in a confidential manner and dealt with in accordance with the principles of fair procedures.

Veterinary Nursing and Fitness to Practise

A registered student on the BSc in Veterinary Nursing programme must be Fit to Practise within their future profession as a registered veterinary nurse. Students will be required to participate in practical and clinical placements in each year of their programme, and therefore will be interacting with members of the profession and the public as veterinary nursing 'professionals-in-training'. The School of Health and Science expects each student to act in a manner that does not bring the profession into disrepute.

In considering any case regarding a student's Fitness to Practise, the School of Health and Science will be guided by the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 and the Veterinary Council of Ireland Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses and Guidance on the Scope and Role of the Veterinary Nurse.

- A primary concern for students must be for the welfare of animals, and the student should be cognisant of the need to act to protect animal health and relieve animal suffering.
- When animal patient records are entrusted to the care of a veterinary nursing student, students must adhere to the Veterinary Council of Ireland codes regarding client confidentiality.
- Veterinary nursing students in practice placement are expected to treat members of the public, clients, placement staff, DkIT placement support staff and other students with respect and courtesy.
- Veterinary nursing students should maintain high standards of biosecurity while on placement.
- Veterinary Nursing students are expected to recognise their own responsibility, and the responsibility of the School, in ensuring that their health, and that of colleagues, clients and patients, is not compromised.

In cases where there is a reasonable belief that a student's fitness to practise has been called into question, the School of Health and Science will follow the DkIT Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practise

DkIT is committed to ensuring equal opportunities are available to students with disabilities. In conjunction with the Disability Support Services, reasonable accommodation can be made for students with a disability, where practicable. Due to the nature of Veterinary Nursing activities, it may not always be practicable or possible for students to be accommodated where the disability affects a student's ability to practise at a level required of a Veterinary Nurse or a student cannot acquire the competencies required of a registered Veterinary Nurse.

Grounds for Fitness to Practise Referral

The following is a list of some issues that may give rise to a concern around a student's fitness to practise as a Student Veterinary Nurse:

- Professional misconduct;
- Poor professional performance/lack of competence;
- Substance misuse;
- An addiction which may affect a student's ability to practise their profession;
- Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour;
- Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour (such as poor time-keeping that impacts on the client, poor communication skills);
- Failure to abide by Health & Safety regulations;

- Failure to accept and follow educational advice;
- Lack of competence which persists despite appropriate intervention and supervision by academic staff and or placement site;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination;
- Having health concerns and failure to manage these;
- A relevant medical disability which may affect a student's ability to practice their profession;
- A contravention of the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013
- Garda Vetting Disclosure deemed serious by Institute Management
- A criminal conviction or charge arising subsequent to a Garda Vetting Disclosure.

Fitness to practise concerns may be raised as a result of a single incident/ matter or may arise over a period of time as a result of a pattern of behaviour or persistent behaviour falling below that required of a Veterinary Nurse.

Student Declaration

All students enrolled on the BSc in Veterinary Nursing shall be informed of the specific requirements relating to fitness to practise and requirements of the Veterinary Council of Ireland. Students shall be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understand DkIT's Student Fitness to Practise Policy and associated Codes of Conduct at the beginning of each academic year.

References

Dossier of European Competencies for Veterinary Nurses. Available from: http://acovene.org/new_acovene/wp-content/uploads/Dossier-of-Competencies-2ndedition-Nov-2012-1.pdf

Veterinary Council of Ireland guidance on animals under veterinary care. Available from: <http://vci.ie/getmedia/ba56821b-a76e-4df4-9d10-7319e4fc47a2/VCI-Animalsunder-Veterinary-Care-Guidance.pdf?ext=.pdf>

Veterinary Council of Ireland Code of Professional Conduct – Veterinary Nurses (2020). Available from: <http://www.vci.ie/Publications/Code-of-Professional-Conduct/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-Veterinary-Nurses>

Veterinary Council of Ireland Guidance on the Role and Scope of Practice of the Veterinary Nurse (2021): [http://www.vci.ie/getmedia/c3291ad8-fb61-4a7a-9492-1b295d8d938a/Role-of-a-Veterninary-Nurse-Booklet-\(Web\).pdf](http://www.vci.ie/getmedia/c3291ad8-fb61-4a7a-9492-1b295d8d938a/Role-of-a-Veterninary-Nurse-Booklet-(Web).pdf)

Veterinary Council of Ireland Veterinary Nursing Education Benchmarks and Competencies (2018): <http://www.vci.ie/Publications/Regulations/VeterinaryNursing-Education-Benchmarks-and-Competencies>

