

16. Fitness to Practise

- [16.1 Introduction](#)

1. Throughout this section of the Academic Quality Handbook the term 'University' refers to the Aberystwyth University. The terms 'Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor', 'Head of Department' 'Academic Registrar', and 'Faculty Registrar' may include designated members of staff acting on behalf of these staff. It applies to all registered students at Aberystwyth University as defined in its Rules and Regulations.

2. The University has a responsibility to ensure that all students on schemes with professional status should maintain appropriate standards of behaviour, both in relation to academic study and to placements in a professional setting.

3. The University also has a responsibility to ensure that students following a programme of study leading to a professional qualification or which is registered with a statutory regulatory body are suitable to enter that profession.

4. This section outlines the expectations for all students at Aberystwyth University and also outlines the procedure for investigating concerns about a student's Fitness to Practise. It should be read in conjunction with the departmental requirements and professional codes of conduct and departmental procedures. These are issued for the following study schemes:

(i) All PGCE schemes in the School of Education

(ii) All PCET schemes in the School of Education

(iii) BA Education schemes with early years practitioner status

(iv) BVSc (AVS FTP Procedure)

(v) Nursing

- **16.2 Departmental Support and Monitoring**

1. Where a department has concerns that students are failing to meet professional standards, it will arrange a meeting to explain these matters. This may lead to increased support and monitoring, additional training, or a series of specific targets. Students will receive a written summary of the actions agreed, and the department will continue to monitor progress. Departments will work with placement providers as appropriate in providing this support, maintaining detailed records of all actions.

2. The aim of the University is to support all students and ensure that they attain professional standards, but in exceptional cases, this may not be possible. If so students will be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel for formal investigation.

- **16.3 Fitness to Practise Investigation**

1. Departments will submit a Fitness to Practise report with all relevant documentary evidence to Academic Registry dscstaff@aber.ac.uk for formal investigation where:

(i) students do not meet professional standards despite earlier support and monitoring at departmental

OR

(ii) The severity of the cases poses a high level of risk to the placement provider or others.

2. The University will seek to resolve all formal Fitness to Practise investigations within 60 calendar days of sending initial notification to the reported student. In cases where investigations cannot be completed within this timeframe, reported students will receive regular communication (including notification of delays as a result of university closure periods).

3. The burden of proof in all cases shall rest on the University and the standard of proof shall be on the balance of probabilities.

4. Legal representation will only be permitted in cases investigated by the Fitness to Practise Panel where the consequences for the student are potentially very serious.

Initial Action

5. On receipt of a written report concerning Fitness to Practise, Academic Registry will review the evidence and conduct a preliminary assessment. This will include a risk assessment under the University's duty of care to determine any conditions on the student's continued registration pending the outcome of an investigation, and possible deferral of the investigation pending the completion of other proceedings. The Academic Registrar will also consider whether to refer the case to the Fitness to Practise Panel, or apply one of the following, liaising with the academic department and the Behaviour Intervention Team (BIT). These may include:

(i) Fitness to Attend

(ii) Student Discipline Investigation

(iii) Unacceptable Academic Practice

Fitness to Practise Panel

6. The Fitness to Practise Panel will include the following:

(i) Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee, not from student's own department) (Chair)

(ii) Head of Department or nominee, with no previous involvement in the case

(iii) External professional specialist (optional)

(iv) Student Representative

(v) Faculty Registrar (Secretary)

7. The academic department will nominate the external professional specialist, to be drawn from the membership of an external advisory board or equivalent.

8. Students will be invited to attend the panel and informed of its date, place and time.

9. Documentary evidence will be provided to students at least 5 days before the date of the meeting and also circulated to Panel members. Any further evidence made available on the date of the meeting may be presented to the Panel, but only with the express permission of the Chair.

10. Students may be represented by an advisor from the Students' Union or a Trade Union. Representation by other persons will be at the discretion of the Chair, and any requests for such representation should be made in writing to the Chair in advance of the panel meeting. Legal representation at the meeting will not normally be permitted.

11. Panel meetings may proceed in students' absence where no good reason is provided for a failure to attend.

Functions of the Fitness to Practise Panel

12. The Fitness to Practise Panel will:

(i) Consider the available evidence;

(ii) Determine whether the student is fit to practice, on the balance of probabilities;

(iii) Determine whether to apply a penalty.

Meetings of the Fitness to Practise Panel

13. The Chair will present an outline of the case, referring to the submitted evidence. Panel members may ask questions of the student.

14. The student will have the right to hear all the evidence relating to the case before responding, and to make a response in person. Additional documentary evidence including evidence of special circumstances may not be presented to the panel on the day of the meeting without the express permission of the Chair.

15. When the presentation of the evidence and the student's response are completed, all persons, other than members of the Panel will withdraw.

Outcome

16. The Fitness to Practise Panel may confirm one of the following outcomes:

(i) The student is fit to practise, with no further action required;

(ii) The student is not fit to practise;

(iii) The case is not proven but that the student should be referred to the department for further support and monitoring.

Action

17. Where the Panel has determined that the student is not fit to practise, it may confirm one of the following:

(i) To refer the student to the academic department for monitoring and support in accordance with the department's professional code of conduct.

- (ii) To exclude the student from the University on a permanent basis.
- (iii) To exclude the student from the University on a temporary basis.
- (iv) To issue a formal warning with specific conditions, for monitoring by the academic department.

Outcome letter and final review

18. Clear reasons will be given for all decisions, including the action taken

Mitigating Circumstances

19. Mitigating Circumstances will not be considered in determining whether a student is fit to practise. They may however be taken into consideration in determining action. Mitigating circumstances may include personal circumstances which affected the student's judgment, but may also include expressed remorse or early admission of specified actions.

Damages

20. The University reserves the right to recover any damages incurred because of students' actions at any stage of the Fitness to Practise procedure.

Independence

21. Staff members involved in investigations and decisions will have no prior involvement in the case. Reported students will be made aware of the identity of panel members, and may submit an objection to Academic Registry caostaff@aber.ac.uk on grounds of conflict of interest. The objection will be considered by the Academic Registrar and students will have the opportunity to appeal the outcome through the Student Complaints Procedure.

Temporary action

22. The University may take temporary action where it considers it to be necessary to safeguard students, staff or the wider community. See 15.2 Temporary action for further details (<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/student-discipline/>)

Student Representation and Support

23. The University will make students aware of support services which are available internally and externally during the course of a Fitness to Practise investigation.

Final Review

24. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Fitness to Practise investigation may request a review, to be investigated by a Pro Vice-Chancellor. The Final Review procedure can be found at <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/fr/>.

Records and Confidentiality

25. Academic Registry will maintain anonymised records of Fitness to Practise investigations to enable reflection and review of the procedure. These will include details of the types of cases, actions taken, and mitigating factors.

26. Academic Registry will maintain records of students who are excluded from the University under the Fitness to Practise procedure, and will review such cases in the event of a further application to study at the University.

27. In order to allow students to defend themselves against allegations, it is not normally appropriate to keep the identity of witnesses secret during Fitness to Practise investigations. It may not be appropriate to rely on the evidence of

witnesses who do not wish their identity to become known to the reported student.

Reconsidering the same allegation

28. Under some circumstances the University may reconsider the same case, taking account of the following:

(i) Whether new evidence is available which could not have been disclosed at an earlier stage, and with a good reason;

(ii) The length of time that has elapsed and the effect of this on the reliability of the evidence;

(iii) The impact on the reported student of undergoing a second investigation;

(iv) Whether leaving the matter unaddressed would impact on the University's obligations under its own Rules and Regulations, or the external requirements of professional or regulatory bodies.

- [16.4 Appendix 1: School of Education](#)

16.4.1 Aberystwyth University

'Ensuring and Supporting Professional Standards on Placement: Guidelines and Processes'

A pdf copy of this section is available for download: [Ensuring and Supporting Professional Standards on Placement](#)

16.4.2 Coleg Cambria Franchise

'Ensuring and Supporting Professional Standards on Placement: Guidelines and Processes'

A pdf copy of this section is available for download: [Coleg Cambria Franchise](#)

- [16.5 Appendix 2: Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science](#)
'Fitness to Practise Guidelines and Procedures'

A pdf copy of this section is available for download: [Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures 2021](#)

- [16.6 Appendix 3: Healthcare Education - Nursing](#)
'Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure for Healthcare Education Professional Programmes Handbook'

A pdf copy of this section is available for download: [Fitness to Practise Policy & Procedure for Healthcare Education Professional Programmes 2021](#)

- [16.7 Appendix 4: Veterinary Nurses](#)
'Fitness to Practise Guidelines and Procedures for Veterinary Nurses'

A pdf copy of this section is available for download: [Fitness to Practise Guidelines and Procedures for Veterinary Nurses](#)

ENSURING AND SUPPORTING
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ON
PLACEMENT

GUIDELINE AND PROCESSES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEVELOPED: SEPTEMBER 2020

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STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE ON PLACEMENT - OVERVIEW

The School of Education has a responsibility to ensure that all our students, who are involved in placements in professional settings should maintain appropriate behaviour and standards.

The School of Education also has a responsibility to ensure that students following a programme of study leading to a professional qualification which is registrable with a statutory regulatory body are suitable to enter that profession.

This document outlines the expectations for all students from the School of Education at Aberystwyth University and also outlines the procedure when there is a cause for concern about a student's fitness to practice, or behaviour whilst on placement.

STANDARDS

All PGCE trainee teachers will be assessed against the "Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards" (<https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/professional-standards/#national-approach-to-professional-learning:-professional-teaching-and-leadership-standards>).

All students of the School of Education involved in a placement in a professional setting should aim to meet the standards as set out in the 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registrants with the Education Workforce Council' (<http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf>) and /or the 'Code of Professional Practice for Social Care' set out by Social Care Wales (https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Code-of-Professional-Practice-for-Social-Care-web-version.pdf).

All students at the School of Education are expected to adhere to the Aberystwyth University rules and regulations as well as those explicitly set out by the School of Education, since all students are considered to be representing the University and the School whilst on placement.

STATEMENT ON DBS DISCLOSURES

Please see the document 'Process for DBS Disclosures in the School of Education'

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR TRAINEE TEACHERS / STUDENTS

ON PLACEMENT

Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct is an integral part of a practitioner / teacher's responsibility. It is essential that relationships with pupils and staff are based on mutual respect and that students' attitude, demeanour, dress code and language are appropriate and professional at all times. The EWC's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers' - <http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf> provides clear guidance on these matters and forms the basis for this code of conduct. Throughout the course you should show that you understand and uphold the principles outlined in this document. Adherence to the Code of Conduct should enhance your enjoyment, success and reputation as a practitioner / teacher and you should pay particular attention to the matters outlined below.

Please ensure that:

1. you have understood the policies and practices of the school/organisation and follow the advice and guidance of your mentors carefully;
2. you have regard to the safety and welfare of children/young persons, colleagues and yourself;
3. you do not have inappropriate physical contact with children/young persons or use inappropriate language or discuss inappropriate subjects;
4. you arrive at your placement school/organisation in good time every day and attend meetings and discussions after school/organisation hours as required;
5. you inform your school/organisation, your tutor and the School of Education office of any absences due to illness or other exceptional circumstances according to your school/organisation's policy. In the case of illness, you will need to provide a self-certification note if absent for more than three working days and a doctor's certificate if absent for more than five working days;
6. in the event of planned absences, such as interviews, you will need to provide work for your children / young persons according to the school/organisation's policy and practice;
7. your demeanour and appearance are suitable (including maintaining appropriate dress codes, hair styles and high standards in personal hygiene) according to the school/organisation's policies;

8. you check the school/organisation policy and expectations at the start of your placement regarding body adornments such as tattoos, nails or body piercing jewellery;
9. you are aware of the school/organisation policies for Safeguarding and Child Protection as well as the ['All Wales Child Protection Procedures'](#) and you know who is the designated 'Safeguarding officer/lead' at the school/organisation.
10. you understand and are aware of the potential risks of being in a one-to-one situation with a child/young person at any time but especially outside the school setting. You must not to give lifts to children/young persons, visit their homes or contact them in a social context;
11. in the course of carrying out any pastoral role you conduct conversations with a child/young person about sensitive issues professionally and inform a relevant member of staff or follow the child protection policy of the organisation, if appropriate;
12. any photographing/ videoing of children/young persons complies with LEA/school/organisation guidelines;
13. you do not engage in personal correspondence with children/young persons, for example via mobile phones (texting etc) and the internet (e-mail, chat rooms, social networks etc);
14. any correspondence with outside agencies (e.g. parents, guardians, carers, other professionals) should only take place with the guidance and permission of a senior member of staff at your school/organisation;
15. you are aware of the dangers of using social websites and media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, You Tube) accessible to children/young persons and parents and should avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any pictures or comments that could damage your professional reputation;
16. your use of mobile devices is professional and respectful at all times and meets the policy and requirements of the school/organisation. You should not use your personal phone for work purposes.
17. you do not discuss your own personal relationships with children/young persons;
18. the language you use at all times is respectful, appropriate and professional to all and thus you do not swear at children/young persons, use offensive names or make inappropriate remarks about their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, age, language, additional learning or special needs or personal circumstances;

19. you treat all information related to the school/organisation, colleagues and children/young persons appropriately and professionally at all times and in line with current data protection policies and practice;
20. you behave professionally and with respect towards all colleagues in all discussions, meetings and correspondence including e-mail messages;
21. you are open to and respond positively and constructively to feedback and advice;
22. that you safeguard and uphold your own, the school/organisation and the University's professional reputation at all times.

I agree to adhere the Professional Code of Conduct as outlined above.

Name (please print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please ensure that you have handed in a signed copy of this form to the relevant Course Administrator. Students / Trainees who do not do so in good time may be prohibited from starting their placement. A breach of this Code could lead to a disciplinary meeting.

'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURE

This 'cause for concern' procedure is a guidance process for placement staff, university staff and students/trainees, to be applied where there is concern for a student/trainee's ability to succeed appropriately on placement.

A 'cause for concern' is intended to be a developmental and supportive process. A cause for concern will be issued when:

- a student/trainee does not make the expected progress on placement;
- a student/trainee struggles professionally or due to personal circumstances to meet expected standards
- a student/trainee fails to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct

A cause for concern will outline the concern and set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in increased agreed placement and university-based support and monitoring.

Specifically, a cause for concern:

- can be raised at any stage of the placement;
- will usually relate to specific aspects of the student/trainee's conduct and be characterised by a lack of expected progress

Targets

- Targets for improvement must be explicitly linked to areas of concern in the student/trainee's conduct and engagement.
- Targets will require agreed actions for both the student/trainee and all those working with him/her in the placement.
- The setting and revision of targets must be based on the review of the full range of evidence; there must be clear alignment between the identified issues, the assessment made and the targets set.

A suggested typical cause for concern process for professional concerns is shown below. The cause for concern procedure should include a statement of concern, targets for improvement and related training and actions.

THE 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCESS

This outlines the steps taken by school or university staff to support and offer developmental targets for students/trainees. Where necessary, students/trainees may ask for a supportive representative to attend their meetings.

STEP 1

- At the earliest opportunity the placement mentor discusses the concerns with the student/trainee in a respectful manner.
- The student/trainee should be informed they are a cause for concern and that the issues must be addressed. A review meeting is held to agree targets which are focused explicitly on areas of improvement with agreed actions, timed expectations and success criteria.
- There should be a maximum of three targets
- University tutor should be informed immediately and receives a record of the concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee.

STEP 2

- If necessary, a joint review meeting with placement mentor and university tutor to take place.
- Review targets, using the full range of evidence.
- If sufficient progress has been made by the student/trainee, normal placement routines continue.
- If insufficient progress has been made, proceed to STEP 3
- The continuing concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee must be recorded and emailed to the University tutor.

STEP 3

- University tutor to inform senior programme leadership.
- A further review meeting with Placement mentor and Senior programme leadership staff to take place after a week.
- If insufficient progress has been made proceed to STEP 4

STEP 4

- The placement is terminated immediately.
- The placement organisation produces an end of placement report noting the issues leading to the termination of the placement.
- Student/Trainee to be informed of their right regarding options.

- If there are concerns regarding the student/trainee's professional 'Fitness to Practise', then the University's Fitness to Practise process will be followed.

STEP 5

- If placement work impacts on the academic qualification, then placement mentor can be invited to report to the internal Exam Board.
- The final decision is confirmed by the relevant Exam Board.

Fitness to Practise

This document corresponds to the Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practice policy. This is a departmental process which outlines the supportive process used by the department to develop students who may not be achieving sufficiently for a variety of reasons. the Fitness to practice policy and procedure outlines the expectations for all students at Aberystwyth University and also outlines the procedure for investigating concerns about a student's Fitness to Practice.

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The School of Education also has a responsibility to ensure that students following a programme of study leading to a professional qualification which is registrable with a statutory regulatory body are suitable to enter that profession.

This document outlines the expectations for all students from the School of Education and also outlines the procedure when there is a cause for concern about a student's fitness to practice, or behaviour whilst on placement.

STANDARDS

All PGCE trainee teachers will be assessed against the "Professional Teaching and Leadership Standards" (<https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/professional-standards/#national-approach-to-professional-learning:-professional-teaching-and-leadership-standards>).

All students of the School of Education, including those on PCET and UG franchise schemes involved in a placement in a professional setting should aim to meet the professional standards relevant to their scheme:

- 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registrants with the Education Workforce Council' (<http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf>)
- 'Code of Professional Practice for Social Care' set out by Social Care Wales (https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Code-of-Professional-Practice-for-Social-Care-web-version.pdf)

- 'Professional standards for further education teachers and work-based learning practitioners in Wales' <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/460a740a-7bf1-4c7b-b4ae-348ae380879b/professional-standards-further-education-teachers-work-based-learning-practitioners-wales.pdf>

All students of the School of Education are expected to adhere to the Aberystwyth University rules and regulations as well as those explicitly set out by the School of Education, since all students are considered to be representing the University and the School whilst on placement.

STATEMENT ON DBS DISCLOSURES

Please ensure you have followed the Coleg Cambria DBS disclosure policy:

[Disclosure of Unspent Criminal Convictions Policy.pdf](#)

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR TRAINEE TEACHERS / STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT

Maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct is an integral part of a practitioner / teacher's responsibility. It is essential that relationships with pupils and staff are based on mutual respect and that students' attitude, demeanour, dress code and language are appropriate and professional at all times. The EWC's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers' -

<http://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/fitness-to-practise/code-of-professional-conduct-and-practice-pdf> and 'Professional standards for further education teachers and

work-based learning practitioners in Wales' <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/460a740a-7bf1-4c7b-b4ae-348ae380879b/professional-standards-further-education-teachers-work-based-learning-practitioners-wales.pdf> provide clear guidance on these matters and forms

the basis for this code of conduct. Throughout the course you should show that you understand and uphold the principles outlined in this document. Adherence to the Code of Conduct should enhance your enjoyment, success and reputation as a practitioner / teacher and you should pay particular attention to the matters outlined below.

Please ensure that:

1. you have understood the policies and practices of the school/organisation and follow the advice and guidance of your mentors carefully;
2. you have regard to the safety and welfare of children/young persons, colleagues and yourself;
3. you do not have inappropriate physical contact with children/young persons or use inappropriate language or discuss inappropriate subjects;
4. you arrive at your placement school/organisation in good time every day and attend meetings and discussions after school/organisation hours as required;
5. you inform your school/organisation, your tutor and the School of Education / Coleg Cambria office of any absences due to illness or other exceptional circumstances according to your school/organisation's policy. In the case of illness, you will need to provide a self-certification note if absent for more than three working days and a doctor's certificate if absent for more than five working days;
6. in the event of planned absences, such as interviews, you will need to provide work for your children / young persons according to the school/organisation's policy and practice;
7. your demeanour and appearance are suitable (including maintaining appropriate dress codes, hair styles and high standards in personal hygiene) according to the school/organisation's policies;
8. you check the school/organisation policy and expectations at the start of your placement regarding body adornments such as tattoos, nails or body piercing jewellery;
9. you are aware of the school/organisation policies for Safeguarding and Child Protection as well as the ['All Wales Child Protection Procedures'](#) and you know who is the designated 'Safeguarding officer/lead' at the school/organisation.
10. you understand and are aware of the potential risks of being in a one-to-one situation with a child/young person at any time but especially outside the school setting. You must not to give lifts to children/young persons, visit their homes or contact them in a social context;

11. in the course of carrying out any pastoral role you conduct conversations with a child/young person about sensitive issues professionally and inform a relevant member of staff or follow the child protection policy of the organisation, if appropriate;
12. any photographing/ videoing of children/young persons complies with LEA/school/organisation guidelines;
13. you do not engage in personal correspondence with children/young persons, for example via mobile phones (texting etc) and the internet (e-mail, chat rooms, social networks etc);
14. any correspondence with outside agencies (e.g. parents, guardians, carers, other professionals) should only take place with the guidance and permission of a senior member of staff at your school/organisation;
15. you are aware of the dangers of using social websites and media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, You Tube) accessible to children/young persons and parents and should avoid publishing, or allowing to be published, any pictures or comments that could damage your professional reputation;
16. your use of mobile devices is professional and respectful at all times and meets the policy and requirements of the school/organisation. You should not use your personal phone for work purposes.
17. you do not discuss your own personal relationships with children/young persons;
18. the language you use at all times is respectful, appropriate and professional to all and thus you do not swear at children/young persons, use offensive names or make inappropriate remarks about their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, age, language, additional learning or special needs or personal circumstances;
19. you treat all information related to the school/organisation, colleagues and children/young persons appropriately and professionally at all times and in line with current data protection policies and practice;
20. you behave professionally and with respect towards all colleagues in all discussions, meetings and correspondence including e-mail messages;
21. you are open to and respond positively and constructively to feedback and advice;

22. that you safeguard and uphold your own, the school/organisation and the University's professional reputation at all times.

I agree to adhere the Professional Code of Conduct as outlined above as well as [Coleg Cambria Code of Conduct](#).

Name (please print): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please ensure that you have handed in a signed copy of this form to the relevant Course Administrator. Students / Trainees who do not do so in good time may be prohibited from starting their placement. A breach of this Code could lead to a disciplinary meeting.

'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURE

This 'cause for concern' procedure is a guidance process for placement staff, university staff and students/trainees, to be applied where there is concern for a student/trainee's ability to succeed appropriately on placement.

A 'cause for concern' is intended to be a developmental and supportive process. A cause for concern will be issued when:

- a student/trainee does not make the expected progress on placement;
- a student/trainee struggles professionally or due to personal circumstances to meet expected standards
- a student/trainee fails to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct

A cause for concern will outline the concern and set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in increased agreed placement and university-based support and monitoring.

Specifically, a cause for concern:

- can be raised at any stage of the placement;
- will usually relate to specific aspects of the student/trainee's conduct and be characterised by a lack of expected progress

Targets

- Targets for improvement must be explicitly linked to areas of concern in the student/trainee's conduct and engagement.
- Targets will require agreed actions for both the student/trainee and all those working with him/her in the placement.

- The setting and revision of targets must be based on the review of the full range of evidence; there must be clear alignment between the identified issues, the assessment made and the targets set.

A suggested typical cause for concern process for professional concerns is shown below. The cause for concern procedure should include a statement of concern, targets for improvement and related training and actions.

THE 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCESS

This outlines the steps taken by school or university staff to support and offer developmental targets for students/trainees and college staff. Where necessary, students/trainees may ask for a supportive representative to attend their meetings.

STEP 1 - PLACEMENT MENTOR

- At the earliest opportunity the placement mentor discusses the concerns with the student/trainee in a respectful manner.
- The student/trainee should be informed they are a cause for concern and that the issues must be addressed. A review meeting is held to agree targets which are focused explicitly on areas of improvement with agreed actions, timed expectations and success criteria.
- There should be a maximum of three targets
- ~~University~~ HE tutor should be informed immediately and receives a record of the concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee. HE tutor informed by mentor or relevant person e.g manager for area trainee is undertaking placement.

STEP 2 - Scheme Lead Tutor

- If necessary, a joint review meeting with placement mentor and HE Scheme Lead tutor to take place.
- Review targets, using the full range of evidence.
- If sufficient progress has been made by the student/trainee, normal placement routines continue.
- If insufficient progress has been made, proceed to STEP 3
- The continuing concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee must be recorded and emailed to the HE Scheme Lead tutor.

STEP 3 – Senior Programme Leadership

- HE Scheme Lead tutor to inform Senior Programme Leadership (Aberystwyth or Cambria, as appropriate).

- A further review meeting with Placement mentor and Senior Programme Leadership staff to take place after a week.
- If insufficient progress has been made proceed to STEP 4

STEP 4

- The placement is terminated immediately.
- The placement organisation produces an end of placement report noting the issues leading to the termination of the placement.
- Student/Trainee to be informed of their right regarding options.
- If there are concerns regarding the student/trainee's professional 'Fitness to Practise', then the University's Fitness to Practise process will be followed.

STEP 5

- If placement work impacts on the academic qualification, then placement mentor can be invited to report to the internal Exam Board.
- The final decision is confirmed by the relevant Exam Board.

Fitness to Practise

This document corresponds to the Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practice policy. This is a departmental process which outlines the supportive process used by the department to develop students who may not be achieving sufficiently for a variety of reasons. The Fitness to practice policy and procedure outlines the expectations for all students at Aberystwyth University and also outlines the procedure for investigating concerns about a student's Fitness to Practice.

Aberystwyth School of Veterinary Science (AVS)

Fitness to Practise Guidelines and Procedures

Introduction

1. Veterinary students represent the future of the veterinary profession and as such, are expected to conduct their studies according to the standards expected of the profession. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) sets and monitors these standards and publishes appropriate guidelines. In addition, it stipulates the procedures to be followed where individuals fall short of expectations. Veterinary students are also subject to the guidelines and procedures set by Aberystwyth University during their first two years of the BVSc programme.
2. There are two major, complementary standards set by the RCVS to which veterinary students must conform, namely, “Day One Competences” and “Fitness to Practise”. The former relates to the knowledge, skills and attributes that students must demonstrate on graduation. The RCVS defines competence as “the ability to perform the roles and tasks required by one’s job to the expected standard”. Fitness to Practise refers to the manner in which students demonstrate that they can practise their profession properly, in both their professional and private lives.
3. Aberystwyth University (AU) also has a Fitness to Practise policy, which has a protocol applying to all relevant courses as well programme-specific procedures. This document outlines the procedures specific to the BVSc programme, which is aligned to the two RCVS standards and the AU policy.

Guiding Documents

4. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the following three documents, which will be used by the AVS in implementing Fitness to Practise policies:
 - i. RCVS:
 - Day One Competences: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day->

[one-competences/](#)

- Fitness to Practise: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/fitness-to-practise-a-guide-for-uk-veterinary-schools-and/>

ii. AU: Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practise (*insert web link here*)

5. Students might also find useful the Code of Professional Conduct, which outlines the professional responsibilities of veterinary surgeons: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>

AVS Procedure

6. Where a member of AVS staff, or anyone else, is made aware of concerns relating to a student's fitness to practise, the matter will be formally discussed with the Head of School, or delegated nominee, who will decide on one of the following options:
 - i. No further action to be taken
 - ii. A meeting to be held with the student and a programme of remedial action implemented
 - iii. The matter to be referred to the AU Registry for potential investigation under its Fitness to Practise policy.
7. The Head of School or delegated nominee will keep a record of the incident, including any material provided by the staff member, notes of any meetings and reasons for the decision reached of further action, if any.
8. The Head of School or delegated nominee may consult with personnel from the AU Registry, Faculty staff, Royal Veterinary College (RVC) or anyone else that might assist in reaching a decision and/or progressing the matter.
9. If a meeting is to be held between the student and Head of School or delegated nominee, the student will be informed in writing and invited to attend. The student will also be invited to bring a fellow-student or student representative.
10. If the matter is to be referred for investigation by the AU Registry, the student will be informed of the matter either by the Head of School or a relevant AU staff member involved in Fitness to Practise administration. The composition of the Fitness to Practise panel has the option to include an external professional specialist, for BVSc students, this would be a veterinary surgeon familiar with the RCVS policy on Fitness to Practise. If the incident is sufficiently serious, the RVC may also be invited to nominate a representative to attend.
11. When BVSc students transfer to the RVC in their third year, they will be subject to the policies and procedures implemented by the RVC. However, this might include referral

back to the AVS or AU Academic Registry for consultation or disclosure of previous incidents while the student was at AU.

February 2021

Prifysgol Aberystwyth University



Fitness to Practise Policy and
Procedure for Healthcare Education
Professional Programmes Handbook

Approved by Academic Board

June 2021

Aims and principles for Fitness to Practise for nursing and midwifery students

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Quality Handbook, section 16 'Fitness to Practise', published at: [Aberystwyth University - Academic Registry: 16. Fitness to Practise](#)

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) clearly defines their overarching objective as an organisation, as the protection of the public. It's central to everything they do.

Article 3(4) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 states: 'The over-arching objective of the Council in exercising its functions is the protection of the public.' Article 3(4A) states: 'The pursuit by the Council of its over-arching objective involves the pursuit of the following objectives—

- protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public
- promote and maintain public confidence in the nursing and midwifery professions
- promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of the nursing and midwifery professions.

In short two key factors apply:

- ensuring patient safety to encourage fairness, openness and learning
- enabling professionalism: supporting nursing and midwifery students to address concerns about their practise, so that members of the public can continue to have confidence in the University to promote and uphold high standards.

Our aims for Fitness to Practise

As an AEI (NMC Accredited Education Institution) the University has two clear aims for Fitness to Practise:

- A professional culture that values equality, diversity and inclusion, and prioritises openness and learning in the interests of patient safety
- Student nurses and midwives who are fit to practise safely and professionally.

The NMC have designed a set of principles to help guide universities in delivering these aims:

NMC principles for Fitness to Practise

The Department will follow the NMC principles to make sure it is consistent and transparent in the way it works with students and in the way it makes decisions about student nurses' Fitness to Practise.

Read about each principle below and how the University applies these (see <https://www.nmc.org.uk/ftp-library/understanding-fitness-to-practise/using-fitness-to-practise/>), Note that 'we' is used throughout the MNC principles as stated below; 'we' in this context relates to Aberystwyth University.

1. A person-centred approach to Fitness to Practise.

A person-centred approach helps to put patients, families and the public at the heart of what is being done.

It involves listening to what patients, their families and loved ones say about their experiences so that the University can understand what the regulatory concerns about student nurses and midwives might be and are better placed to act on those concerns. Sometimes, they provide vital information that shows the University needs to scrutinise the conclusions others have reached.

The university wants patients and members of the public to feel supported and listened to in its Fitness to Practise proceedings. Putting patients, families and the public at the centre helps to make sure it is in the best place to protect the public.

2. Fitness to Practise is about managing the risk that a student nurse or midwife poses to patients or members of the public in the future. It isn't about punishing people for past events.

If professional programme students see the University as being punitive, those students are more likely to hide things going wrong or act defensively. This will make it difficult to achieve the kind of open and learning culture that's most likely to keep patients and members of the public safe.

If the university is seen by the people affected by unsafe care, as being there to discipline the student nurses and midwives involved, those people may be distressed if it does not take action against student nurses and midwives who are no longer a risk.

3. The university can best protect patients and members of the public by making Fitness to Practise decisions swiftly and disseminate learning effectively

Transparency is crucial to an effective Fitness to Practise process. All the people involved in a case, including students, patients, members of the public, and nurses and midwives, expect Fitness to Practise processes to be efficient and joined up.

They need to understand clearly and as quickly as possible what has been done about the concerns, and the reasons for the decisions taken. Those reasons may help others in similar situations make decisions that will help keep patients and members of the public safe.

4. The University will act first to deal with concerns about a student nurse or midwife's practice, unless the risk to patients or the public is so serious that it needs to take immediate action and include other agencies in the response.

Universities are closer to the sources of risk to patients and members of the public, and better able to recognise and manage them. If they need to, they can intervene directly and quickly in a student nurse or midwife's practice and do so in a targeted way dealing specifically with the risks.

The university will involve other agencies early on if the student nurse or midwife poses a risk of harm to themselves, university staff, patients or the wider public that it can't manage effectively.

Aberystwyth University's overarching Fitness to Practise procedures are set out in the Academic Quality Handbook section 16: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/fitness-to-practise/> and the processes followed are set out in full in this document.

The University maintains the right to suspend the student nurse or midwife from the programme of study pending further investigation and following the 'Fitness to Practise' process can result in a student being suspended and/or withdrawn from the programme. To

allow for timely investigation and action the student will normally be placed on 'study leave' until the result of the investigation and a panel decision have been reached.

The University wants to support student nurses and midwives in positively engaging with the process and help them to show they have learned from mistakes because this will help with developing their professional duty of candour and help promote, rather than discourage, the kind of professional culture that's been shown to keep people safe

The duty of candour requires student nurses and midwives to be open and honest when things go wrong. It stops them from trying to prevent colleagues or former colleagues from raising concerns.

5. In cases that aren't about clinical practise, taking action to maintain public confidence or uphold standards is only likely to be needed if the concerns raise fundamental questions about the trustworthiness of a student nurse or midwife as a professional.

The University knows that the public take concerns which affect the trustworthiness of nurses and midwives particularly seriously. These cases are likely seen by the public as serious breaches of professional standards. Conduct that could affect trust in student nurses and midwives and require action to uphold standards or public confidence include, professional behaviour and attitude, professional practice, dishonesty, bullying and harassment. Within a student nurse or midwife's private life, convictions that relate to specified offences or result in custodial sentences are also likely to require action for the same reason.

Conduct that calls into question the basics of a student's behaviour and professionalism raises concerns about whether they are a suitable person to join a register of professionals.

Areas normally (but not exclusively) covered in Fitness to Practise:

Misconduct

Misconduct in either academic and practice context, we will usually only need to take action if it's clear that the student nurse or midwife deliberately chose to take an unreasonable risk with the safety of themselves, others, patients or service users in their care.

Examples:

- breaching the professional duty of candour to be open and honest when things go wrong, including covering up, falsifying records, obstructing, victimising or hindering a colleague or member of staff or patient who wants to raise a concern, encouraging others not to tell the truth, or otherwise contributing to a culture which suppresses openness about the safety of care
- sexual assault, relationships with patients in breach of guidance on clear sexual boundaries, and accessing, viewing, or other involvement in child pornography
- deliberately causing harm to others including patients
- deliberately using false information or qualifications or giving a false picture of employment history which hides significant incidents in the past
- exploiting patients or abusing the position of a student nurse or midwife for financial or personal gain
- being directly responsible for exposing patients or service users to harm or neglect, especially where the evidence shows the student nurse or midwife putting their own priorities, or those of the organisation they work for, before their professional duty to ensure patient safety and dignity

Lack of competence

Substandard clinical care that calls into question a student nurse or midwife's competence would usually involve an unacceptably low standard of professional performance, judged on a fair sample of the nurse or midwife's work, which could put patients at risk. For instance, when a student nurse or midwife demonstrates a lack of knowledge, skill or judgement showing they are incapable of safe and effective practise.

Criminal convictions and cautions

Considering criminal conviction or caution declarations

All student nurses or midwives must declare any cautions or convictions, unless these are for a protected caution or conviction, when they apply to join the programme, and to ensure they are eligible to join the NMC register or renew their registration.

All registered nurses also need to let the NMC know if they become involved in criminal offending while they're on our register. Student nurses will be expected to annually declare

any cautions or convictions. Not telling the University about a conviction or caution is a clear breach of the Code and could have serious consequences. This is because the university has a clear expectation, as set out under the Code, that student nurses and midwives should let it know if they are involved in criminal offending as soon as they can.

If there's evidence the student nurse or midwife was dishonest about criminal offending when they applied to join the programme, the university will have to carry out a full investigation into the circumstances to determine if this affects their continuation on the programme leading to registration.

In all these cases the university will consider the possible effect on the student nurse or midwife's continuation on the programme, or their Fitness to Practise, even if the offending itself was not serious.

Specified offences include:

- hate crimes
- sexual offences
- offending previously known as 'serious arrestable offences'

Health

The University will not normally need to intervene in a student nurse or midwife's practise due to ill health unless there is a risk of harm to patients or a related risk to public confidence in the profession. A student nurse or midwife may have a disability or long-term health condition but be able to practise with or without adjustments to support their practise.

Cases of ill-health are likely to be managed with support to safely reduce any risk to patients, and where:

- the student nurse or midwife has demonstrated good insight into the extent and effect of their condition
- the student nurse or midwife is taking appropriate steps to access support and/or treatment and is following any advice from those treating them
- occupational health or other health professional is providing support

- the student nurse or midwife is managing his or her practise appropriately

Issues raised which indicate long-term, untreated (or unsuccessfully treated), or unacknowledged physical or mental health conditions will be of particular concern if they suggest a risk to public protection. Even where a health condition appears to be well managed, the student nurse or midwife may be at risk of relapse, which could affect their ability to practise safely. In such cases some form of restriction or adjustment may be required to make sure there is no risk of harm to patients or others.

When the University assesses whether concern about a nurse or midwife's health is serious enough to become impact their practise, it will consider the nature of the concern and whether there is sufficient evidence to justify seeking further information from third parties, such as the nurse or midwife's GP or occupational health department. The University will balance the student nurse or midwife's right to privacy with its overarching duty as an AEI to help protect the public.

Knowledge of English and patient risk

When there are seriousness of concerns about whether an applicant is suitable to be enrolled onto a programme of study which leads to registration as a nurse or midwife the university will first assess if the applicant has the necessary knowledge of English, the first question will be whether patients are placed at potential or actual risk of harm.

Examples of language concerns that could place the public at risk of harm include:

- poor handover of essential information about patient treatment or care to other health professionals because of an inability to speak English
- serious record keeping errors or patterns of poor record keeping because of an inability to write English
- serious failure(s) to give appropriate care to patients because of an inability to understand verbal or written communications from other health professionals (or patients themselves).
- drug error(s) caused by a failure to understand or inability to read prescriptions.

Applicants for the BSc Nursing programme at Aberystwyth University require a minimum of 104/96 UCAS points, via:

- 3 A Levels BCC/CCC
- BTEC Extended Diploma
- BTEC Diploma
- Access to HE Diploma (guaranteed an interview)

Plus, NMC requirements of:

- GCSE (or equivalent) English and Mathematics Grade C/4 or above.
- Good Health and Good Character assessment.
- Enhanced DBS
- Occupational Health Screen
- International applicants: IELTS with an overall score of at least 7 and at least 6.5 in the writing section and at least 7 in the reading, listening and speaking sections are accepted. They also accept OET certificate minimum of C+ in writing alongside a minimum of B in reading, listening and speaking.

Process and procedures

The process for managing Fitness to Practise issues raised is known as our **“Cause for Concern”** procedure. This sits alongside the normal practice assessment, feedback and ongoing record of achievement processes as set out in the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018) Future nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses. All Wales Practice Assessment Document and Ongoing Record of Achievement.

These processes are not mutually exclusive and may inform decisions and any actions in relation to student progress on the programme.

'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCEDURE

This 'cause for concern' procedure is a guidance process for placement staff, university staff and students/trainees, to be applied where there is concern for a student/trainee's ability to succeed appropriately on the programme.

A 'cause for concern' is intended to be a developmental and supportive process. A cause for concern will be issued when:

- a student/trainee does not make the expected progress;
- a student/trainee struggles professionally or due to personal circumstances to meet expected standards
- a student/trainee fails to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct

A cause for concern will review the evidence, outline the concern and set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in increased agreed placement and university-based support and monitoring.

Specifically, a cause for concern:

- can be raised at any stage of the programme;
- will usually relate to specific aspects of the student/trainee's conduct and be characterised by a lack of expected progress

Targets

- Targets for improvement must be explicitly linked to areas of concern in the student/trainee's conduct and engagement.
- Targets will require agreed actions for both the student/trainee and all those supporting and supervising him/her
- The setting and revision of targets must be based on the review of the full range of evidence; there must be clear alignment between the identified issues, the assessment made and the targets set.

A suggested typical cause for concern escalation process for professional concerns is shown below. The cause for concern procedure should include a statement of concern, targets for improvement and related training and actions.

A TYPICAL BUT NOT EXCLUSIVE 'CAUSE FOR CONCERN' PROCESS (NURSING)

STEP 1 – ACADEMIC/PRACTICE MINOR CONCERN

- At the earliest opportunity joint review cause for concern meeting with Programme Lead, Practice Learning Partner (PLPs) nominated person (if appropriate), university tutor and/or academic assessor to take place and discuss the concerns with the student/trainee in a professionally appropriate manner. The student/trainee shall have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow student or representative from the Students' Union or Trade Union, where relevant.
 - Review issue raised, student progress and any response/mitigation, using the full range of evidence.
 - Agree targets (if appropriate) which are focused explicitly on areas of improvement with agreed actions, timelines/ expectations and explicit success criteria.
- The student/trainee should be informed they are a 'Cause for concern' and that the issues must be addressed, failure to do so could result in escalation and a Fitness to Practise concern being raised.
- If a sufficient response and plan of action and/or progress has been agreed by the student/trainee, normal programme and placement routine can continue. The student must confirm they agree to take ownership of their progress.
- If insufficient response and plan of action and/or progress has been made or significant concern raised which potentially could compromise student and/or patient safety, proceed to STEP 3
- The meeting must be recorded and any continuing concerns, targets and actions for the student/trainee must be shared appropriately with Programme Lead, PLPs nominated person (if appropriate), university tutor and/or academic assessor. A

detailed plan for monitoring and reporting progress and measurable success criteria must be included.

STEP 2 ACADEMIC /PRACTICE PLACEMENT SIGNIFICANT CONCERN

A significant academic/practice placement concern is defined as any issue raised which actually or potentially could compromise staff, student, public or service user safety

- Within 5 working days a joint cause for concern review meeting with Principal Lead, Programme Lead, Practice Learning Partner (PLPs) nominated person (if appropriate), university tutor and/or academic assessor to take place and discuss the concerns raised with the student/trainee in a professionally appropriate manner. The student/trainee shall have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow student or representative from the Students' Union or Trade Union, where relevant.
- Where staff, student, public and/or patient safety has been actually or potentially compromised, escalation to appropriate internal and external agencies may be appropriate. The student will be informed, and a plan of action and support agreed.
- The student will be suspended immediately and placed on 'study leave' until a full investigation has been conducted, a conclusion reached, and a plan of action agreed.
- The meeting must be recorded and any feedback, continuing concerns, targets and actions regarding the student/trainee must be shared appropriately with student, Programme Lead, PLPs nominated person, university tutor and/or academic assessor. A detailed action plan must be included and action points with responsible person listed. Details of any external agencies involved, with contact details must also be recorded.
- Student/Trainee to be informed of their rights regarding complaint/appeal options.
- Students will be informed about the expected timeline for any ongoing investigation and likely referral to Fitness to Practise Advisory Panel
- Principal lead to inform Head of Faculty and/or academic quality and refer the case to the Academic Registry under the formal university Fitness to Practise process; the

Academic Registry would then communicate with the student through the panel secretary.

STEP 3 – REFERRAL TO ‘FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL’

Fitness to Practise

Student/Trainee behaviours and attitude in the matters identified in the Nursing and Midwifery (NMC) ‘Code’ Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>

The Code presents the professional standards that nurses, midwives and nursing associates must uphold in order to be registered to practise in the UK. It is structured around four themes –

- prioritise people,
- practise effectively,
- preserve safety and
- promote professionalism and trust.

Developed in collaboration with many who care about good nursing and midwifery, the Code can be used by nurses, midwives and nursing associates as a way of reinforcing their professionalism.

The Code should be useful for everyone who cares about good nursing and midwifery.

- Patients and service users, and those who care for them, can use it to provide feedback to nurses, midwives and nursing associates about the care they receive.
- Those on our register can use it to promote safe and effective practise in their place of work.

- Employer organisations should support their staff in upholding the standards in their professional Code as part of providing the quality and safety expected by service users and regulators.
- Educators can use the Code to help students understand what it means to be a registered professional and how keeping to the Code helps to achieve that.

The Code of Professional Conduct identified above may sometimes raise questions regarding the student/trainee's Fitness to Practise.

The intention of the programme team and wider university is to support and ensure the development of the student/trainee, the supportive process is identified above in the 'Cause for Concern' procedure Stage 1 and 2. In exceptional cases, the professional fitness of the student/trainee needs to be formally considered, prior to any action being taken.

If there are concerns regarding the student/trainee's professional 'Fitness to Practise', then the Principal lead or Programme Director will refer to 'Fitness to Practise'. The student will be informed in writing that they have been referred and the Fitness to Practise Advisory Panel will be convened.

For further information please contact: nrstaff@aber.ac.uk

This guidance will help nursing students, staff, service users and stakeholders understand the basis of our thoughts, decisions and actions. It needs to be read in conjunction with all other student information and Aberystwyth University policies.

Aberystwyth University and its Practice Learning Partners remain committed to ensuring both student and service user safety.

This guidance has been developed from the NMC website <https://www.nmc.org.uk/ftp-library/understanding-fitness-to-practise/using-fitness-to-practise/> (Last Updated 26/11/2018)

Approved Academic Board June 2021

(Nursing - Aims and principles for fitness to practise FINAL June21.docx)

Introduction

1. Veterinary nursing students represent the future of the veterinary nursing profession and as such, are expected to conduct their studies according to the standards expected of the profession. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) sets and monitors these standards and publishes appropriate guidelines. In addition, it stipulates the procedures to be followed where individuals fall short of expectations. Veterinary nursing students are also subject to the guidelines and procedures set by Aberystwyth University during the duration of the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme.
2. There are four major, complementary standards set by the RCVS to which veterinary nursing students must conform, namely the 'Day One Competences', the 'Day One Skills', the 'Professional Behaviours and Attributes' and 'Fitness to Practise'. The first three relate to the knowledge, skills and attributes that students must demonstrate on graduation. The RCVS defines competence as 'the ability to perform the roles and tasks required by one's job to the expected standard'. Fitness to Practise refers to the manner in which students demonstrate that they can practise their profession properly, in both their professional and private lives.
3. Aberystwyth University (AU) also has a Fitness to Practise policy, which has a protocol applying to all relevant courses as well as programme-specific procedures. This document outlines the procedures specific to the FdSc Veterinary Nursing programme, which is aligned to the three RCVS standards and the AU policy.

Guiding Documents

4. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the following documents, which will be used by the AVS in implementing Fitness to Practise policies.
 - i. RCVS:
 - [Day One Competences](#)
 - [Day One Skills](#)

- [Professional Behaviours and Attributes](#)
 - [Fitness to Practise](#)
- ii. AU:
- [Aberystwyth University Fitness to Practise](#)
5. [The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#) outlines the ‘professional responsibilities of veterinary nurses, who are expected to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to their care and to fulfil their professional responsibilities, by maintaining five principles of practice’:
1. Professional competence
 2. Honesty and integrity
 3. Independence and impartiality
 4. Client confidentiality and trust
 5. Professional accountability

AVS Procedure

6. There is no complete list of behaviours that may result in a concern regarding a student’s fitness to practise, however the policy may be implemented in any of the following cases:
- i. Where an animal is deemed to be at risk
 - ii. Where the health and safety of the student, colleagues or the public were deemed to be at risk
 - iii. Where the behaviour of the student (in education or in private life) is deemed to bring the profession into disrepute
 - iv. A serious or repeated concern about the student’s ability to practise after graduation
7. Where a member of AVS staff, or anyone else, is made aware of concerns relating to a student’s fitness to practise, the matter will be formally discussed with the Head of School, or delegated nominee, who will decide on one of the following options:
- i. No further action to be taken

- ii. A meeting to be held with the student and a programme of remedial action implemented
 - iii. The matter to be referred to the AU Registry for potential investigation under its Fitness to Practise policy.
- 8. The Head of School or delegated nominee will keep a record of the incident, including any material provided by the staff member, notes of any meetings and reasons for the decision reached of further action, if any.
- 9. The Head of School or delegated nominee may consult with the personnel from the AU Registry, Faculty staff, training practice staff or anyone else that might assist in reaching a decision and/or progressing the matter.
- 10. If a meeting is to be held between the student and the Head of School or delegated nominee, the student will be informed in writing and invited to attend. The student will also be invited to bring a fellow student or student representative.
- 11. If the matter is to be referred for investigation by the AU Registry, the student will be informed of the matter either by the Head of School or relevant AU staff member involved in Fitness to Practise administration. The composition of the Fitness to Practise panel has the option to include an external professional specialist, for FdSc Veterinary Nursing students, this would be a registered veterinary nurse (RVN) or veterinary surgeons (MRCVS UK practising) familiar with the RCVS policy on Fitness to Practise.
- 12. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the RCVS veterinary nursing department will be notified.