



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

Fitness to Practise Policy Document

1. Introduction

A student's fitness to practise is called into question when their conduct, behaviour or health raises serious or persistent concerns regarding their suitability to continue on a programme of study which leads to registration with a professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB).

2. The Scope, Purpose and Principles of this Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to make explicit the Department of Social Policy and Social Work's intentions, expectations and actions with respect to assuring social work applicants' and students' fitness to practise.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all applicants and students during their programme of study and where relevant, up to and including the point of confirming eligibility to register with the professional, statutory and regulatory body for social work.
- 2.4 Those applying this policy must ensure that proceedings take into account the need to:
 - Protect people who use social work services, carers and the public
 - Declare and uphold appropriate standards of professional and personal conduct and behaviour
 - Maintain public confidence in students of social work
 - Maintain confidence in the ability of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work to appropriately deal with fitness to practise issues of students on social work programmes leading to registration with their professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB)
- 2.5 Those applying this policy will ensure that matters are handled sensitively and efficiently within reasonable time periods (where possible) and ensure that outcomes are achieved and communicated clearly at all stages of the fitness to practise proceedings. In exceptional circumstances timescales may be extended to ensure that the process is fair.
- 2.6 Students must be given a full opportunity to explain, respond or defend themselves. Students must be given the opportunity to seek appropriate Independent advice from YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA

(University of York Graduate Students Association). In exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement, students may be accompanied by another member of paid staff of the university.

- 2.7 Advice, if required, may be sought from other members of staff within the University of York and from relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) at any stage of the proceedings.
- 2.8 Matters relating to these proceedings should be treated as confidential to the parties concerned, but the University of York reserves the right, and in some cases has a legal duty, to inform professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and/or organisations (the Police, Home Office, Social Services, UCAS etc.). It may also be necessary at a later stage of the process to refer the case to the University of York's Special Cases Committee and share details of the case and investigation with them.
- 2.9 On completion of the proceedings copies of all correspondence will be placed in the Fitness to Practise folder of the student file.
- 2.10 The standard of proof applied to the factual stage of the proceedings is based 'upon the balance of probabilities'.
- 2.11 Failure to meet the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) domains or to progress with an action plan are practice issues, and do not need to be dealt with under FtP procedures. However, some concerns may be common to both the PCF and FtP. Where this is the case, the Practice Educator for the placement should produce a placement report as normal, recommending a 'fail' and highlighting any events or actions that the Practice Educator considers FtP. This report will be used to inform the FtP process.

3. Principles relating to the Professional Behaviour of Students

- 3.1 A degree in Social Work is the professional qualification for social workers in all settings in the voluntary, statutory and private sectors. Social workers practise in complex and diverse situations, and the majority of people to whom they provide services are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. In view of this, social work students are required to demonstrate not only academic and practice ability, but also personal suitability for and commitment to social work at the point of admission to and throughout their degree. Students must be aware that their behaviour outside the practice placement environment, including in their personal lives, may have an impact on their fitness to practise. Their behaviour at all times must justify the trust that people who use social work services, carers and the public place in their profession.
- 3.2 Students must comply with the University of York Ordinances and Regulations relating to the professional behaviour expected of students in

order to demonstrate that they are fit to practise. These principles are broadly grouped into:

- Relationships with people who use social work services and Carers
- Probity – Honesty, Trustworthiness and Acting with Integrity
- Maintaining Good & Effective Practice
- Working with Colleagues
- Health

- 3.3 Students are also required to behave in accordance with the rules, regulations, policies, procedures and codes of conduct of the professional, statutory and regulatory body for social work. The current relevant PSRB (Feb 2020) is Social Work England (SWE); documentation outlining their rules, regulations, policies, procedures and codes of conduct can be found on their website <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/> and information specifically for students is at <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/education-training/information-for-students-and-graduates/>.
- 3.4 Applicants and students are required to disclose any criminal convictions (including spent convictions under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) and inclusion on the Disclosure & Barring Service 'barred lists' prior to admission to the University of York and whilst the student remains registered on their programme of study.
- 3.5 SWE note that concerns may be raised under one of the following categories:
- Misconduct
 - lack of competence or capability
 - conviction or caution in the UK for a criminal offence
 - conviction elsewhere which would be a criminal offence if committed in England or Wales
 - physical or mental health that stops the social worker from practising safely
 - a decision by another regulator that the social worker is not fit to practise
 - being included on the barred list of the Disclosure and Barring Service or the equivalent lists in Northern Ireland or Scotland
 - not having the necessary knowledge of English to practise safely.

For more information about SWE Fitness to Practise guidance, please review this website: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/1537/guidance-on-the-application-of-social-workers-regulations-and-social-work-england-fitness-to-practise-rules-final.pdf>

4. Principles relating to Student Health & Disability

- 4.1 Students should understand that their physical or mental health may be a relevant reason for them to be deemed unfit to practise, notwithstanding the

requirements of the Equality Act 2010. As a consequence they may not be able to complete their programme of study for which they are enrolled.

- 4.2 Students must be fit to practise social work. The safety of people who use social work services and/or carers will always be the prime consideration. It is recognised that most students who have a disability or health condition will register successfully. However, for a minority, a disability-related issue or a health condition may make it impossible to meet the outcomes required by their programme of study. In a circumstance where a student cannot demonstrate the necessary level of competence, and if all reasonable avenues open to the student and the University of York have been explored and a way forward cannot be mutually agreed, it would be appropriate to consider fitness to practise proceedings in full discussion with their Personal Supervisor and University of York Occupational Health Service.
- 4.3 Applicants are required to inform the University of York prior to admission about any pre-existing conditions for which reasonable adjustments within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 may need to be made to programme arrangements (see Appendix 1b).
- 4.4 Students are required to inform their Personal Supervisor of any changes in their physical and/or mental health which could affect their fitness to practise

5. The Composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee

Normally the minimum composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee will be:

- The Chair and/or Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practice Committee
- At least one and no more than two other social work qualified members of academic staff from the Social Policy & Social Work Board of Studies
- At least one and no more than two qualified social workers from a practice partner organisation

6. Assessing Fitness to Practise during Admission and Enrolment

- 6.1 To meet its obligations regarding fitness to practise the Department of Social Policy and Social Work is required to make an assessment based on the limited information available at the point of admission to the programme. The Department of Social Policy and Social Work may refuse application to individuals they believe are not fit to undertake a programme of study leading to registration with the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB).
- 6.2 Both the application process through UCAS and the University of York, Department of Social Policy and Social Work programme application forms

include a requirement to declare criminal convictions and cautions. This is summarised in Appendix 2a. Applicants declaring a criminal conviction or caution will be contacted and asked to supply the Admissions Tutor with more detailed information (see Appendix 2b). The Admissions Tutor will anonymise this information before distributing it to the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practice Committee.

- 6.3 All students on programmes leading to a registration with the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) are required to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the point of enrolment. If a conviction or caution (or other information) is returned on this DBS check which had not previously been declared by the student/applicant on application or self-declaration or was not accurately described, the student/applicant will be referred through to the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise committee.
- 6.4 Where a concern has been raised in relation to criminal convictions or cautions during admission and enrolment, the Chair and / or Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practice Committee will make an initial decision about the severity of the concern. If the concern is too serious to admit the applicant to the programme, an offer will not be made. If the concern is such that the application may progress to an offer, they will consult the FtP committee for a decision on whether an applicant is suitable to commence on the programme.
- 6.5 Where the FtP committee are consulted on a decision, the applicant information will be circulated in advance and the meeting may be undertaken by email or face-to-face (virtually or in person) depending on the complexity of the case being discussed. Academic representatives will consider the individuals suitability for the programme as a whole, while practice partner representatives will clarify whether their organisation would be prepared to offer a practice placement to the student. If the FtP committee decides that the candidate is not suitable for the programme, or practice partner representative/s state that they would not offer a placement, the applicant will not be offered a place on the course. Applicants who receive an offer to study on the course will receive the decision through UCAS in the normal manner. Those who are not offered a place will be informed of the reason for this decision by the Social Work Admissions Tutors. See Appendix 2c for the record of the decision.
- 6.6 Applicants declaring a disability and/or health condition at the application stage may also be required to undergo further more in-depth assessment. This is likely to involve the University of York Occupational Health Service. The Occupational Health recommendation will be shared with University's Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) team to inform decision-making and with the Department of Social Policy and Social Work Admissions Tutors.

7. The Fitness to Practise process for managing concerns raised about students

7.1 Receiving Information, Initial Consideration of a Case and Informal Stage

Information raising/detailing concerns regarding a student's fitness to practise may come from a variety of different sources including members of the general public, other students, practice placement staff, family members/friends, University teaching and support staff, the Independent Practice Panel (IPP – see Appendix 6) or from the student themselves (see Appendix 3).

7.2 Information raising/detailing concerns regarding a student's fitness to practise must be supported by written or other evidence detailing the alleged issue/concern. Anonymous reports will not normally be considered, although the Fitness to Practise Committee may at their discretion withhold from the student the identity of the complainant.

7.3 After receiving the initial written information and associated evidence, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee will meet to discuss the most appropriate way forward. The needs of the student, their stage of programme, the nature of the alleged issue/concern and the implications for public protection are carefully considered. An assessment based on the evidence presented will be made about whether to bring this to the student's attention if not already known. The Chair and Deputy Chair may consult with the Head of Department, Chair of Board of Studies, relevant Programme Leaders and /or other Support Services within the University regarding the plan for progression. This is to establish as far as practicably possible that the evidence provided is not of a vexatious nature.

In certain circumstances no further action may be indicated at this stage.

Usually, the student is, at the earliest opportunity, notified of the Fitness to Practise concern. A staged approach to dealing with concerns is adopted. The stages are:

- **Informal Stage** (Stage One)
- **Investigation/Assessment Stage** (Stage Two)
- **Formal Stage** (Stage Three)

Students will be contacted (via their University email account) and given information about the process that clearly indicates the stage of the concern. At each of the three stages students have the right to bring a representative from YUSU/GSA with them to any meetings; the Department highly values the independent advice and support YUSU/GSA representatives can play in providing independent support to students and all students referred to the Fitness to Practice Committee are strongly encouraged to seek support from

YUSU/GSA. Throughout the process, students will also be encouraged to access advice from their personal supervisor in relation to academic progression and pastoral support, and from University services in relation to both pastoral and practical support.

7.4 Suspension from Practice

At any point during the three stages above, the Placement Providers and the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise Committee reserve the right to remove a student from a practice without notice if their ability to engage in the provision of safe and effective practise is compromised. The authority for suspension will rest with the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise Committee (see Appendices 4a and 4b).

7.4.1 Notification giving the reasons for suspension must be fully explained to the student as soon as the decision to suspend is made.

7.4.2 The public interest is more important than the student's interests when considering concerns/issues relating to safe and effective practice.

7.4.3 Students will not normally be suspended from engaging with University based learning due to fitness to practise issues/concerns unless the seriousness of the situation warrants this.

7.5 Stage One (Informal stage)

Typically students will enter the process at the Informal Stage as this enables the student to seek advice and support in accordance with University regulations. Students attend an Informal Meeting with the Chair or Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise Committee to explain their account of events and demonstrate their response to the concerns raised. This offers an opportunity for the student to inform the Fitness to Practise Committee of any relevant issues or mitigating circumstances that have not previously been raised.

The outcome of the Informal Stage may be:

- No further action
- Recommendation to seek support & guidance from their personal supervisor and/or the Chair/Deputy Chair may suggest further action for the supervisor to undertake with the student
- The student progresses to the Investigation/Assessment (Stage 2) of the process.
- Students who have been suspended from Practice by the Placement Provider will continue to follow the 'Suspension from Practice by the Placement Provider' process (Appendix 4a).
- Following the informal, stage one, meeting the Fitness to Practise Committee will write to the student clearly indicating the outcome.

8. 8. Stage 2 Investigation /Assessment Stage

8.1 Health and Well -being

If more information is needed regarding the health & well-being of a student, the Chair/Deputy Chair will utilize the Occupational Health Referral Policy (See Appendix 1 and *FtP Process Summary Flow Chart* below)

8.2 Conduct and/or Behaviour

If the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise Committee decides that more information is needed regarding a conduct & behaviour concern, or following failed mediation as part of the suspension from practice an investigation will be undertaken. An investigating officer will be appointed from within the membership of the Fitness to Practise Committee. This will be a member of academic staff who has not been involved to date with the case and does not have a significant relationship with the student (i.e. not their Personal Supervisor or current University Liaison) (see Appendices 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d).

The quality of the investigation is crucial in achieving the outcome of quality fitness to practise decisions. The purpose of the fitness to practise investigation is to:

- Identify the exact nature of the concern(s)/issue(s)
- Identify, collate and analyse all relevant information exploring the concern(s)/issue(s)
- Identify whether the information identified points to a potential risk to public safety, breach of professional standards or impact on the reputation of the profession relating to the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB).

8.3 The investigation should be carried out in a timely manner remembering where possible to minimise disruption to the student's programme of study. This may not be always possible if statements from external individual(s) or medical or other assessments are required.

8.4 The student must be informed of the expected timescale where reasonably possible.

8.5 The investigating officer will report to the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise Committee outlining the following:

- The key concerns (both identified originally and those that have emerged as part of the investigation process)
- If the concern(s)/issue(s) relate to public safety or to professional standards

- How the concern(s)/issue(s) relate to the relevant code of the professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRBs) regarding conduct/expectations relating to professional behaviour.
- 8.6 The Investigating Officer will not make a conclusion as to whether or not a student's fitness to practise is impaired.
 - 8.7 Reasonable discretion should be used by the Investigating Officer to filter out unsubstantiated vexatious or frivolous information during the Investigation stage.
 - 8.8 The Investigation report along with all of the supporting evidence will be reviewed fully by the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise in consultation with two members of the Fitness to Practise Committee to determine the appropriate action. If the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise in consultation with two members of the Fitness to Practise Committee find that the student's fitness to practise is likely to be impaired then they progress the case to Stage 3, the Formal Stage, and will convene a full Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing.
 - 8.9 If the Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise in consultation with two members of the Fitness to Practise Committee find that the case does not meet the threshold for progression to the Formal Stage (Stage 3) they will make a decision as to the most appropriate course of action. Possible actions are to: (i) take no further action; (ii) student attends a meeting with the Chair/Deputy Chair and personal supervisor where guidance is given regarding conduct & behaviour; (iii) if following a suspension from placement, then the Suspension from Placement process continues to be followed (Appendices 4a and 4b); (iv) a referral to the University's Occupational Health service for assessment.
 - 8.10 The Chair/Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise will write to the student to summarise the outcome at Stage 2 of the process.

9. Formal Stage (Stage 3) The Role and Composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing

- 9.1 The Role and Composition of the hearing is to consider the evidence received by the Investigating Officer. The Hearing will determine whether a student's fitness to practise is impaired and, if so, which sanction(s) (if any) should be applied to this case. The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing have the delegated authority from the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) and the wider University of York to make decisions with regards to the case.
- 9.2 The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing has responsibility to question the student to ensure that the concern(s)/issue(s) are explored and examined

satisfactorily. It is the role of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing to ensure that all evidence is looked at in its entirety, especially when the evidence and information is disputed by the student.

- 9.3 A date and time is set for the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing and the members are set by the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee. These will be drawn from the usual committee membership, outlined in 6.
- 9.4 Where a student is on placement with a practice provider and/or is sponsored by that provider, and they appear before the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing, the practice representative(s) will not normally be members of that provider.
- 9.5 When establishing a panel for the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing, a key requirement is for all panel members to be free from any perceived conflict of interest or bias with regard to the student or the case at hand. At the point of invitation, all Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel members will be asked by the Chair/Deputy Chair to declare any prior knowledge of the student or the case.
- 9.6 The Investigating Officer will be invited to the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing to answer any questions relating to the investigation process. The Investigating Officer will not take any part in the decision making process.

10. Preparing for the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing

- 10.1 As soon as a date and time is set for the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing and the members are set, the student should be invited to attend and notified of the following information:
 - A summary of the concerns raised
 - The date, time and venue of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing
 - Their right to seek appropriate representation from a representative of YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association) but not a legal or trade union representative. In exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement, students may be accompanied by another paid member of University staff.
 - The composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel members and the mechanism for challenging its composition based upon potential conflict or bias, with an appropriate deadline for the challenge.
 - Information on submitting a further statement, information, supporting evidence or references with an appropriate deadline for submitting this documentation.
- 10.2 Accompanying the letter should be the following:
 - A copy of the Investigation Report

- Any supporting information gathered as part of the Investigation
 - The Fitness to Practise Policy
 - Fitness to Practise: a guide for students
 - The code of the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB)
- 10.3 Should the student wish to submit further statements, information, supporting evidence or references in advance of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing, they should do so by the deadline given. Where possible the student should also confirm the name and the role of the appropriate representative of YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association).
- 10.4 The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing will only be rearranged in exceptional circumstances as the student is expected to prioritise attendance at the hearing above anything else.
- 10.5 If the student does not attend and is not represented, the hearing may proceed if the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing is satisfied that all reasonable efforts have been made to contact the student.
- 10.6 The members of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing will be sent confidential information packs prior to the hearing which include the date, time and venue of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing with a copy of the Investigative Report plus any supporting information gathered as part of the Investigation.
- 10.7 New evidence may not be presented or tabled without the advance express permission of the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing.

11. The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing

- 11.1 The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel will initially convene in private and hold a preliminary discussion based on the case history. It will identify the key facts of the case and the lines of questioning to be pursued. The Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing will assign panel members to ask specific questions.
- 11.2 The student, their representative from YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association) and Investigating Officer are invited to join the meeting by the Fitness to Practise Chair.
- 11.3 The Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing will formally introduce the panel members and explain how the hearing fits in with the wider context of the Fitness to Practise Policy.

- 11.4 All members present at a Fitness to Practise Hearing should ensure that proceedings are followed in accordance with University, Departmental and Fitness to Practise policy and procedures.
- 11.5 The Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee should ensure that the hearing is conducted in a fair and respectful manner.
- 11.6 Notes of the hearing will be taken by the Secretary to Fitness to Practise Committee. The minutes of the meeting will be agreed by the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee and circulated to panel members in order to check they are an accurate record of the meeting.
- 11.7 The student will be given the opportunity to make a verbal statement should they wish to do so. The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel will then take it in turns to ask the student a series of questions relating to the investigative report and to the nature of the concern(s)/issue(s) raised.
- 11.8 The student will not normally be permitted to submit further documentary evidence, however the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee may use their discretion to allow further documentary evidence where there is good reason to do so.
- 11.9 The student and their representative from YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association) can confer at any time. If they wish to confer in private they may leave the room for a brief period of time to be agreed with the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee.
- 11.10 When the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel have completed their questions the student and their representative from YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association) will be invited to make a closing statement.
- 11.11 The Chair/Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee will then advise the student of the next stage of the process with regards to reaching a consensus of opinion on the outcome of the hearing.
- 11.12 The student, their representative from YUSU (University of York Students Union) or GSA (University of York Graduate Students Association) and Investigating Officer will be asked to leave the hearing.

12. Outcomes and Sanctions

- 12.1 Part of a fair and just hearing is that it gives adequately reasoned and balanced decisions. This is to ensure that all parties involved in the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel fully understand the decision and so that the decision of the panel hearing can be seen to uphold the professional

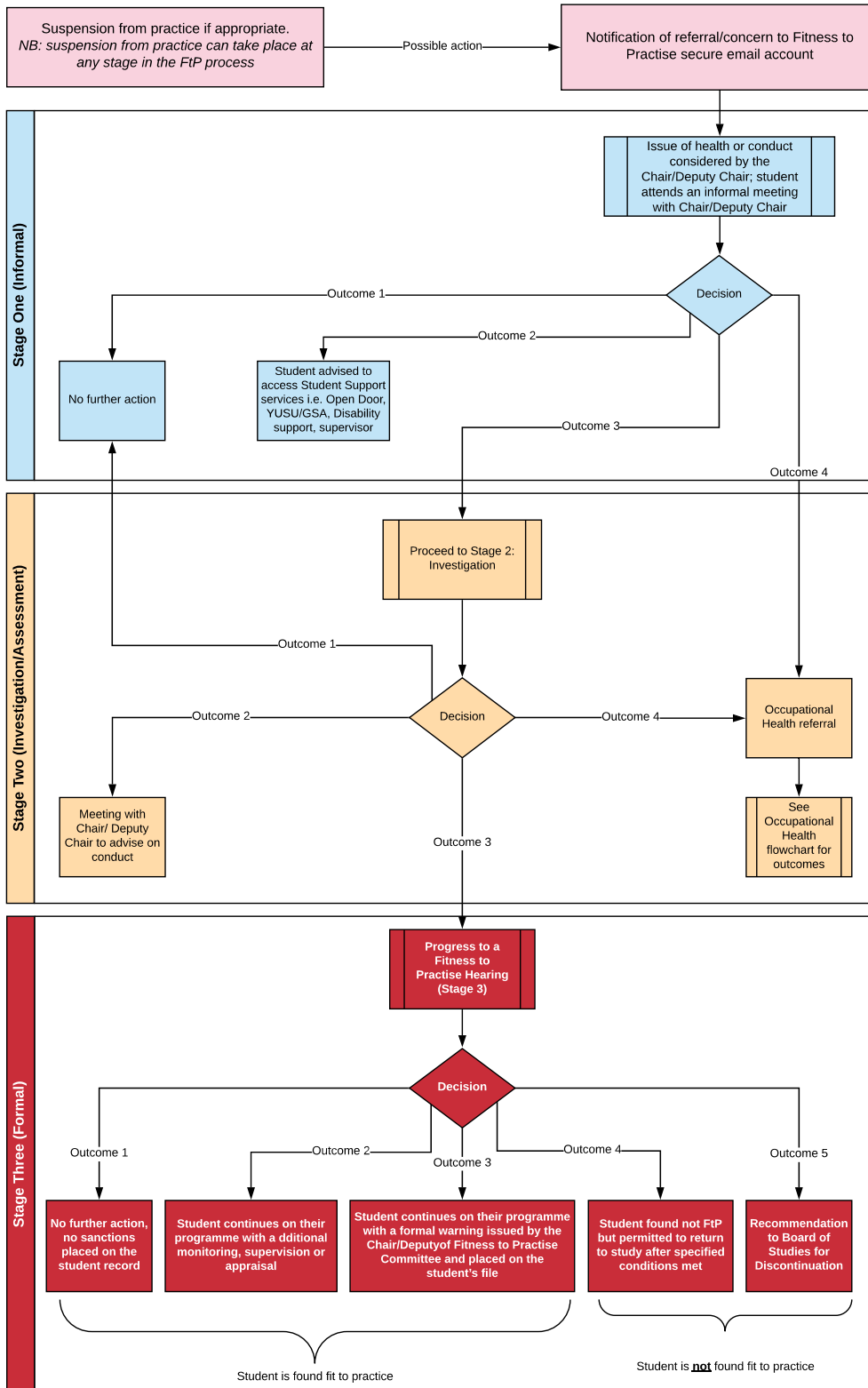
standards and maintain trust and public confidence in the social work profession.

- 12.2 The Fitness to Practise Committee must always keep in mind the balance between public and service user/carer safety, the interests of the student and the overall need to maintain trust and public confidence in the profession of the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRBs).
- 12.3 All decisions reached by the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel will be taken using guidance set by the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) and be consistent with the rules, regulations, and ordinances set by the University of York, Department of Social Policy and Social Work.
- 12.4 Should the student raise significant mitigating circumstances during the Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel then these will generally be taken into consideration when deciding on the most appropriate outcome and sanction.
- 12.5 The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel will generally give 'due regard' to any evidence presented by way of formal mitigation. The purpose of any formal outcome(s) and/or sanction(s) is to protect public and service user/carer safety rather than to act as a punishment for the student.
- 12.6 The standard of proof shall be based on the balance of probabilities, therefore whether the facts are more likely than not to be true.
- 12.7 The Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing panel will need to make an overall decision and conclude one of the following:
- 12.8 That the student **is fit** to practise and is
 - permitted to continue on the programme without change
 - permitted to continue on the programme in conjunction with provisos determined by the Panel
 - permitted to continue with the programme under close supervision
 - permitted to continue on the programme but with a formal reprimand or warning
- 12.9 That the student **is not** fit to practise and
 - is required to attend an Occupational Health assessment
 - is required to suspend their studies until such time as any undertakings, recommendations or conditions imposed by the Panel have been fully met.
 - is required to undertake any other action considered appropriate by the Panel to enable the student's successful completion of the remainder of the programme

- a recommendation is made to the Chair of the Board of Studies that the student's programme of study leading to a professional qualification be terminated but that the student be permitted to seek admission to an alternative academic qualification
 - a recommendation is made to the Chair of the Board of Studies that the student's studies are terminated and the student is required to withdraw from the University. Subject to the recommendation of a Progression and Award Board, the student may be eligible to receive any exit award to which they are entitled.
- 12.10 If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the opinion of the majority will prevail. If the panel reaches a hung decision, the Chair/Deputy Chair will decide upon the formal outcome(s) and/or sanction(s).
- 12.11 Where a student is allowed to continue with the programme in conjunction with provisos determined by the Panel, or when the studies have been temporarily suspended, they may be required to meet with the Panel on further occasions in order that progress can be monitored.
- 12.12 The student will be informed of the outcome of the FtP investigation by telephone, email or letter, in advance of the minutes being circulated.

If the student was on placement at the time of FtP concerns being raised, the placement provider (work based supervisor and / or social work lead for the organisation) and the practice educator will be informed of the outcome of the FtP investigation, but will not be party to the minutes. The minutes will specify any advice / information to be shared with the placement provider, any future placement provider, and any other party.

Fitness to Practise Committee Process



Please note that the above outlines typical processes, however as issues of Fitness to Practise are investigated and dealt with on a case by case basis, variations in this process may be applied to accommodate specific issues and requirements.

13. 13 Right of Appeal

- 13.1 Students have the right to appeal against a recommendation by the Department of Social Policy and Social Work Board of Studies to suspend or terminate their studies. A recommendation to terminate studies is always *considered* by the University of York Special Cases Committee (SCC). Where a recommendation to terminate a student's registration is the outcome of Fitness to Practise procedure this is considered at a full hearing of the SCC. The student has the right to request that the SCC hearing turn into an appeal against the recommendation from the Department of Social Policy and Social Work Board of Studies.
- 13.2 The appeals process for fitness to practise should follow the same process as academic appeals as set out at Regulation 6.7 at http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/aso/ordreg/r6_new.htm#appeals
- 13.3 When hearing an appeal case on the basis of fitness to practise, SCC should include an external adviser who shall be a full member of the panel, taking part in making decisions. The external adviser must be someone who can reasonably be viewed by the social work professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) as having the necessary experience, competence and authority to provide advice to a university body dealing with a hearing about fitness to practise potentially leading to termination or suspension. By way of example, an external advisor may be a member of the social work professional or regulatory body or a member of an equivalent body. The Department of Social Policy and Social Work should keep a list of names, revised and updated as necessary from time to time, representing a pool of such external advisers who would be reasonably viewed by the professional body as appropriately qualified to take on such a role.
- 13.4 The conduct of such hearings follows the same procedure as that laid out in Section 10 of the University's 'Student Academic Appeals Procedure', available to view at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/appeals-procedure/>
- 13.5 Both the student and the Department shall have the right to present and respond to the case. The procedures are detailed in Sections 9 and 10 of the 'Student Academic Appeals Procedure', available to view at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/appeals-procedure/>

14. 14 External and Independent Review

- 14.1 Students who have exhausted the University's internal appeals procedures but remain aggrieved may be able to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Complaints to the OIA must be made within 12 months of receiving a Completion on Procedures

letter from the University. Further information about the OIA is available on the OIA website at: www.oiahe.org.uk

15. Appendices index

Appendix	Name of document
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1b	Admissions Stage Health Declaration Form
2	Declaration of Suitability for Social Work form
3	Referral of Student to Fitness to Practise Committee form
4a	Suspension from Practice Procedure (by the placement provider)
4b	Suspension from Practice Procedure (by the Fitness to Practise committee)
5a	Fitness to Practise Committee Investigation Process
5b	The role of the Investigating Officer – Fitness to Practise Committee
5c	Fitness to Practise Committee Investigator Checklist
5d	Fitness to Practise Committee Investigation meeting record
6	Independent Practice Panel Policy

Appendix 1: Occupational Health Referral Policy



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRAL POLICY

There are two categories to be considered:

- i) Students with health/disability issues which have been identified at the commencement of the programme and have been passed as fit for the programme by Occupational Health at initial screening with/without conditions attached
- ii) Students who become unwell during their programme

Category One - Students with health/disability issues identified at the commencement of the programme.

- Health - It is the student's responsibility to notify their personal supervisor of the medical condition. If the personal supervisor becomes concerned or the student notifies his/her supervisor of a change in their health status, the personal supervisor refers the student to Fitness to Practise Committee for referral to Occupational Health for health assessment and monitoring, and ensuing decision on Fitness to Practise.
- Disability –The department makes a decision as to whether the student can be supported throughout the programme. If so, recommended support mechanisms will be received from Disability Services and these will be implemented and monitored by the student's personal supervisor. If the personal supervisor feels that the student's health has changed, he/she should contact Fitness to Practise Committee for referral to Occupational Health for health assessment and monitoring, and ensuing decision on Fitness to Practise.

Category Two – Students who become unwell during the programme

- New condition diagnosed that may affect fitness to practise – The personal supervisor refers the student to the Fitness to Practise Committee for referral to Occupational Health for health assessment and monitoring
- Pre-existing health condition which was not declared – The personal supervisor refers the student to the Fitness to Practise Committee, potentially on grounds of conduct, and for referral to Occupational Health for health assessment and monitoring, and ensuing decision on Fitness to Practise.

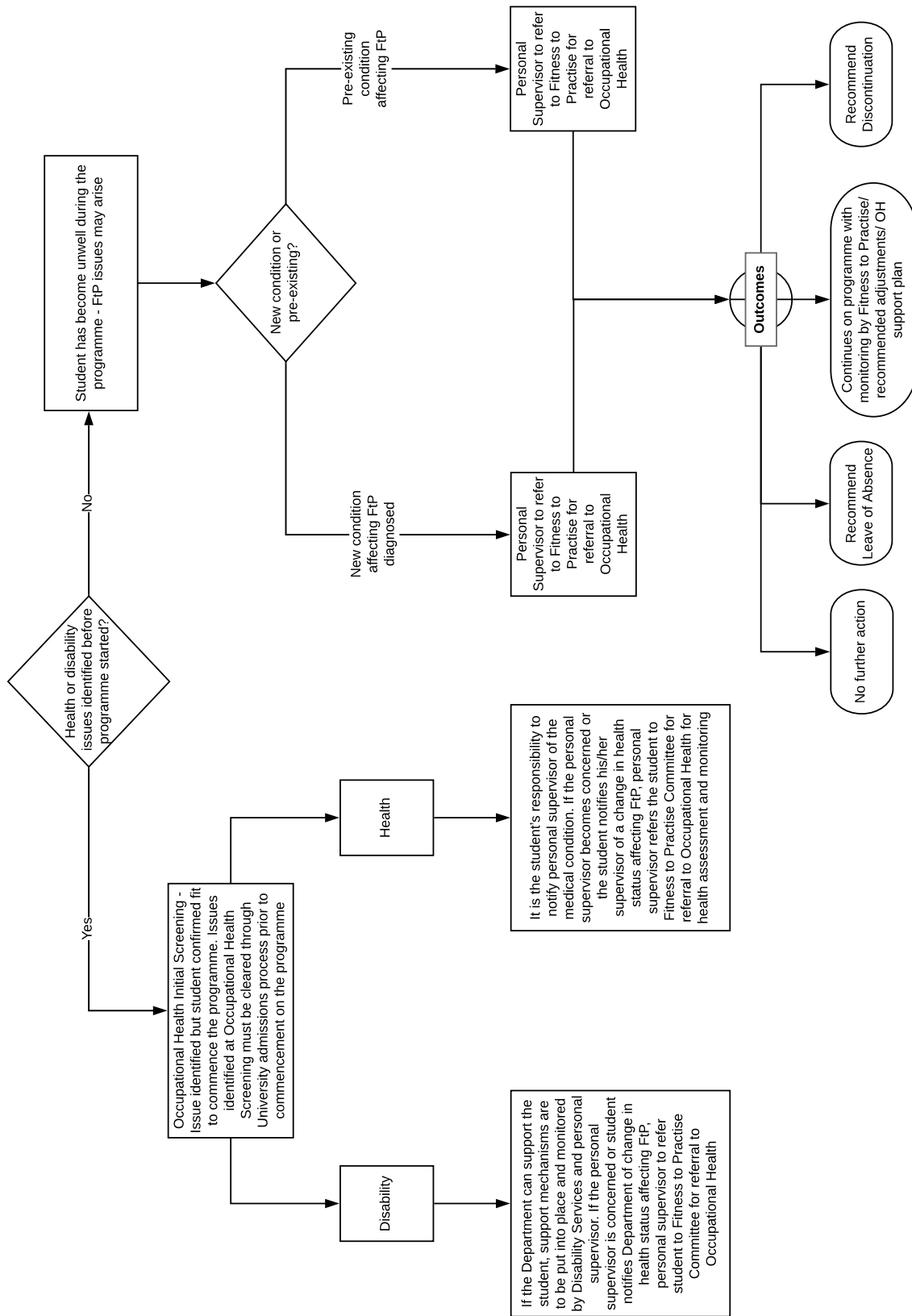
REFERRALS AND MONITORING

Any personal supervisor who wants to refer a student for Occupational Health assessment must do so via the Fitness to Practise Committee. Personal Supervisors **must not** refer any student directly to Occupational Health.

Return from Leave of Absence - Students returning from Leave of Absence on medical grounds are advised that medical evidence is required to confirm fitness to return to the programme. Upon receipt of the Occupational Health report, the Chair and Deputy Chair of Fitness to Practise will normally meet to consider any restrictions or adjustments to the programme which may be required. If the report specifies that follow up appointments or reviews are required then this will be monitored by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REFERRAL PROCESS

The flowchart below summarises the process:





DECLARATION OF HEALTH, Professional Programmes – MA Social Work

CONFIDENTIAL

All information provided in this form will be held confidentially by the University Occupational Health Service. It will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, Medical Reports Act 1988 and GMC Guidance on Confidentiality 2009. Information from this form will only be released to others with the person's consent. If health issues come to light which may impact on your fitness to practice in the chosen field of study, Occupational Health will seek to advise accordingly subject to the above legal requirements and guidance governing confidentiality and consent. A report will be provided to Student Admissions and/or the Department of Social Policy and Social Work stating that you are either 'Fit', 'Fit with the following adjustments or restrictions', 'Under Review' or 'Unfit' for the proposed course. Due to time restrictions 'Under Review' may be utilised where Occupational Health are unable to declare a candidate 'Fit' due to a need for further information.

Section 1 of this questionnaire is to be completed promptly by you and, along with Section 2 which should be completed and stamped by your current GP, should then be returned in the sealed envelope provided to Postgraduate Admissions, ensuring you have signed and dated it and completed the required details on the envelope. The envelope with questionnaire will then be forwarded unopened by Postgraduate Admissions to Occupational Health.

SECTION 1: HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Surname _____

First names _____

Previous or alternative names _____

Title (Mr./Mrs/Ms/Miss) _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Day time telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

Email _____

Present Occupation _____

Name:

Date of Birth:

Please answer all of the following questions by marking the appropriate box. If you answer yes, please give further details, continuing on a separate piece of paper if necessary.

	Yes	No	Details (including dates)
Have you ever had any illness, medical problem or disability that may currently affect your ability to work safely as a teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you need or would it assist you to have any special provision made to enable you to fulfil your training and/or subsequent employment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever been treated in hospital? If yes, please give reason(s) and dates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you seen a doctor in the last year for any kind of health problem? If so please give reason(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you having any treatment or investigations of any kind at the moment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you waiting for any treatment, operation or investigation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had any illness or health related problem that may have been caused or made worse by your work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever been medically retired from any job, or left any job because of ill health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you had any days off sick in the last 2 years? If yes, please give number of days and reasons to the best of your recollection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any difficulties standing, bending, lifting or with any other movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had any back problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had any problem with your joints including pain, swelling or stiffness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever suffered from any mental illness, psychological or psychiatric problem (e.g. any psychological or emotional problems, eating disorders, anxiety, depression, self-harm)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had a drug or alcohol problem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Name:	Date of Birth:
-------	----------------

	Yes	No	Details
Have you ever had fits, blackouts or epilepsy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any chronic skin problems? e.g. psoriasis, eczema	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any eyesight problems not corrected with glasses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any hearing problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had any heart or blood pressure problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever suffered from asthma, bronchitis or chest problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
In the last 12 months, have you had a cough for more than 3 weeks, coughed up blood or had any unexplained weight loss or fever?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you ever had hepatitis or jaundice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any other medical conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you on any medication at present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you feel well at present?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you allergic to anything? If so, what and how severely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

May we have your consent to approach your family doctor and if necessary your hospital specialist for further information (see explanatory note below)?

Yes No

I do/do not* wish to see the medical report before it is sent to Occupational Health (**Please delete as appropriate*).

Name:	Date of Birth:
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Please give the name and address of your family doctor and hospital specialist (s)

Name(s)	Addresses

Declaration

I declare that all of the statements and information I have made on this questionnaire are true to the best of my knowledge.

I understand that giving false information or failing to disclose any significant information could have consequences for my ability to continue with this course of study.

I understand that I may be responsible for the expenses of any medical examination or report which may be required.

I understand that I may be required to attend for a medical examination.

I agree to Disability Services being informed about any adjustments required to assist to study at York.

Signed _____ Date _____

This questionnaire is to be completed promptly along with Section 2 below which should be completed and stamped by your GP and returned to Postgraduate Admissions in the sealed envelope provided, ensuring you have signed and dated it and completed the required details on the envelope. The envelope with questionnaire will then be forwarded unopened by Postgraduate Admissions to Occupational Health.

If you have any health-related questions regarding this process, please contact the Occupational Health Advisor, Gary Malcolm on (01904) 432026 or email gary.malcolm@york.ac.uk

Occupational Health, on behalf of the University of York, is seeking your consent to apply to a doctor for a report giving information about your state of health if this is felt to be appropriate. You are not obliged to give your consent to such an application being made, but any decision that Occupational Health or The University of York might have to take regarding your suitability for your course of study will then be taken on only those facts that are already available.

Before you complete the above, you should be aware that you have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. In summary, these rights are:

1. To withhold your consent for an application to be made to a doctor for a medical report.
2. To see the medical report before it is supplied to Occupational Health (In this case you will have 21 days to make arrangements with your GP/Specialist to see the report before it is sent).
3. To ask your doctor to amend any part of the report which you consider to be inaccurate or misleading; or
4. If your doctor declines to amend the report, to attach a written statement giving your views on its contents; or
5. To withhold your consent to the report being supplied to Occupational Health.

NB: The doctor may withhold from you sections of the report if he or she thinks you would be seriously harmed by seeing it.

SECTION 2: GENERAL PRACTITIONER'S/DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE

Your patient has been offered a place to study at University of York. All prospective students undertaking a course of study for a professional program, i.e. PGCE/Initial Teacher Training and Social Work are required to complete a health questionnaire to enable the University to assess their medical fitness to practice and where appropriate consider any reasonable adjustments or additional support needs.

We would ask for your co-operation in verifying the health information provided by the prospective student:

Name Date of Birth:

Please mark the appropriate answer YES/NO and add any relevant comments below. You are asked to bear in mind that these courses are physically and psychologically demanding and your comments may be used to assist decisions of fitness or requirement for further information.

		Yes	No
1.	Are you the applicant's General Practitioner?		
2.	Are you a relative of the applicant?		
3.	Do you hold the applicant's medical records?		
4.	According to your records and knowledge of the applicant, do the answers to section 1 appear correct? (please add any comments below)		
5.	Are you aware of any additional medical information which may be relevant to this application? (please add any comments below)		

Comments:

PLEASE NOTE. A medical examination is not required. Any fee required for completion of the form is the responsibility of the patient. Thank you for your co-operation in completing this form.

G.P./Doctor's Signature _____

Date _____

G.P. Practice Stamp (Essential)

OFFICIAL USE ONLY



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

MA SOCIAL WORK HEALTH DECLARATION ASSESSMENT

Name		Date of Birth	
------	--	---------------	--

The Health Declaration for the above person has been received and checked and was found to be:

Fit

Under Review

Unfit

Fit with the following adjustments/restrictions:

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH ADVISOR

Name (Print): _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Cc:

Contact details: Occupational Health, University of York, Heslington Hall, Heslington, YO10 5DD
Tel: (01904) 324608/2026, email: occupational-health@york.ac.uk

Appendix 2a: Declaration of Suitability for Social Work Form



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

DECLARATION OF SUITABILITY FOR SOCIAL WORK

Personal Details

Surname Forename

Address

Contact details:

Home phone

Mobile phone

Email address

Social Work programme applied for (please tick): MSocW (4 year) MA (2 year)

1. Introduction

Social Work England (SWE) standards require that students who are being admitted to the social work programme have undertaken:

a) enhanced checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) [Formerly known as Criminal Records Bureau]; and

b) a health check, usually by means of a self-declaration, but with an additional statement from a GP or consultant where deemed necessary.

In addition to these statutory requirements, universities may seek other relevant information to help them make a well-informed judgement about an applicant's suitability to enter social work education.

This programme wishes to preserve entry to a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds and does not wish to automatically exclude students who have a criminal or disciplinary record, or have previously experienced poor health, or have had contact with social service departments. We recognise that in many instances there is no simple criterion of suitability and thus each case will be assessed individually using our professional judgment.

You will be informed if your declaration is deemed to require further consideration. In the event that this results in your offer being withdrawn, you will be informed of the general reason (subject to any restrictions on passing on confidential information contained within the General Data Protection Regulation).

The arrangements for subsequent (post-offer) DBS, vetting and barring checks will be discussed during the selection day and explained subsequently to those offered a place on our programmes. Please read and complete the following sections carefully. If you are

unsure how to proceed or have any queries, contact the Admissions Tutor who will advise you. The information that you provide will be treated as confidential within the organisational boundaries of the MSocW and MA Social Work programmes but may be shared with the SWE, or other relevant bodies, for the purpose of deciding suitability for registration.

If you are not offered a place on the programme (offers are always conditional upon satisfactory health and DBS/suitability checks and may also have academic conditions), your envelope will be destroyed and your declaration unread. If you take up a place elsewhere, your form will be destroyed. Otherwise, your form will be kept securely by the University, after it has been reviewed, and placed on your student file if you enrol here.

Please note that at the end of your individual interview, you will be asked to confirm whether you have disclosed information in sections 2 and 3 of this document and invited to discuss the circumstances with the interview panel. This is so that you have an opportunity to explain and reflect upon criminal convictions and cautions and disciplinary issues, you will NOT be asked about the remaining sections of the form at this stage.

All information will be stored and used in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which also provides the statutory right of access to personal information.

Please note, if you refuse to provide additional relevant information or otherwise assist in this process, the offer of a place on the programme may be withdrawn. Failure to disclose relevant information which is subsequently discovered could lead to a suitability investigation and your exclusion from the programme.

While the university is making a prospective judgement as to your suitability to train as a social worker on its programme, Social Work England ultimately makes the decision as to whether you are suitable for entry on the professional register upon successful completion of the course. Further information on the SWE processes for considering these issues is available on their website: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/>

The university decision-making processes are informed and guided by SWE documentation and requirements. Applicants concerned about issues of assessment relating to health or character issues should consult SWE Practice Standards. Other relevant SWE documents include Qualifying Education and Training Standards 2020 Guidance.

2. Criminal convictions and cautions/warnings

Social work is exempted from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and information about previous convictions, cautions, warnings or ongoing police matters must be provided. A conviction does not automatically debar a student and the programme will seek further information about the circumstances to make an informed and considered judgement about a candidate's suitability. You can make further representations in writing, giving details of the offence/experience under review, and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the Admissions Tutor. Since 2013, some 'minor' offences that were committed several years ago no longer need to be disclosed, so long as the sentence was non-custodial in nature and the offence was not a 'listed' offence (violent offences, sexual offences and those that relate to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are all listed offences). Listed offences must always be disclosed, regardless of the time since the offence. There are details of the time limits that apply and exceptions to this at:

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/apply/uk/rehabilitationofoffendersact/>.

We will usually follow SWE guidance on these matters. However, if you are in any doubt at all as to whether something should be disclosed or not, you are advised to disclose rather than to withhold information in a way that later becomes problematic. You are welcome to contact the admissions tutor for guidance on this matter.

Bearing the above guidance in mind, please tick yes or no for each question

	YES	NO
Have you ever been convicted of any offence by any court?		
Have you ever been cautioned?		
Have you ever been reprimanded?		
Have you ever been bound over?		
Have you ever received a final warning?		
Do you have any prosecutions pending?		
Have you ever been disqualified from working with children by an order under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000) or other provision?		

If you have answered 'YES' to any of these questions, please give full details (date, court, offence, sentence, outcome, charge, etc.) in the box below and continue on a separate page if necessary.

--

3. Disciplinary record, unprofessional conduct, and barring lists

Social service agencies and members of the public who receive services are entitled to expect the highest standards of reliability and integrity from social workers and it is imperative that the qualifying award is held only by those whose personal and professional conduct merits this trust. The MSocW and MA Social Work programmes require that you make a declaration in this regard. Please answer the following questions carefully. If you answer 'YES' to any of the questions, you may be contacted by the Admissions Tutor who will seek further information about your circumstances and may make other relevant inquiries to colleges and former employers to enable an informed decision to be made about your application. At this stage, you can make further representations in writing and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the Admissions Tutor.

Please tick yes or no for each question

	YES	NO
Are you currently the subject of any disciplinary investigation?		
Have you ever had a disciplinary finding against you?		
Have you ever had your employment terminated for unprofessional behaviour or misconduct?		
Have you ever been suspended or disqualified from any professional education or training programme?		
Have you ever been suspended or deregistered for professional misconduct by any other professional register/body?		
Have you ever been listed upon the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) register, the Protection of Children Act list (POCA), or Section 142 of the Education Act (2000), (formerly List 99)?		

Have you previously enrolled upon a social work programme?		
--	--	--

If you have answered 'YES' to any of these questions, please give full details in the box below (outcome, date, employer, course, college, reason for non-completion, etc.) and continue on a separate page if necessary.

4. Personal health and circumstances

Social work is a demanding and sometimes stressful occupation and successful completion of the MSocW or MA in Social Work programmes requires full participation at university and upon practice learning placements. Furthermore, the practice of social work is often undertaken with people who are vulnerable, at risk, or whose capacity to manage their own affairs is temporarily or permanently impaired. Accordingly, the programme seeks to ensure that all students are capable of enduring the stresses and strains of the programme and do not present any threat to the safety of service users, or to themselves.

Please note that you are not required to make a declaration about health problems that do not impinge upon your capacity to study or practice, or that in the normal course of your social work duties, would not present a risk to self or others. Please also note that in the event of health problems arising during the course, the programme will, within its rules and regulations, respond sympathetically and try to ensure that a student is able to complete in due course. However, chronic poor physical or mental health may make it difficult or impossible for you to complete the course and may also place clients at risk.

We also need to know whether you have had children in your personal care placed upon a child protection register or placed in care, or have lived in a household where children have been registered or placed in care. These circumstances do not automatically debar you from entry to the programme, but we need to make an informed judgement about what risks, if any, they may pose for you and for other people. This information may also have a bearing upon the range of practice placements available to you.

If you answer 'YES' to any of the questions, you will be contacted by the Admissions Tutor who will seek further information about your circumstances, and may make other inquiries to enable an informed decision to be made about your application. At this stage, you can make further representations in writing, and you may be invited to discuss your application directly with the Admissions Tutor or the Programme Director. In the case of medical conditions, with your consent (implied where you complete the GP contact details below), further information may be sought from your doctor, or a medical consultant. We may also seek advice from our own medical and occupational health officers.

a. Please tick yes or no for each question

	YES	NO
Do you have any physical or mental health condition (or associated treatment) that may impact upon your ability to safely and effectively perform any part of the work of a social worker or social work student?		
Do you have any physical or mental health condition that in the normal course of your social work duties might present a direct risk to other		

people, or which might affect your judgement or performance in a way that poses risk to self or others?		
Has any child or children in your care, or within the household in which you live or have previously lived, been subject to an investigation under the safeguarding children procedures process?		
Has any child or children in your care, or the household in which you now or previously have lived, been placed upon a social service child protection register/been made subject to a child protection plan or been looked after/placed in care?		
Have you had any involvement in an adult protection/safeguarding case as an adult carer?		

If you have answered 'YES' to any of these questions, please give full details in the box below and continue on a separate page if necessary.

General Practitioner contact details:

Name

Address

Telephone

b. To be completed by all applicants: *confirmation of commitment to manage own health and refrain from work when needed*

Although we wish to minimize intrusive additional checks in respect of health unless essential, we must be guided by the professional standards and expectations. Whether you have disclosed a current or previous health condition above or not, please complete the following declaration by ticking and signing where indicated:

- I confirm that I understand the importance of taking responsibility for managing any health condition that I currently have or that may develop during my training;
- I understand that this includes, but is not limited to, taking responsibility for seeking appropriate medical or other professional guidance as required;
- I also undertake to refrain from work/placement when unwell, if not doing so may pose a risk to others or to myself or when not doing so may adversely affect my performance.

- I will also undertake to report any change in my health which may affect my fitness to practise to my personal supervisor in order for them to inform the Department of Social Policy & Social Work Fitness to Practise Committee where relevant

Signature	Date
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5. Disability

Disability need not be a barrier to the programme and qualification and in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act (2010) the University will endeavour to make 'reasonable adjustments' where you have informed us of a disability through the standard admissions or student support processes. Please note that for the purposes of this declaration you do not need to make any statement about your disability unless this relates to a health condition covered in the previous section. The University believes that you should have a choice about when, and whether, you wish to declare a disability, although we hope to provide a context in which disclosure is seen as a positive and enabling act.

If you do wish to discuss what adjustments might be required, you may do this informally prior to interview, or may wait until after the results of your interview have been communicated to you. Once you have been offered a place we will meet with you to discuss your requirements, and will formally record what adjustments and arrangements can be made and how these will be reviewed. The needs of students with disabilities will be prioritised in the allocation of practice learning placements. If you have any further enquiries or concerns in regard to disability please contact the Admissions Tutor directly.

Please note that any disclosure of a disability on this form will not trigger referral to student support services, nor serve to initiate the processes of agreeing reasonable adjustments as the purpose of this form is to assess suitability for entry to the programmes. You are encouraged to self-disclose any disability needs to the relevant university service prior to admission or as soon as possible after admission to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be explored and implemented where needed.

6. Your declaration

Please tick next to each statement and sign below

- I understand that the information that I have provided will be checked against my Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service disclosures and that my signature affirms that this is a full and accurate declaration. In the case of Employment/Sponsored Route students, a duty of care may oblige the University to divulge disclosures to the sponsoring agency, and information will be shared between the University and the employer, if this is deemed necessary, within the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You must provide a copy of your enhanced DBS to the University prior to admission.
- I understand that if I refuse to provide additional relevant information or otherwise assist in this suitability process that the provisional offer of a place on the programme may be withdrawn.
- I also understand that failure to disclose relevant information is regarded as a serious matter and that if it is discovered after I have been accepted upon the

programme, it could result in a fitness to practise investigation which may lead to exclusion from the programme.

- I undertake to inform the programme team (after enrolment) or the Admissions Tutor (prior to enrolment) about any relevant changes in my circumstances that may affect any assessment of my suitability.
- I give my agreement for the programme to obtain a health report from my GP, consultant, or other relevant person, if necessary, for the purposes of this pre-course assessment of suitability for professional education.
- I agree that the information that I give may be used to assess my suitability for social work education and that, subject to the principles outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant legislation or statutory guidance, it may be shared with Social Work England and other relevant bodies if required.

Signature	Date
-----------	------



Department of Social Policy and Social Work

Fitness to Practise Panel - Admissions Applicant Criminal Offence/Conviction Disclosure

Name	Insert name here
Programme applied for	Insert programme title here
Offence	Give information about the offence here
Date of offence	Date/s
Age at time of offence	Insert age here
Circumstances	Give account of the circumstances of the offence
Sentence / outcome / charge (if any)	Insert information here
Date sentence / charge will be spent	Date/s
Reflection and any other pertinent information	
Insert information here. You may choose to attach references	

The applicant should be aware that further scrutiny is undertaken prior to each practice placement and when applying for qualified social work roles in the future. Placement providers and employers are likely to undertake their own risk assessment, taking into account the offence and relevant information, the applicants' attitude towards and understanding of the offence, and the applicants' progress and achievements since.

Please note the information you provide will be shared with our placement providers (anonymously) to ascertain if they would be able to provide you with a social work practice learning placement. Please sign to indicate you agree with this information being shared.

Applicant signature Date/s Date Date/s

Appendix 2c: Fitness to Practise Committee – Admissions Decision



Department of Social Policy and Social Work

**Fitness to Practise Panel - Admissions
Record of Decision**

Committee attendees Names / roles of attendees, to include Chair / Minute Taker

Date Date of decision

Summary of decision Discussion & recommendations

Feedback to be provided to applicant Specify any feedback to be provided

Appendix 3: Referral of Student to Fitness to Practise committee



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

REFERRAL OF STUDENT TO FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE

Student Details

Surname Forename

Programme (& year)

Date of referral Last date of attendance

Grounds for Referral

Health Disability Conduct/Behaviour Failure to Comply with Programme Requirements

Please give a FULL description of the circumstances leading to the referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee. This should include incident/nature of concern and any significant events or behaviour which have contributed to this referral:

(box will expand as you type)

Have you made the student aware of this referral to Fitness to Practise Committee?
Yes No

Name

Signature Date

Please attach any supporting information and or evidence and forward by email to spsw-ftp@york.ac.uk

Appendix 4a: Suspension from Practice Procedure (by the placement provider)



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

SUSPENSION FROM PRACTICE PROCEDURE (BY THE PLACEMENT PROVIDER)

The Placement Provider reserves the right to remove a student from a Placement without notice in any case in which they consider it appropriate to do so having regard to concerns over the student's fitness to practise. The initial authority for suspension will rest with Practice Educator or the Practice Educator Mentor where applicable, in consultation with the relevant Team Manager and the University Liaison.

In all cases the Chair/Deputy Fitness to Practise Committee must be consulted and both parties must follow the Suspension procedure. Every effort should be taken to minimise the disruption to the student's programme of study at removal stage.

Suspension is the temporary removal from placement whilst an investigation is completed. If the issues are resolvable, and if agreed by all relevant parties, the student may return to the placement. If not, the practice educator must complete the end-of-placement report.

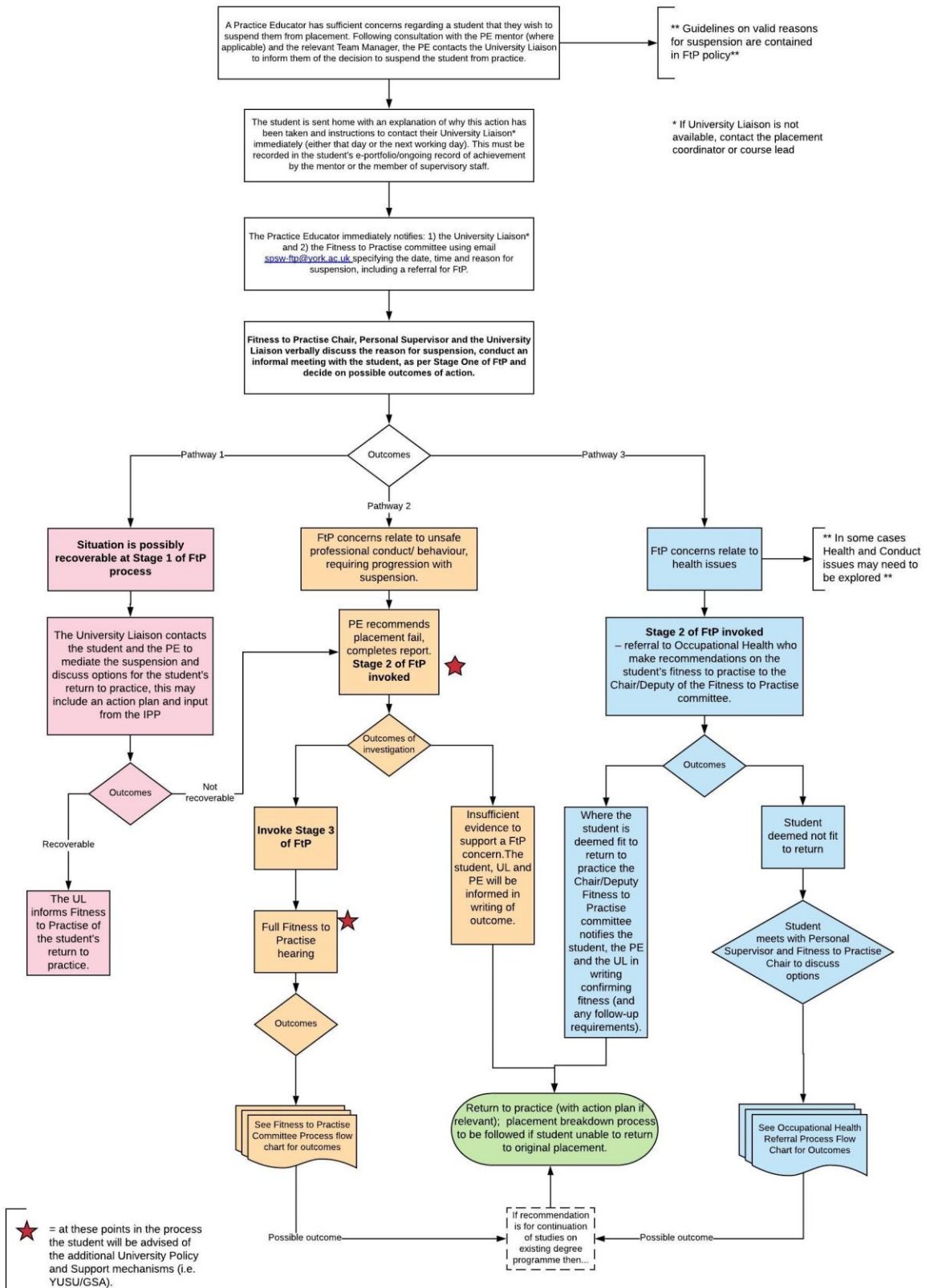
The Placement Provider and Department of Social Policy and Social Work must follow the process as attached.

Reasons for Suspension could be, but not inclusive of, the following: unsafe professional conduct/behaviour, concerns about the student's health or the health and safety of service users/carers.

The following **DO NOT** constitute reasons for suspension: failure to meet the PCF domains, failure to progress with an action plan.

The student should be encouraged to seek support from their Personal Supervisor/University Liaison should they be suspended from practice. If the student feels that they cannot approach their Personal Supervisor /University Liaison then they can seek assistance from the York University Students Union (YUSU) on (01904) 323720 or asc@yusu.org or they can gain support from the Graduate Students' Association (<http://www.yorkgsa.org/>).

Suspension from Practice (by the placement provider)



Appendix 4b: Suspension from practice procedure (by the Fitness to Practise committee)



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

SUSPENSION FROM PRACTICE PROCEDURE (BY THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE)

The Chair/Deputy of the Fitness to Practise Committee reserve the right to remove a student from a Placement Area without notice in any case in which they consider it appropriate to do so, having regard to the student's conduct/behaviour or professional suitability. Every effort should be taken to minimise the disruption to the student's programme of study at removal stage.

Suspension is the temporary removal from placement whilst an investigation is completed. If the issues are resolvable, and if agreed by all relevant parties, the student may return to the placement.

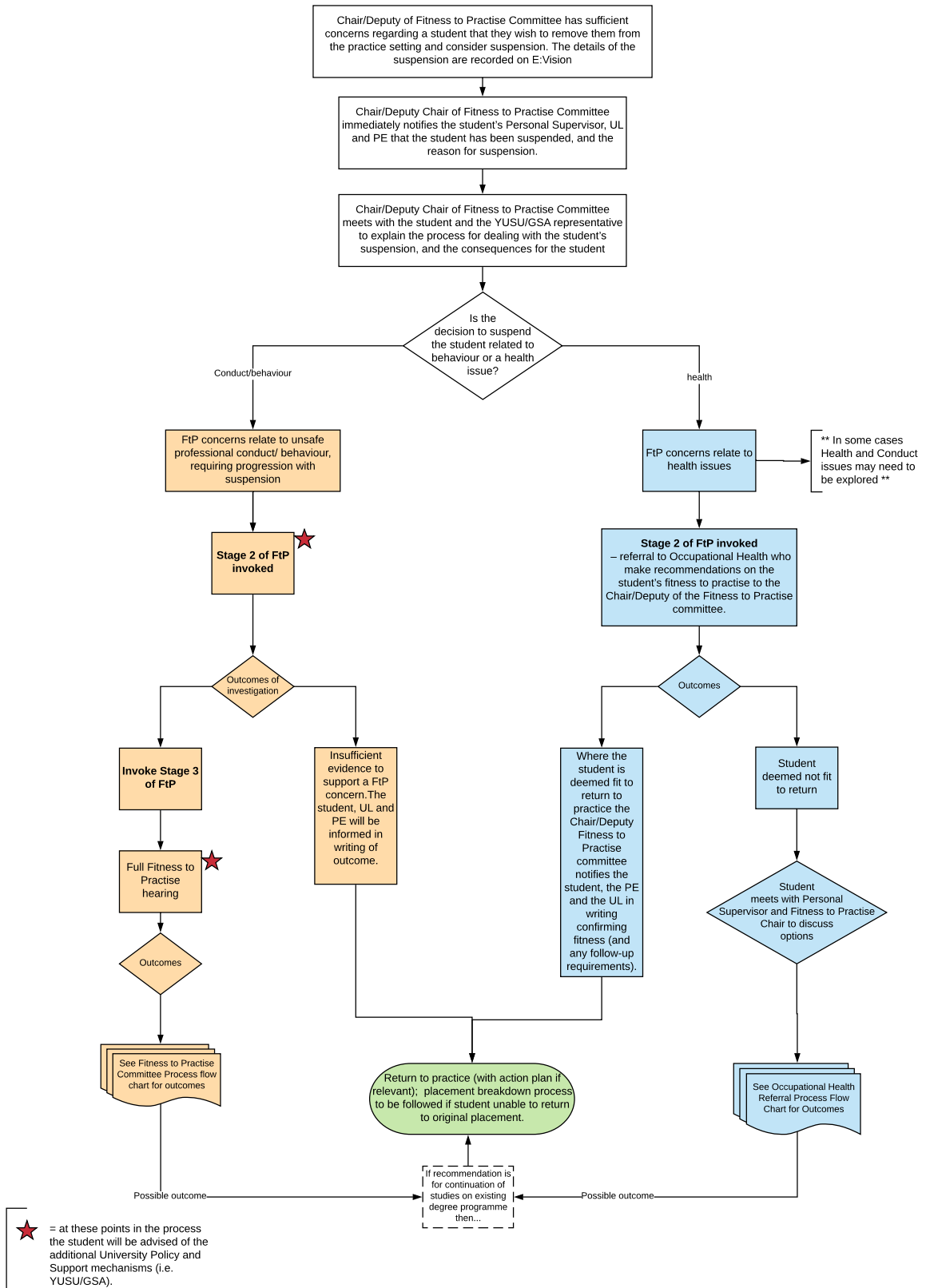
The Placement Provider and Department of Social Policy and Social Work must follow the process as attached.

Reasons for Suspension could be, but not inclusive of, the following: unsafe professional conduct/behaviour, concerns about the student's health or the health and safety of service users.

The following **DO NOT** constitute reasons for suspension: failure to meet the PCF domains, failure to progress with an action plan.

The student should be encouraged to seek support from their Personal Supervisor/University Liaison should they be suspended from practice. If the student feels that they cannot approach their Personal Supervisor /University Liaison then they can seek assistance from the York University Students Union (YUSU) on (01904) 323724 or asc@yusu.org or they can gain support from the Graduate Students' Association (<http://www.yorkgsa.org/>).

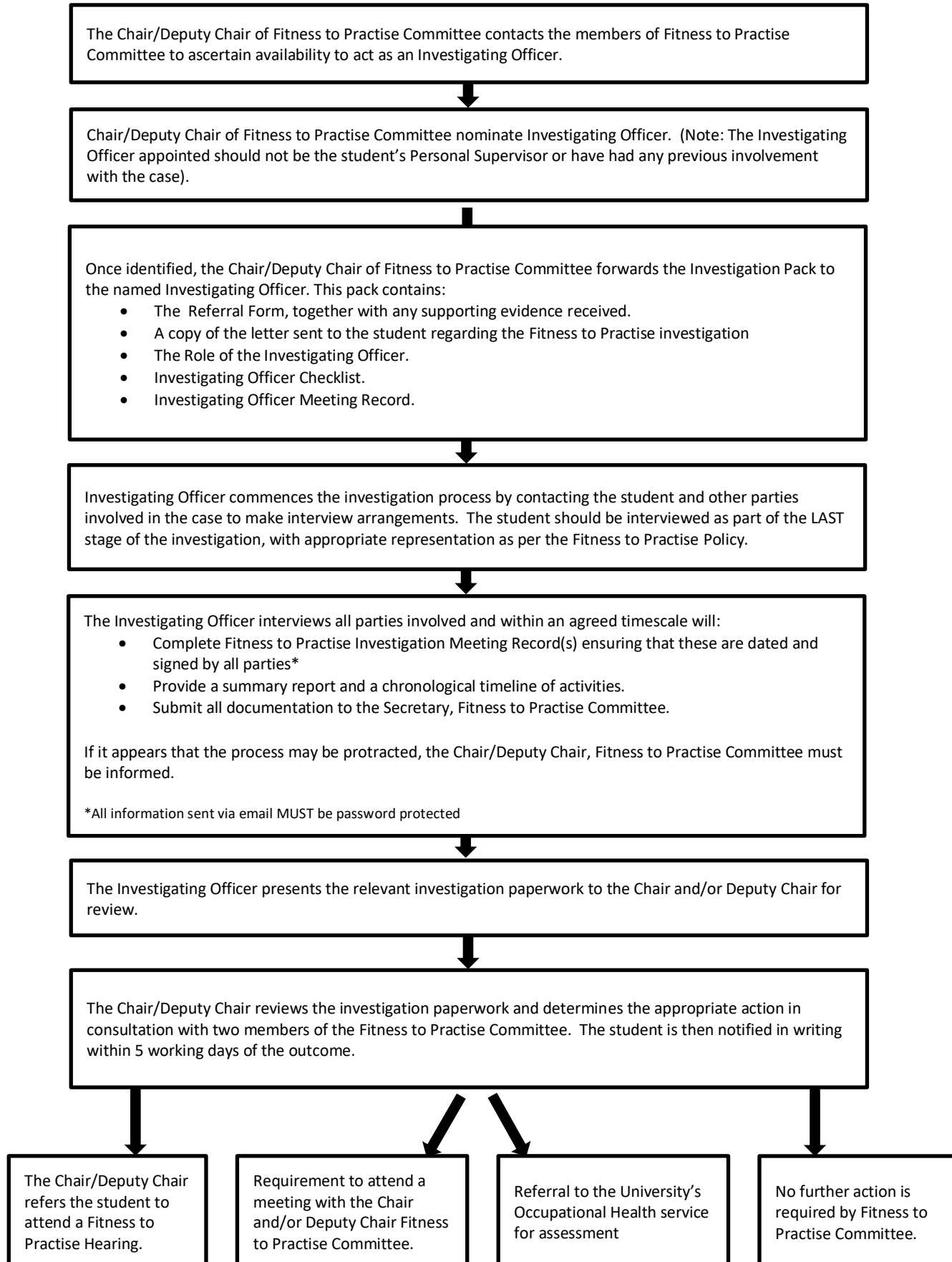
Suspension from Practice (by the Fitness to Practise Committee)



Appendix 5a: Fitness to Practise Investigation Process

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE: INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee determines that the student case requires referral to a hearing and the following investigation process is initiated:



Appendix 5b: The role of the Investigating Officer - Fitness to Practise Committee



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

THE ROLE OF THE INVESTIGATING OFFICER - FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE

The Investigative Process:

Concerns relating to a student's fitness to practise, whether from an academic member of staff or from an external contact (placement provider, member of the public etc), should be passed in writing to the Chair/Deputy of the Fitness to Practise Committee. The Chair/Deputy of the Fitness to Practise Committee should authorise an initial investigation as to whether there are grounds for concern regarding a student's fitness to practise, as specified above. The Chair/Deputy of the Fitness to Practise Committee shall promptly, and in any event within 5 working days refer the matter to an Investigating Officer for investigation and shall notify the student of

- the details of the allegations against him/her; and
- the identity of the investigating officer; and
- any suspension from his/her programme or limitations or conditions placed upon the continuance of his/her studies or supervised practise during the period of the investigation.

NOTE: *The Investigating Officer should not be the student's Personal Supervisor nor should they hold any conflicts of interests.*

At this point the Investigating Officer may request the people connected with the case to provide written comments on the student's conduct and/or health pertinent to the case, explaining why there is concern as to the student's fitness to practise. Factual information about the student's professional progress on the course and any other relevant documentation should also be provided.

The Investigating Officer shall interview relevant individuals including the student himself/herself using the Fitness to Practise Investigating Officer Checklist.

The student, in order that a report can be made on his or her fitness to practise on medical grounds, may be required to be assessed by a suitably qualified Health Practitioner as appointed by the University for this purpose.

Promptly on receipt of the report from the Investigating Officer, and in any event within 5 working days, the Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee shall notify the student in writing of:

- the outcome of the investigation; and

- whether the matter is to be referred to the full Fitness to Practise Committee together for adjudication with full details of the procedures to be adopted; and
- the imposition, cessation, continuance or alteration (as the case may be) of any suspension or conditions/limitations placed on the student's studies.

Points to Remember throughout your Investigation:

- You must remain totally impartial throughout your investigation.
- All information sent via email MUST be password protected
- Remember that at this stage these are allegations not proven fact.
- You must seek out what is the evidence to support the allegation(s).
- You will need to ascertain as much detail as possible, including a review of any incidents which have previously led to this investigation which may have already been resolved informally or formally.
- You must interview the person making the allegation, the student and witnesses on both sides. The interviewees should be provided with at least three working days' notice and informed that they may be accompanied at the interview by a representative. For students this may be a representative of the York University Students' Union (YUSU) or the Graduate Students' Association (GSA).
- You should interview the student as part of the LAST stage on the investigation, so that the student is given the opportunity to respond to any issues which have arisen as part of your investigation.
- You should remind the student of SWE Professional Standards and reiterate the importance of being open and honest before starting the interview.
- When interviewing the student you should ask if they are aware of anyone else who the student feels can provide evidence related to the incident(s).
- You should keep in mind the balance between service user/carer and public safety, the overall interests of the student and the need to maintain trust in the relevant profession.
- A précis must be taken of any interview conducted as part of the investigative process. This must be signed and dated by the Investigating Officer and the interviewees. You must inform the interviewees that they shall be entitled to have sight of this record prior to a full Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing.
- Any interview with the student and other parties must be held face-to-face. Where this is not

possible/practicable a video call interview (e.g. Skype) may be held but a summary of the discussion must then be provided in writing by the Investigating Officer and signed by the other party as an accurate representation of the discussion.

- The investigating processes should be concluded as swiftly as possible. If it is looking likely that this process may be protracted then you must inform the Chair/Deputy of the Fitness to Practise Committee.
- After you have concluded all of the required interviews and collated appropriate evidence you must then prepare a formal written report of your findings and submit this to the Chair/Deputy of Fitness to Practise Committee, attaching evidence as appropriate.

Appendix 5c: Fitness to Practise Committee – Investigator checklist



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE - INVESTIGATOR CHECKLIST

QUESTION	YES/NO	RATIONALE	COMMENTS
Have you received the Referral Pack?			If no, do not commence investigation.
Good practice requires investigation to <i>normally</i> be completed within 10 working days – can you achieve this?			If no, please notify Fitness to Practise Secretary and provide an expected date of completion.
Notes of interviews should be contemporaneous and signed by the interviewee at the time of completion. *It may be necessary to accept official e-mail as identification/confirmation. In this instance emails must be password protected.		Unsigned data will not be accepted as evidence.	If no, please identify why not and ensure signatures are obtained as quickly as possible.
Do you have copies of any supporting evidence? Has this been signed by the person providing it?		Unsigned data will not be accepted as evidence.	
Has the supporting evidence been included as appendices?			If no, please ensure appendices are attached in the appropriate order.
Have you written and signed a report of your investigation?		You will present this at the hearing in addition to all parties receiving a copy.	
Have you listed the contents of your report with page numbers if relevant, in chronological order, including all relevant appendices?		This is very helpful when collating the evidence for the student and panel.	

Appendix 5d: Fitness to Practise Committee – Investigation meeting record



Department of Social Policy & Social Work

FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE - INVESTIGATION MEETING RECORD

Date and Time of Meeting:
Meeting Venue:
Present:
Explanation of the Role of the Investigating Officer:

Factual information about the incident:
Background information (eg surrounding circumstances including sickness):
Previous history:

Evidence:
Contributing factors:
Changes to the situation since the incident:

It has been agreed that these notes are an accurate reflection of the interview held on the date above:			
Investigating Officer: <i>Print and Sign</i>		Date:	
Student: <i>Print and Sign</i>		Date:	
Interviewee: Title/Designation <i>Print and Sign</i>		Date:	