

**School of Psychology  
Health and Conduct Committee  
Membership, Frequency, & Reporting**

<p><b>TITLE:</b> School of Psychology Health and Conduct Committee</p>
<p><b>MEMBERSHIP:</b> Head of School of Psychology or nominated representative (Chair) Plus three members nominated by the Head of School (or nominated representative) from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Undergraduate Psychology Programme</li> <li>• Director of Postgraduate Psychology Programme</li> <li>• Director of Postgraduate Counselling Psychology Programme</li> <li>• Director of Learning and Teaching</li> <li>• A member of the academic staff from the School</li> <li>• Academic staff member from another School</li> </ul>
<p><b>FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS:</b> Meetings to be called as necessary</p>
<p><b>ADMINISTERED BY:</b> School of Psychology Senior School Manager or nominated representative. Senior School Manager collates all information in regard to student health and conduct issues and meets with the Directors of Postgraduate and Undergraduate Programmes as the issue arises. The Directors will determine the outcome of collated information.</p>
<p><b>REPORTS TO:</b> Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee and School Learning and Teaching Committee</p>
<p><b>RECEIVES REPORTS (as required) FROM:</b> Head of School Psychology or nominated representative Director of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes Academic Conduct Officer / Deputy Academic Conduct Officer Members of the Academic and Academic Related Staff Placement Providers Student</p>
<p><b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b> Attached</p>

**Terms of Reference:**

It is the role of the Committee to consider the circumstances of individual student's health and/or conduct where there is concern regarding that student's fitness to practise.

In particular, it is the role of the committee to:

- Receive and consider accounts of unprofessional conduct;
- Receive and consider accounts of the health of students where there may be a risk to patients, the public, colleagues, or themselves
- Receive and consider accounts from prospective students who have made a disclosure regarding health and/ or criminal convictions

When considering accounts of unprofessional conduct particular reference will be made to the following guidelines: Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Conduct (HPC) [http://www.hpcuk.org/assets/documents/1000062CHPC034HPCA5\\_Standards\\_of\\_conduct\\_performance\\_and\\_ethics.pdf](http://www.hpcuk.org/assets/documents/1000062CHPC034HPCA5_Standards_of_conduct_performance_and_ethics.pdf) British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct [http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code\\_of\\_ethics\\_and\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code_of_ethics_and_conduct.pdf) British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/assets/docs/BACP-Ethical-Framework-for-Good-Practice-in-Counselling-and-Psychotherapy\\_1276615182.pdf](http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/assets/docs/BACP-Ethical-Framework-for-Good-Practice-in-Counselling-and-Psychotherapy_1276615182.pdf) These will be made available to all students via KLE/ weblinks. The committee will also refer to these publications as appropriate.

### **Matters that can be considered**

- Concerns in relation to the student's fitness to practise on the grounds of health or behaviour;
- Allegations of misconduct;
- Proven cases of academic misconduct i.e. plagiarism or examination misconduct under Keele University Academic Regulation 8.12.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulation8/>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/paa/studentappealscomplaintsandconduct/studentacademicconduct/>

The following are examples of matters that may be referred for consideration:

- Conviction of a criminal offence;
- Falsification of patient or other professional records (including student records);
- Substance misuse;
- Reporting for studies / duty in an intoxicated state;
- Inappropriate or intimidating behaviour;
- Incidents of violence on or off University premises;
- Severe and relapsing mental and / or physical illness;
- Carrier of a serious communicable disease that poses a risk;
- Exploiting the vulnerability of patients or clients;
- Offences against patients, clients and / or staff;
- Proven cases of academic misconduct.

All proven cases of plagiarism or examination cheating under Keele University Academic Regulation 8.12 will be referred by the School Academic Conduct Officer / Deputy Academic Conduct Officer without prejudice to the Head of School. The Head of School will then decide if the case is to proceed to the School Health and Conduct Committee.

- Academic misconduct pertaining to formative work  
(this list is not exhaustive).

### **Procedures**

The Committee's prime function is to consider evidence of a student's fitness to practise and, where there is cause for concern, make a referral to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee. The School Health and Conduct Committee will therefore be conducted in an inquisitorial and not an adversarial manner.

The following is the normal process for consideration of a student's circumstances by the School Health and Conduct Committee:

1. All potential referrals to the School Health and Conduct Committee should be forwarded to a nominated senior School of Psychology administrator. Where referrals are made regarding prospective students that referral will be made with the individual's written permission to disclose pertinent information. N.B All stages of this process will be documented

- Referrals may be made by members of the teaching staff, students, placement providers, external health professional supervisors, patients and members of the public;
- Referrals need not be made explicitly to the School Health and Conduct Committee; rather, all complaints about students' conduct or fitness to practise should be considered.

2. Referrals will be collated by the nominated administrator and considered for referral to the full School Health and Conduct Committee by two members of Committee, including at least one of: the Head of School of Psychology, the Directors of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes and Director of Learning and Teaching.

- In considering the circumstances of each potential referral the senior staff will be mindful of the gravity of the circumstances, the potential impact on patient and public well-being, and (in the case of less serious conduct issues) whether there is a pattern of minor but repeated poor professional conduct on file. Where appropriate, additional information may be requested.
- Where the decision is that no referral to the School Health and Conduct Committee is needed a full record must be kept in the student's file.

In all other cases the circumstances will be passed to the School Health and Conduct Committee for consideration.

3. For each referral that is passed to the Committee the student will be given prior notice in writing by the School administrative staff:

- This communication will contain the reason(s) for the referral as well as the date and time of the School Health and Conduct Committee;
- A full set of documentation pertaining to the inquiry will be appended to the letter (i.e. copy of School Health and Conduct Procedure; the report of the issue under investigation; supportive documentary evidence);
- At least two weeks' notice will be given to the student
- A referred student should be:
  - asked to indicate to the School administrative office in writing his/her intention to attend
  - reminded that they can seek advice from the Independent Advice Unit in the Students' Union / Student Support /Lecturer in the School prior to attending.
  - invited to provide complete and comprehensive documentary evidence of mitigating circumstances to support their case, to the Secretary to the Committee at least one week in advance of the meeting. Where matters of health are considered, the Committee would require submission of supporting information by a registered health care professional. This information should be provided at least one week in advance of the meeting.

4. Prior to a meeting of the Committee the nominated administrator will provide the committee members with a report of the circumstances, including any communications or evidence made or provided by the student for each case to be considered.

5. The meeting will be conducted as follows:

- i. For each student the committee will consider in private the report presented;
- ii. The Chair will then invite the student to present any information that they feel is relevant and any evidence of mitigation;
- iii. The student may be accompanied by a friend / supporter;
- iv. If a student chooses not to attend, a written submission and or evidence of mitigation supplied by the student will be considered. The Committee will generally not consider supporting statements from family or friends but will consider documentary evidence from general practitioners and other similar bodies.
  - If a student asserts, for reasons considered valid by the committee, that s/he is not able to attend the case may be deferred until the next meeting. However, where the circumstances indicate a significant risk to patients, the public or colleagues, the committee may make a referral to the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee where interim action may be taken;
  - If a student asserts that s/he is not able to attend but the reasons given are not considered valid by the committee the case may be considered in his/her absence based upon the available reports and evidence;
- v. The committee members may question the student under the direction of the Chair. The student's supporter may be invited to assist the committee at the discretion of the Chair;
- vi. Having given the student full opportunity to make representations, the Committee will consider the available information in private and reach a decision.

6. The Committee may:

- Find that no further action is required;
- Refer the student for support / investigation e.g., occupational health service; student support services;
- Issue a warning to the student, with recommendations where appropriate;
- Refer the student to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee (see Keele University Regulation 18 <https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulation18/#d.en.20181>).

7. The student, if available, will be informed of this decision by the Chair of the Committee and the decision will be communicated / confirmed in writing within five working days of the meeting.

8. The decision of the Committee will be documented and kept in the student's personal file. The decision of the Committee will normally be communicated to the student's personal tutor and the Programme Leader. Others, including the Director of Academic Services will be advised as is pertinent to the case and agreed by the Committee members.

9. The student may appeal against any decision that is reached. Where a student is unwilling to accept the decision of the School of Psychology Health and Conduct Committee she/he should inform the Head of School in writing within 14 days of being notified of the decision of the Committee. The circumstances of the case will then be referred to and considered by the Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee.

10. The School of Psychology Health and Conduct Committee will meet with full membership (as far as practicable) annually to review procedures and recommend amendment as appropriate.

## Procedure

The following outlines the procedure for referrals to the School Health and Conduct Committee and its proceedings (see Table 1).

### Conduct of the Meeting:

- The Chair opens the meeting and introduces panel members to each other;
- The Chair invites the panel to review received documentation pertaining to the inquiry;
- The Chair asks the Committee Secretary to invite the student and any representative to the meeting.

The Chair:

- a. Introduces panel members
- b. Asks student to confirm name
- c. Explain role of representatives, if any and when they can speak
  - when student asks them to
  - at the end to comment
- d. Explains the purpose of the Committee meeting
- e. Asks them to explain the circumstances
- f. Asks if they are aware of the School Health and Conduct Procedure
- g. Asks if they were made aware of regulatory body requirements and student guidance in relation to regulatory body requirements
- h. Asks if they were aware of the School's Health and Conduct requirements, in the course regulations; periodic updates pertaining to professional conduct
- i. Asks if they signed a declaration of good health and professional conduct

The inquiry:

- j. The Chair asks specific questions
  - k. The Chair invites each panel member to ask specific questions
  - l. The Chair asks the student if they wish to add anything
  - m. The Chair asks representatives if they wish to add anything
- The student and representative(s) are asked to leave and wait to be called;
  - The Chair invites panel discussion and the recommendation is made (see range of recommendations below);
  - The Student and representative(s) are invited back in;
  - The Chair summarises the case and delivers the recommendation that will be confirmed in writing;
  - The Chair thanks student, and representatives, for attending and asks them to leave.

### Recommendations of the Committee

Recommendations of the Committee may include one or more of the following:-

- No further action is required;
- Issue a warning to the student, with recommendations where appropriate;
- The student is referred to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee.

The Chair of the Committee will inform the student of this decision and this decision will be confirmed in writing from the Head of School (or nominated Chair of the panel) within five working days of the meeting.

Should the student be unwilling to accept the outcome of the inquiry, the case will be referred to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee.

If a case is referred to the Faculty of Natural Sciences Fitness to Practise Committee a full report together with a full set of documentary evidence to support the case will be sent to the Faculty Office to prepare the Fitness to Practise inquiry.

**Table 1: A summary of the essential features and principle lines of responsibility of the fitness to practice procedure.**

The following diagram represents in summary only the essential features and principal lines of responsibility of the Fitness to Practise Procedure for all School students; the textual description of the Health and Conduct procedure is definitive.

