

University of Aberdeen

Guidance Notes for:

- Students studying as a candidate for the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB);
- Students studying for an intercalated degree within the Degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB);
- Students studying as a candidate for the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) or the Dip HE in Dental Technology;
- Students studying as a candidate for the MSc Physicians Associate Studies (PA);
- Graduates of the University of Aberdeen with the Degrees of MBChB during their pre-registration (Foundation Year 1) period of training;

who are being considered for disciplinary action on the grounds that they are not “Fit to Practise” under the relevant regulations for their programme of study.

These Guidance Notes describe the procedures that must be followed in regard to any such allegations, the mechanisms for response and rights of appeal.

Any reference to Regulator Guidelines refers to the relevant professional regulators latest guidance documents. Where none exist the GMC documents ‘Professional behavior and fitness to practise’ (<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/professional-behaviour-and-fitness-to-practise>) and ‘Achieving good medical practice’ (<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/achieving-good-medical-practice>) , will be utilized.

If you would like more help after you have read these Guidance Notes, links to further sources of information and support are provided through this document.

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1. How are concerns raised

Preliminary concerns can be raised from a variety of sources, including but not restricted to: -

Academic

Administrative

Clinical

Occupational Health Service

Other students

Outside agencies, such as the Police

The student themselves

Members of the public

Anonymous – however, this will be considered on the merit of the information and severity of the accusation.

And cover a wide variety of concerns, including but not restricted to: -

Inappropriate conduct

Lack of attendance

Lack of engagement

Failure to manage ongoing health issues

Any other Unprofessional behavior

If reaching a certain stage and significant degree of seriousness, the investigation and support for fitness to practise concerns becomes '**disclosable**'. This means that going forwards the student will be required to declare the issues to the relevant professional regulator (e.g. GDC or GMC) whenever they require this e.g. when registering with the professional regulator at the end of your programme, or when applying for jobs in the postgraduate sector.

2. Low Level concerns/processes

Student support meetings and advisory meetings are themselves not disclosable Fitness to Practise processes. However, it should be noted that there are some things which lead to these types of meetings may in themselves be disclosable e.g. criminal convictions.

Advisory meetings have formal paperwork. Normally this will be a meeting with the student and someone with them for support, 2 members of academic staff and a clerk. The student will receive a letter (which will detail the concerns, date, time and venue as well as those who will be at the meeting) and an evidence folder (with the items to be considered) before the meeting. The evidence folder can be updated during the run up to the meeting if further evidence becomes available. In addition to those at the advisory meeting, the paperwork is shared with the relevant Programme Lead, the student's Regent and the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition Healthcare Student Support Lead.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, all communications will be with the student through at their university registered address and by means of their university email account.

The student will normally be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting during term time (or 10 working days out with). It is necessary that they confirm their attendance and advise if they plan to bring someone to support and who this is (this is strongly recommended). It should be noted this is restricted to one supporter. It is important to remember that during meeting the panel want to hear from the student to get their perspective and understanding.

The student has the opportunity to provide written evidence and/or a statement answering the concerns ahead of the meeting.

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The student may ask for one reschedule of the meeting if there is a satisfactory and evidenced reason. If they fail to attend a meeting, they will be offered a second opportunity. Under these circumstances the second meeting would go ahead without them should they still not attend with a strongly increased likelihood that this would result in referral to the next stage of process.

At the advisory meeting there will be a clerk who will keep a summary note.

The Academic lead will:

- Welcome everyone and make introductions.
- Explain the process to be followed and review the fitness to practise flowchart. (Appendix 1)
- Ask and ensure the process is clear to all present.
- Ask if the student has any additional evidence they wish to present.
- Explain why the meeting has been called and ask the student to make an initial statement giving their response/reasons, acknowledging if they have provided a written statement.
- Work through the scenario/evidence questioning as appropriate.
- Explore any potential reasons and/or reasonable resolutions.
- Allow student and supporter opportunities to speak
- Ask the student to make a final statement.
- Highlight the next steps, including confirmation of note, outcome and appeals process.
- Close the meeting and thank all participants.

The student will receive the meeting note and be asked to check for factual inaccuracies and to confirm the note within 5 working days.

Within five working days of the confirmation of the meeting note, the advisory meeting outcome will be sent to the student. Potential outcomes include one or more of the following (see Glossary for definitions):

- No action
- Support structures put in place
- Advice
- Recommendations
- Requirements
- Remedial Training
- Warnings
- Reasonable adjustments, normally only following OHS report
- Referral to Fitness to Practise Investigation

Students can appeal an advisory meeting outcome through the University Appeals process, but it should be noted that appeals can only consider grounds of procedure and not the academic judgement made following the advisory meeting. In particular, an appeal panel cannot challenge the judgement of referral to a full Fitness to Practise Investigation. To appeal the student should complete a Part A and send to Registry, copying in the clerk, within 10 working days of the outcome, and stating the grounds of appeal.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/appeals-complaints-3380.php>

If the matter is referred for investigation, the Head of Programme, or their representative, will decide whether there is a case to answer by reviewing the concern, the student file and any other relevant information.

3. Issues which raise concerns relating to the University Code of Practice on Student Discipline

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If the matter under consideration falls within the remit of the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline, e.g. academic misconduct such as cheating, contract cheating or plagiarism (for further information see: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/student-discipline-and-fitness-to-practise-6120.php>), the first process will be to complete an investigation under the Code of Practice on Student Discipline. A first offence of plagiarism or collusion may be investigated within the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition but other academic misconduct and any second offence will be forwarded to the University Academic Registrar for investigation. Where the concern has raised a question around Fitness to Practise then the investigation by the Academic Registrar will be followed by an advisory meeting to explore this aspect.

4. What will happen if matters progress to formal Fitness to Practise Disclosable Processes

Any student in this situation will be advised of the process and encouraged to seek support if they have not already done so. Where events could indicate that there have been health concerns then there may be referral for Occupational Health guidance and support at this point, if this has not already occurred. It is normally the case that the student will continue with their studies in the usual way throughout this process.

Exceptionally, where there is a safety concern, the Head of School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition or in their absence either the Director of the Institute of Education for Medical and Dental Sciences or the Director of the Institute for Dentistry, may recommend that the student's status as a matriculated student/trainee be suspended immediately, or that they be excluded from specified activities of the University/training programme, pending further consideration of the case through fitness to practise procedures by the Fitness to Practise Committee, in accordance with the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline.

5. Fitness to Practise Investigation – paperwork, meeting, outcomes, appeal

Please note that any Fitness to Practise Investigation and the outcomes of the investigation require to be disclosed to any future healthcare regulator or employer.

Such investigations are formal and follow a formal process. Normally at a Fitness to Practise Investigation meeting with the student there will be 2 Investigators (who undertake the Investigation on behalf of the School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition although they may come from elsewhere e.g. other areas of the University or NHS) and a clerk. The student will receive all the paperwork to be considered during the investigation. This will include a letter (which will detail the concerns, date, time and venue as well as those who will be at the meeting) and an evidence folder (with the items to be considered). This can be updated during the run up to the meeting if further evidence becomes available provided by the student or by the investigators. This paperwork will be shared with those undertaking the investigation, the relevant Institute Director, the Programme Lead, relevant student Regent and Student Support Lead.

The student will normally be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting during term time (or 10 working days out with), along with initial paperwork.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, all communications will be with the student through at their university registered address and by means of their university email account.

The student is required confirm attendance and advise who they will be bringing to support them (this is strongly recommended). It should be noted this is restricted to one supporter. This is a university process and it is important to remember that in such investigations the investigators are considering both the events, and also the students understanding and insight of how events relate to

consideration of professionalism and fitness to practise. Therefore, although supporters will be invited to make a contribution during the meeting, in order to make the best judgement it is essential that the investigators hear predominantly from the student and not from a third party.

The student has the opportunity to provide written evidence and/or a statement answering the concerns. It is encouraged that this is provided prior to the hearing in line with the deadline given in the papers along with any supporting evidence.

The student may request one rescheduling of the investigation meeting for a reasonable and evidenced reason. However, if the student declines the second date scheduled or fails to attend or send a representative, the meeting will go ahead in their absence with increased likelihood that there would be referral to the next stage of fitness to practise process.

At the meeting there will be a clerk who will keep a summary note.

The Investigators will:

- Welcome everyone and make introductions.
- Explain the process to be followed and review the fitness to practise flowchart. (Appendix 1)
- Ask and ensure the process is clear to all present.
- Ask if the student has any additional evidence they wish to present.
- Explain why the meeting has been called and ask the student to make an initial statement giving their response/reasons, acknowledging if they have provided a written statement.
- Work through the scenario/evidence questioning as appropriate.
- Explore any potential reasons and/or reasonable resolutions.
- Allow student and supporter opportunities to speak
- Ask the student to make a final statement.
- Highlight the next steps, including confirmation of note, outcome and appeals process.
- Close the meeting and thank all participants.

The student will receive the summary note of the meeting and be asked to check for factual inaccuracies and then confirm the final version of the note within 5 working days.

The fitness to practise outcome will be received in writing, within 5 working days of confirmation of the note. Potential outcomes include (see Glossary for definitions): -

- No action
- Formal warning
- Requirements
- Undertakings (offered by student and accepted by Investigators)
- Referral to Fitness to Practise Committee to independently review Fitness to Practise

Appeal would refer the matter to the next level of process. To appeal the student should advise the Fitness to Practise Committee Clerk in writing within 5 working days of the grounds of appeal, who will ensure the appeal progresses to the next stage.

6. Fitness to Practise Committee - paperwork, meeting, outcomes, appeal

Outcomes from Fitness to Practise Committee Hearings are disclosable to any future healthcare regulator or employer.

The University Senate has delegated authority to consider recommendations concerning students' fitness to practise to the Fitness to Practise Committee (Healthcare) in accordance with the relevant Regulations.

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The committee will hear representations submitted by the student against any such recommendations and will take decisions about whether or not sanctions should be issued against the student. The committee may decide that the student should be excluded from specified activities of the University/programme of study or whether the student's studies as a healthcare professional should be suspended or terminated.

The procedures have formal paperwork and normally require a hearing. The student will receive the paperwork consisting of a letter (which will detail the concerns, date, time and venue as well as those who will be at the hearing) and an evidence folder (with the items to be considered). This can be updated during the run up to the meeting if further evidence becomes available to either the Investigators or the student. All paperwork will be shared with those undertaking the investigation, Head of School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition, relevant Institute Director, Programme Lead, Regent and Student Support Lead.

The student will normally be given 5 working days' notice of the meeting during term time (or 10 working days out with).

Except in extraordinary circumstances, all communications will be with the student through at their university registered address and by means of their university email account.

The Committee will normally consist of a convenor (or deputy) and a minimum of 3 (but no more than 4) further members to be quorate, including one non-clinical member. In addition to the convenor (or deputy), the committee members will include 1 or 2 clinicians, 1 non-clinical member, and 1 external drawn from another University Healthcare School - all of whom are appointed members with appropriate training. Where possible clinical members will be drawn from the professional constituency of the student's programme of study. In exceptional circumstances the Committee can continue with 2 members and a convenor. The detailed composition of the Fitness to Practise Committee (Healthcare) is approved annually by the University of Aberdeen Quality Assurance Committee.

There will also be a Clerk who will keep a summary note of the meeting, and one or both of the Fitness to Practise Investigators.

The student is required confirm their attendance in advance and advise who they will be bringing to support them (this is strongly recommended). It should be noted this is restricted to one supporter. It is important to remember the Committee want to hear from the student. The student may also bring witnesses provided they inform the Clerk of the Committee no later than the designated date prior to the date of the hearing.

The student, the Investigators and the Committee can call witnesses. The purpose of their attendance should be clearly highlighted in the written evidence. On the day they will be called at an appropriate time to give evidence, be questioned by both parties and the committee and then leave the hearing.

The responsibility for ensuring that the student supporters and any witness(es) attend at the appropriate date and time and receive a copy of the papers for the hearing lies with the student. Witnesses cannot be represented and cannot ask questions at the hearing.

The student has the opportunity to provide written evidence and/or a statement answering the concerns. This is strongly encouraged and should be provided in line with the deadline provided in the letter. If the student fails to submit documentation by the required date which they later wish considered, they need to satisfy the Convener that they were not reasonably able to submit the documentary evidence earlier. While the Convener's decision shall be final in this regard, there is the

right to seek independent review of a decision not to consider supporting evidence that is submitted after the required deadline. Late submission of evidence may lead to postponement of the hearing.

The student may ask for one rescheduling if they can provide a satisfactory and evidenced reason for this. However, if the student declines or fails to attend, or sends a representative, the meeting could go ahead in their absence and the likelihood is this could result in the highest level of sanction.

The Convener of a Fitness to Practise Committee has delegated powers to uphold representations without the need for the Committee to meet if, having considered the written representations and any response received, it is clear that the representations should be upheld.

Students will be allowed to state an objection that they believe a member of the Committee is unable to be impartial, provided it is done before or at the very start of the hearing of the Committee. It will be for the Convener of the Committee to decide, in the interests of fairness, whether that member should remain or should be replaced by another member. Replacement would normally only be required if the removal would make the committee non- quorate. This may result in the hearing being postponed, to allow the alternate member time to study the papers circulated for the hearing. As such we would strongly recommend objections are raised as early as possible. Objections to committee members cannot be admitted later, unless the Convener of the Committee decides that the student could not reasonably have known of or could not reasonably have stated that objection earlier.

Please note that if a member of the Committee has taught the student, sat on a previous unrelated disciplinary process for the student or otherwise been involved in their education, this will not normally be sufficient evidence of lack of impartiality to justify that member's exclusion from hearings in regard to that student.

The Convener will: –

- Welcome everyone and make introductions, highlighting the process and protocols. They will ensure all parties have all papers required.
- Invite the Investigating Officer/s to present the circumstances of the case and to indicate why they believe that the student is not fit to practise medicine and to describe the investigation undertaken by him/her and their colleague in reaching that view.
- Invite members of the Committee to address questions to the Investigating Officer/s.
- Invite the student (if present) or, if preferred, their representative (where applicable) to respond to the Investigating Officers' concerns and indicate why they believe they should be permitted to continue with their studies.
- Invite members of the Committee to address questions to the student and/or their representative.
- Invite any witnesses to make a statement.
- Invite members of the Committee to address questions to any witnesses.
- Invite the student and/or their representative to address questions to the Investigating Officer/s, through the Convener.
- Invite the Investigating Officer/s to make a closing statement.
- Invite the student and/or their representative to make a closing statement.

When the Convener is satisfied that the student, any person accompanying them, and the Committee members have no more questions to ask or statements to make, they will highlight the remaining process for the student, including potential routes of appeal. All those present except the Committee members and the Clerk will then be asked to leave the room while the Committee considers its decision. The Convener will have the right to vote as a member of the Committee and, additionally, will have a casting vote if necessary.

The student will receive a note of the meeting and be asked to check for factual inaccuracies and then confirm the final note within 5 working days.

In some cases, the Committee may seek further evidence (e.g. OHS report) and the decision may be postponed, or the committee may reconvene when the evidence is available to reach the final decision.

Finally, an outcome will be received in writing, normally within 5 working days of confirmation of the final meeting note.

Potential outcomes include (see Glossary for definitions): -

- No action
- Formal warning
- Undertakings (offered by student and accepted by Committee)
- Conditions
- Suspension
- Expulsion (with subsequent inclusion on the Excluded Students Database)

Any appeal following the outcome of a Fitness to Practise Committee hearing would utilise the Part C University Appeals process. The student would complete the Part C form (found at the web link provided below) and send to Academic Services, copying in the Clerk to the Fitness to Practise Committee. This would refer the matter to the grounds to proceed panel only if there are valid grounds to do so (under section point 2.1 of the Policy and Procedures on Academic Appeals).

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/appeals-complaints-3380.php>

An initial assessment of the appeal is made by a Grounds to Proceed Panel who may refuse the appeal or refer any procedural irregularity back to the original Committee for rehearing on that point.

If as part of the appeals process, the student submits new evidence to support their representations, this will be referred to the Convener of the Fitness to Practise Committee. After consideration of this evidence, the Convener will decide whether the appeal should be upheld either by Convener action or whether the new evidence warrants the Committee re-convening.

In either circumstance if the Committee is reconvened, the process followed at the hearing will be as described above but only the point of referral would be considered.

This is the final stage of appeal available within University processes, and the student will be advised of their right to review by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

7. Medical Conditions

The student may believe that any concerns with their conduct or behaviour were the consequence of a medical condition or personal circumstance and that this should be considered. For such a medical condition or personal circumstance to be taken into account, supporting evidence must be provided by the student.

If concerns about fitness to practise relate to a student's health, to allow appropriate consideration it is particularly important that the student ask a Medical Practitioner to provide a report for the student to submit, detailing the medical circumstances, any treatment and comment on the prognosis where this has implications for fitness to practice, in their view as a professional.

The student may be referred to the Occupational Health Service for assessment and the processes may be suspended pending the outcome of such an assessment. The advisory panel or Investigators may also decide to recommend to the Director of the Institute of Education for Medical and Dental Sciences that the student's studies/training be suspended, or that they be excluded from specified activities of the University/training programme forthwith, in accordance with the programme regulations, pending receipt of the report. The Committee may undertake these actions directly.

8. Rights & Responsibilities

The student must ensure that any written information reaches the Committee, Investigating Officers or panel in line with stated deadlines. All papers will be sent to the student's University email account only and it is their responsibility to ensure this is regularly checked and any documentation shared with representatives or witnesses.

Written responses must not contain abusive, threatening or offensive language and/or comments which could be interpreted as being defamatory or derogatory in nature. However, if there are minor procedural deficiencies in the representations but otherwise they are well founded, the student will be given the opportunity of revising their representations. It will be for the Convener of the Committee to determine whether the student should be allowed to revise their representations. Whilst the Convener's decision shall be final, the student will have the right to seek independent review of a decision not to allow them to revise their representations.

Any statement provided should give reasons for challenging any concern or recommendations in regard to fitness to practise. Such a statement should be clearly and concisely expressed and, as far as possible, all supporting documentation submitted in advance.

The student will normally be given at least five working days' notice of a meeting. If there is good reason, this may be reduced both by the University or at the request of the student, if reasonable and practical.

If a date is arranged for the hearing of the case and the student has indicated that they wish to attend the scheduled hearing, they are obliged to either attend the hearing in person or arrange for someone to represent them. If they cannot attend or refuse to attend on the agreed date, a new date will be set with one opportunity of attending a second scheduled hearing. If the student fails to attend or send a representative, to either the original or rearranged date, the case may be considered, including any written representations submitted, in the student's absence.

It should be noted timeframes for hearings are likely to be impacted by the clinical commitments of senior staff, which can require 8 weeks lead time.

The student has the right to bring one supporter. This may be either personal support or alternatively representation from either a defense union or a legal representative. Legal representatives are not required or encouraged at any stage. However, if the student wishes to utilise their services this is allowable. In these circumstances the University should receive confirmation of this from the student by the defined deadline and may choose to have its own legal representatives present. The process will not be altered, and the priority will always be to hear from the student directly. Students who elect to have a representative or supporter should note it is their responsibility to share any papers with this person.

The student has the right to expect that everyone who responds to, investigates or adjudicates any issue of their fitness to practise, will do so impartially and will act in any matter in which they have a material interest, or a potential conflict of interest may.

The student has the right to expect that their case will be considered on its own merits and on its particular facts and circumstances so that justice may be done and may also be seen to be done.

The student's privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the process, as far as possible. However, limited disclosure of any allegations and subsequent representations will be necessary in order to consider the case and where issues of patient and colleague safety exist to ensure this is protected.

Retention of data - Due to increasing requirements of regulators, employers, past students and reference queries there is a local policy on data retention. Following graduation or withdrawal, the School will retain records of disciplinary actions, such as advisories, Fitness to Practise investigations or committee hearings, for a period of 60 years. They may be hard copy or electronic records.

Generally, the student's status will not be affected during the processes unless suspension or exclusion from specified activities of the University/training programme has been granted. If following a committee hearing with a finding of suspension or exclusion there is an appeal, the Head of School of Medicine, Medical Science and Nutrition or in their absence either the Director of the Institute for Education in Medical and Dental Sciences or Director of Dentistry can take a decision on the grounds of patient and colleague safety.

9. Independent Review of a Decision of the University

In accordance with the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) has responsibility for investigating student appeals and complaints. The SPSO provides a route for those who have exhausted the University's appeals and complaints procedures, to refer their appeal or complaint for independent review, where they are dissatisfied with the handling of the internal appeals or complaints procedure. Once the SPSO has made a judgement, it would be for the University Court to decide whether or not to accept the judgement and on any remedial action to be taken. Where the issue is one of Fitness to Practise this would only allow refusal or referral back to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Students/doctors in training whose appeals are not upheld by the University, or who have not submitted their appeal or documentary evidence by the required timescales, will be informed of the procedures for referral of their appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for independent review.

10. Disclosure and the Excluded Students Database

Students are responsible for disclosing any investigations or committee hearings taken under these procedures to their regulator or future healthcare employer. The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition may also pass on personal information to the regulator, and other medical schools or postgraduate deaneries in accordance with regulator guidelines, if a student receives a warning or sanction.

If there is found to be no case to answer following an investigation this process is not disclosable.

Certain issues may remain disclosable to the regulator regardless of the level or outcomes of the processes e.g. criminal offences. Students should always ensure they follow their regulators guidance.

The excluded students' database is maintained by the Healthcare Schools Councils and if the Committee conclude that a student should be excluded from their course of study they will also require inclusion on the relevant database. Rules relating to this are available from the appropriate healthcare school council.

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11. Expenses

If an appeal is successful, the student may be entitled to a refund of incidental expenses necessarily incurred in attending a hearing(s). However, they must contact the administrator arranging the hearing **before committing** to any expenditure and receive confirmation that the expenditure proposed is eligible for refund if the appeal is successful. <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/academic-quality-handbook/AandC%20-%20Payment%20of%20expenses%20incurred.pdf>

12. Further guidance

The way in which the University's Policy on Fitness to Practice is implemented is monitored by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning and, through that Committee, by the Senate and the University Court. The University is committed to equality for all students to ensure there is no discrimination. There are nine 'protected characteristics' in equality and diversity related legislation that make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of: sex; age; race; disability; religion & belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity; and marriage & civil partnership. The University will monitor these processes relating to students' studies to ensure, so far as possible, that no discrimination exists.

You may find it useful to consult the University's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement. You can download this at: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/equality/policy.shtml>

For further clarity, please contact any of the following:

- the Clerk to the Committee (Tel: (01224) 437754; e-mail: arlene.ray@abdn.ac.uk)
- the School Registry Officer (Tel: (01224) 437927; e-mail: sarahmiller@abdn.ac.uk)
- Student Support Services (Tel : (01224) 273935 ; e-mail : student.support@abdn.ac.uk)
- AUSA (Tel: (01224) 274200; e-mail: ausaadvise@abdn.ac.uk)

If, once you have looked at these Guidance Notes and sought further clarity, you feel that you have a serious concern that is not covered by any of them, you should consult the Code of Practice on Whistleblowing (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/policy-zone-governance-and-compliance/2015-03-24_Whistleblowing_PolicyApproved_Court.pdf) which "...is designed to allow employees and all other members of the University to raise concerns or to disclose information which, the complainant or informant believes, shows malpractice."

13. Glossary

Conflict of Interest:

An example would be where a member of the Committee has been involved in the decision against which representations are being made. Normal teaching or communication regarding other topics will not normally be seen as a conflict.

Investigating Officers:

Any reference to the Investigating Officers can be taken to refer to the Head of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition/Postgraduate Dean, and/or any senior staff appointed by him/her to undertake a particular investigation. Each case will be allocated a panel of two Investigating Officers.

Minor Procedural Deficiencies:

An example would be where the student has unwittingly made an incorrect claim or assertion through a misunderstanding of University procedures.

Personal Circumstance:

A personal matter which, the student believes, has affected their performance or attendance and which has indirectly resulted in a sanction. An example would be where the student has an ongoing medical problem which has affected their performance.

Sanctions:

A There are three lesser level sanctions:

1. Recommendations:

A proposal as to a positive course of action that can be taken by the student.

2. Requirements:

A compulsory action that is required from the student.

3. Remediation:

Often further teaching to be undertaken by the student or actions to address the specific area of concern.

B There are also five types of Fitness to Practise sanctions. Beginning with the least severe, the sanctions are:

1. Warnings:

Formal statements that indicate that the student's behaviour is unacceptable. These apply where there is no current finding of impairment, or risk to patients or the public confidence in the profession.

2. Undertakings:

A promise given by the student in writing to the Investigating Officers or Committee Convenor that they will not behave in a certain way in the future.

3. Conditions:

Set objectives where the student is clear what is expected. These must be specific, proportionate, workable, time bound, measurable and monitored.

4. Suspension from course of study:

Prevents the student from continuing with their course for a specified period and graduating at the expected time.

5. Expulsion from course of study:

Prevents the student from continuing with their course. The student may be helped to transfer to another course if appropriate. However, the nature of the student's behaviour may mean that they could not be accepted on certain courses, or even on any other course.

Appendix 1

