



BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice Fitness to Practise Policy

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Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					

BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice

Fitness to Practise Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Policy applies to students studying the BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice course which is approved by the Association for Nutrition (AfN). Upon successful completion of this course a student will be eligible to apply to the AfN Register as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr).
- 1.2 As training health care professionals, students studying this course must also demonstrate their fitness to practise and comply with the ethos of fitness to practise for the duration of their studies. This includes both within and outside of the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) and any practice-based setting (placement) and from the point of admission to the point of graduation (or any such time that a student ceases to be a student of the UCO) and includes vacation periods, during an interruption of study and during any periods of suspension from the course of study or the UCO.
- 1.3 In line with the AfN's standards, this policy clearly identifies what constitutes fitness to practise and fitness to practise concerns, what triggers formal action in response to a fitness to practise concern, what the formal action will consist of and what the possible outcomes are.

2. WHAT IS FITNESS TO PRACTISE?

- 2.1 Health care professionals wishing to register with the AFN must be fit to practise, i.e. have the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise safely and effectively in addition to ensuring that their professional and personal conduct within and outside of their working environment is sound and appropriate.
- 2.2 As a student studying on a course approved by the AFN, you are expected to meet the standards described in the AFN's Standards of Ethics, Conduct & Performance. Working towards and with these standards throughout your studies will prepare you for professional life and enable you to meet the AFN's registration requirements.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that you remain fit to practise throughout your studies you should:
 - a) Maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct;
 - b) Maintain your health and disclose any health concerns immediately to the Student Support Officer;
 - c) Promote and protect the interests of your service users (the term service users includes patients and clients);
 - d) Communicate appropriately and effectively;
 - e) Work within the limits of your knowledge and skills;
 - f) Delegate appropriately;
 - g) Respect confidentiality;
 - h) Manage risk;
 - i) Report concerns about safety;
 - j) Be open when things go wrong;
 - k) Be honest and trustworthy;

- l) Keep records of your work with your service users;
- m) Use social media responsibly;
- n) Comply with all UCO Policies and Procedures.

3. WHAT CONSTITUTES A FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERN?

- 3.1 If you do not align with the standards and expectations referred to in Section 2, you may become the subject of a fitness to practise concern.
- 3.2 The following list (which is not exhaustive) provides examples of behaviour that may lead to a fitness to practise concern:
- a) Dishonesty, fraud or abuse of trust;
 - b) Exploitation of a vulnerable person;
 - c) Failure to act in the best interests of service users;
 - d) Serious breaches of a service user's confidentiality or data protection requirements;
 - e) Committing reckless or deliberately harmful acts;
 - f) Serious or repeated mistakes in service user care;
 - g) Behaviour that has harmed service users or put them at risk of harm;
 - h) Breach of a professional relationship with a service user;
 - i) Violence, sexual misconduct or indecent behaviour;
 - j) A caution or conviction for a criminal offence.
 - k) Health conditions that are not being managed that may affect the safety of service users and/ or the academic or wider community;
 - l) Substance abuse or misuse;
 - m) An adverse finding by another regulatory body;
 - n) Fraudulent or incorrect use of a professional title;
 - o) Other equally serious activities which affect public confidence in the profession.
- 3.3 This Fitness to Practise Policy is part of a trio of policies that also include Support to Study and Code of Conduct & Disciplinary policies. Depending on the nature of the concerns, the case might be dealt with by any one of these policies and as the case is managed, the case can switch to any of these policies, consistent with the needs of the case. For example, persistent and ongoing attendance issues will normally be dealt with under Disciplinary Procedures but may become a Fitness to Practise concern if attendance issues continue.
- 3.4 Every fitness to practice concern raised will be considered on an individual basis.

4. WHO CAN RAISE A FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERN?

- 4.1 Anyone can raise a fitness to practise concern including other students, UCO staff, practice-based placement staff, service users, employers and the public.

5. STAGE 1 - NOTIFICATION OF A FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERN

- 5.1 If an individual has cause to raise a fitness to practise concern (hereafter called the alleged concern), they should notify the BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice Course Leader (hereafter referred to as the Course Leader) in writing at the earliest possibility by completing the “Fitness to Practise Concern Form” provided in [Appendix 1](#) and supplying any evidence that supports the alleged concern. The Course Leader will acknowledge receipt of this form, normally within five working days.
- 5.2 The Course Leader will advise the Registrar of the case.
- 5.3 The Course Leader will inform the student alleged to have committed the fitness to practise breach that an investigation into the concern is commencing, normally within five working days of receipt of the Fitness to Practise Concern Form.
- 5.4 An investigation in response to a fitness to practise concern is a very serious matter and any student who is the subject of such an investigation is advised to seek assistance and support from the UCO Student Services.
- 5.5 If, in the opinion of the Course Leader the alleged concern is very serious or raises safeguarding concerns in relation to the student or others, the Course Leader will recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that the student is suspended for the duration of the investigation of the alleged concern. If the Vice-Chancellor considers that the allegation justifies the suspension, they will notify the student of the suspension as soon as is reasonably practicable. The student may appeal against the suspension to the Vice-Chancellor orally or in writing, providing their reasons why they should not be suspended and any supporting documentary evidence. Suspensions will be reviewed regularly, and the review dates provided in advance to the student.
- 5.6 If, in the opinion of the Course Leader, the alleged concern amounts to criminal activity, they will inform the Vice-Chancellor. If the Vice-Chancellor considers that the alleged concern amounts to criminal activity, they will notify the Police so that they can make their own enquiries, in which case the Vice-Chancellor will suspend the Fitness to Practise procedures pending the outcome of the police enquiry.

6. STAGE 2 – INVESTIGATION OF THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERN

- 6.1 The Registrar will appoint an Investigating Officer to investigate the alleged concern, normally within five working days of receipt of the Fitness to Practise Concern Form. The Investigating Officer will normally be a Unit Leader (or equivalent) not involved in the case and may be from another course.
- 6.2 The Investigating Officer must be appropriately trained and will act in a proportionate way by evaluating the veracity of the evidence and weighing the interests of service users, the public and colleagues against those of the student.
- 6.3 The appointed Investigating Officer will determine how to conduct the investigation using the UCO’s “Guidance for Investigations” to assist them. Normally, the investigation will include a review of the Fitness to Practise Concern Form and any initial evidence submitted with this, a formal interview with the student alleged to have committed the concern, formal interviews with any witnesses of the alleged concern, and scrutiny of any further documentary evidence

as appropriate. The Investigating Officer will draw upon evidence as indicated by the case in determining whether the facts found proven amount to the concern being proved on the balance of probabilities.

- 6.4 If the investigation is regarding a student's lack of attendance, the Investigating Officer will normally include the attendance statistics (from Student Attendance and Retention Group (SARG) minutes) and any correspondence with the student (copies of emails/letters) and a statement from the relevant Unit Leader regarding their attendance.
- 6.5 The Investigating Officer will consider whether the alleged concern is better dealt with through student support and remedial tuition rather than through a formal panel hearing. However, if the Investigating Officer finds that the alleged concern is so serious or persistent as to call into question the ability of the student to continue on the course, their fitness to practise as a student or their fitness to practise as a future nutrition professional after graduation, they will recommend to the Registrar that case be referred to the Fitness to Practise Panel.
- 6.6 The Investigating Officer will prepare a report of their findings and present the report to the Registrar, usually within fifteen working days of receiving the request to investigate.
- 6.7 Any mitigating evidence found by the Investigating Officer will be considered by the Registrar when deciding on the appropriate outcome at the Investigation Report Outcome Meeting (Stage 3).

7. STAGE 3 – INVESTIGATION REPORT OUTCOME MEETING

- 7.1 The Registrar will arrange a meeting with the student and Course Leader to discuss the Investigating Officer's Report and the proposed outcome/s.
- 7.2 The student will be provided with a copy of the report prior to the meeting and will be permitted to be accompanied to the meeting, for example a fellow UCO registered student, an officer of the UCO Students' Union, or a member of academic staff, whose role will be pastoral and not representative. The student must notify the Registrar of the name and affiliation of the person accompanying them in advance of the meeting. It is not normally necessary to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, but if the student does decide to seek approval to be accompanied by such a person, the UCO reserves the right to include a legally qualified colleague to participate in the meeting.
- 7.3 This meeting will not be audio or video recorded. Instead, the Registrar will appoint a secretary for this meeting to formally record the discussions and outcome/s in writing.
- 7.4 The purpose of the Investigation Report Outcome Meeting will be to determine whether, having considered the Investigating Officer's report and having discussed the fitness to practise concern with the student, there are grounds for referral to a Fitness to Practise Panel or another appropriate outcome.
- 7.5 The possible outcomes to this meeting are:
 - a) The Registrar finds that there is no case to answer and closes the proceedings, and the student is provided with a Completion of Procedures Letter;
 - b) The Registrar issues an oral warning concerning the student's future conduct, and this will be noted on the student's record;

- c) The Registrar issues a written warning concerning the student's future conduct, and this will be noted on the student's record;
 - d) The Registrar finds that the case should be referred and considered under the Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Policy or Student Support to Study Policy;
 - e) The Registrar finds that the case should be referred directly to a Student Fitness to Practise Panel (Stage 4).
 - f) The Registrar may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that the student should be suspended from the UCO whilst a Student Fitness to Practise Panel is convened.
- 7.6 If the student fails to attend the Investigation Report Outcome Meeting with the Registrar and Course Leader and produces no evidence of a justifiable reason for their non-attendance, the Registrar may recommend that a Student Fitness to Practise Panel is convened.
- 7.7 Where the Registrar determines that the case should be referred to a Fitness to Practise Panel, they will compile an 'evidence bundle' for the Panel and Student. This will include:
- a) a brief Referral Report as a bundle cover;
 - b) the Notice to Appear Before a Fitness to Practise Panel and will include the date and time of the hearing and a brief but clear specification of the charge(s);
 - c) the Investigating Officer's Report;
 - d) witness statements;
 - e) any supplementary report from another member of staff acting in a capacity comparable to that of the Investigating Officer;
 - f) other documentary evidence relevant to the case;
 - g) a statement from the student subject to clause 8.6 below.
- 7.8 The Registrar will send to the student the Notice to Appear Before a Fitness to Practise Panel. This Notice to Appear will be received by the student no later than two working days following the Investigation report Outcome Meeting and give at least ten working days' notice of the hearing. In addition to this Notice, the Registrar will also send:
- a) the Registrar's Referral Report;
 - b) information given under paragraph 8.4 below concerning guidance on the format of the panel and the possible outcomes;
 - c) advice that the student will receive the full bundle of documentation to be relied upon by the Panel no later than five working days before the hearing.
- 7.9 The Panel Secretary and student will receive the bundle ideally ten but not later than five working days prior to the Student Fitness to Practise Panel hearing.

8. STAGE 4 - STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL

- 8.1 All fitness to practise cases referred to a Student Fitness to Practise Panel will normally be processed within ten working days of the referral being made by the Registrar.
- 8.2 The Student Fitness to Practise Panel will consist of panel members that are independent of the alleged concern and the subsequent investigation and will normally consist of:

- a) a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair);
 - b) a senior member of academic staff (who is a nutrition professional or dietician);
 - c) a lay member of staff;
 - d) a student;
 - e) A secretary appointed by the Registrar.
- 8.3 Panel members should have relevant experience and have had training for their role. Panellists must:
- a) know and understand the rules and regulations concerning fitness to practise and hearing conduct arrangements;
 - b) be fair-minded and capable to determine the facts of the case; whether these reach the threshold of amounting to the allegations being found proven on the balance of probabilities; and sanctions determination taking due regard to mitigation. Panellists will select the lowest level of sanction that disposes of the case, while meeting the needs to protect the good name of the profession, service users and the wider community;
 - c) be prepared to seek appropriate expert advice, making sure fitness to practise proceedings are fair and proportionate.
- 8.4 A student who is referred to the Student Fitness to Practise Panel will:
- a) be provided with Panel procedures and possible outcomes;
 - b) be notified that they may call such witnesses in defence as they think fit and must inform the Secretary of the Panel of the names of those witnesses in advance of the hearing;
 - c) be notified that they may be seek procedural advice and guidance about putting together information for the hearing from the Panel Secretary or the Student Services;
 - d) be notified that they are permitted to be accompanied by a friend for example, an officer of the UCO Students' Union, a fellow UCO registered student, or a member of academic staff, whose role will be pastoral and not representative. The Panel Secretary must be notified of the name and affiliation of the person accompanying the student in advance of the hearing;
 - e) be notified that it is not normally necessary to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, but if the student does decide to be accompanied by such a person, the UCO reserves the right to include a legally qualified colleague to participate in the hearing;
 - f) be asked to confirm whether they would like to question the Investigating Officer during the hearing.
- 8.5 The Panel and Student will, as a minimum, receive the items listed at 7.7 above.
- 8.6 The student may provide a written statement in support of their case if they choose to do so. It must be submitted to the Registrar no less than 5 working days prior to the Panel Hearing.
- 8.7 The student may admit the alleged concern at any time prior to the day of the hearing by notifying the Panel Secretary. Any admission should be recorded in writing with an accompanying reflective account that clearly demonstrates reparation which must be signed

by the student. The Panel will still convene a hearing to determine the outcome of the alleged concern and the student may attend to address the Panel prior to determination of any sanction to offer mitigation. The Panel will take into account the student's prior admission and mitigating evidence when deciding the outcome.

- 8.8 Where the student has not admitted the alleged concern prior to the day of the hearing, the hearing will normally take the following course:
- a) Having considered the Investigating Officer's Report and any documentary evidence and witness statements, the Panel will meet privately to discuss their findings and determine lines of enquiry for both the Investigating Officer and the student.
 - b) The Panel will call in the Investigating Officer and the student with their colleague.
 - c) The Panel will receive oral evidence from the Investigating Officer and their witnesses regarding the nature of the alleged concern in the presence of the student and their colleague.
 - d) The Panel will then invite the student to cross examine the Investigating Officer and their witnesses in the order of their appearance.
 - e) The Panel will question the Investigating Officer and their witnesses in the order of their appearance after any questions from the Student.
 - f) The Panel will then invite the student give oral evidence who may call their witnesses.
 - g) The Panel may then question the student and their witnesses in the order of their appearance.
 - h) After all the evidence is heard, the Investigating Officer will sum up their case and then student with sum up their case.
 - i) The Panel will then convene in camera:
 - a. the standard of proof is the civil standard (balance of probabilities);
 - b. the panel will determine the evidence that it finds reliable;
 - c. the panel will ask itself whether on the balance of probabilities the evidence found proven amounts to each of the charges made against the student being found.
 - j) The Panel will reconvene with the Student, their colleague and the Investigating Officer and the Chair will read out the Panel's findings;
 - k) The Chair will then invite the student to provide any written or verbal evidence in mitigation;
 - l) The Panel will call for evidence concerning the student's fitness to practise, disciplinary and other relevant records;
 - m) The Panel will then consider sanctions, taking into account the student's evidence in mitigation and other records:
 - a. starting at the lowest sanction available, the Panel will ask itself whether this sanction is sufficient to meet the needs of public trust, confidence and safety including interests of the wider community, in balancing the needs of the student against these criteria, as sanctions are not meant to be punitive, although they may have that effect;

- b. the Panel will work up the list and stop at the sanction that meets the needs above.
- n) The Chair of the Panel will write to the student within 5 working days confirming the outcome, where the case requires immediate action to ensure protection, the student will be notified verbally at the time of the hearing, with written confirmation within 5 working days.

9. OUTCOMES OF STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE HEARINGS

- 9.1 All warnings or sanctions will be kept on the student's file in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule.
- 9.2 Student Fitness to Practise Panels should refer to Section 11: Glossary of Terms when considering outcomes of hearings.
- 9.3 Where there is no case to answer, the student may receive advice and guidance.
- 9.4 Where there is a case to answer possible sanctions include from lowest to highest severity:
 - a) the student receives written advice and guidance;
 - b) the student received a written warning;
 - c) undertakings placed on the student's study or their wider activity;
 - d) conditions placed on the student's study or their wider activity;
 - e) suspension from the student's course or unit(s) of study or from the UCO or parts of its campus;
 - f) expulsion from the UCO.
- 9.5 The panel will make the objectives of any sanctions clear, so that the student knows what is expected of them. Sanctions should be:
 - a) specific;
 - b) proportionate;
 - c) realistic;
 - d) time bound;
 - e) with measurable outcomes;
 - f) capable of being monitored.
- 9.6 The Panel Secretary will produce a Student Fitness to Practise Hearing Report which will formally record the proceedings and the outcome of the hearing and be agreed by the Panel, normally within five working days of the hearing.
- 9.7 The outcome of the hearing will be communicated to the student by the Chair of the Panel by letter, within five working days of the hearing. The letter will also advise the student of their right to appeal the Panel's decision in line with Section 10 of this policy.

10. STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE OUTCOMES APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 10.1 A student may appeal against the decision of a Student Fitness to Practise Panel by writing to the Registrar within five working days of the Panel hearing stating the full grounds of the appeal.
- 10.2 The following only will constitute grounds for appealing:
- that new and relevant material evidence or information has emerged, which could not have been made available for consideration at the time of the hearing;
 - that the decision reached was perverse in the light of the evidence presented;
 - that there was a procedural error at the hearing or in the process leading up to it which had a material effect upon the Panel's decision;
 - That the severity of the penalty imposed was unreasonable and disproportionate.
- 10.3 If in the collective view of the Registrar and an independent member of the Senior Management Team, the grounds of appeal do not cast doubt on the validity of the Panel's decision, they will issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the student and advise them of their right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator¹.
- 10.4 If in the collective view of the Registrar and an independent member of the Senior Management Team the grounds of appeal cast doubt on the validity of the Panel's decision, the Registrar will convene an Appeal Hearing to re-examine the case in the light of any additional evidence provided by the student as follows:
- where the student was issued with a penalty other than a suspension, exclusion or expulsion the Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee) will hear the appeal. Unless it is deemed appropriate by the Vice-Chancellor, there will be no re-hearing of the matter;
 - where the student was issued with a sanction consisting of either suspension, exclusion or expulsion an Appeal Panel will hear the appeal.
- 10.5 The Appeal Panel will normally consist of:
- three Board Members of the UCO nominated by the Chair of the Board, one of whom will act as Chair and at least two of whom will be external to the UCO.
 - a Secretary appointed by the Registrar.
- 10.6 The Appeal Hearing will normally take place within fifteen working days of the receipt of the appeal.
- 10.7 A student who is invited to an Appeal Hearing will:
- be provided with a copy of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel Hearing Report.
 - be notified that they are permitted to be accompanied by a friend for example, an officer of the UCO Students' Union, a fellow UCO registered student, or a member of academic staff, whose role will be pastoral and not representative. The Panel Secretary must be notified of the name and affiliation of the person accompanying the student in advance of the hearing;

¹ <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

- c) be notified that it is not normally necessary to be accompanied by a legally qualified person, but if the student is accompanied by such a person, the UCO reserves the right to include a legally qualified colleague to participate in the hearing.
- 10.8 The Appeal Hearing will normally take the following form:
- a) a nominated member of staff appointed to present the UCO's case will address the Appeal Committee;
 - b) the student will then address the Appeal Committee;
 - c) if additional witnesses are called, they may be cross-examined;
 - d) the parties will be required to withdraw while the Appeal Panel considers its decision.
- 10.9 The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student by the Chair of the Appeal Panel by letter, normally within five working days of the hearing. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Registrar and held on the student's file within the Registry in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule.
- 10.10 Where a student's appeal is successful, the case will be referred back to the Student Fitness to Practise Panel, who will reconsider the case in light of the Appeal Panel's comments and representation from the student. The decision of this Panel will be final. A Completion of Procedures Letter which will also inform the student of the Appeal Hearing outcome will be produced and sent to the student by the Chair of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Registrar and held on the student's file within the Registry in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule.
- 10.11 Where a student's appeal is unsuccessful, whether or not the penalty involves suspension or dismissal, a Completion of Procedures Letter which will also inform the student of the Appeal Hearing outcome and advise them of their right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator², will be produced and sent to the student by the Chair of the Appeals Panel. The decision of this Panel will be final. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Registrar and held on the student's file within the Registry in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule.

11. GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR USE BY STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANELS

11.1 WARNINGS

- 11.1.1 Warnings are the lowest level of sanction. They are formal statements and may be given when a student's fitness to practise raises concerns but is not so serious that their fitness to practise is impaired or merits a more serious sanction (see below).
- 11.1.2 A warning may be deemed appropriate particularly when:
- a) the behaviour in question does not involve dishonesty, offences of a sexual nature or a lack of insight or responsibility.
 - b) there have been no previous concerns about the student's fitness to practise.
- 11.1.3 Panels might consider issuing a warning if:

² <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

- i. there was no direct or indirect patient harm or harm to a member of the academic or wider community;
- ii. the panel is satisfied that the student will take the warning seriously;
- iii. the student has shown insight into why their behaviour was inappropriate;
- iv. the behaviour was serious enough to warrant formal recognition.

11.1.4 If a warning is given, support should be provided to the student to address any underlying problems that may have contributed to their fitness to practise concern.

11.1.5 Any subsequent incidents may be considered in light of earlier warnings.

11.1.6 Patterns of poor behaviour may give rise to more serious concerns about a student's fitness to practise.

11.1.7 A warning will remain on a student's record in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule (i.e. for the length of time specified in the written warning).

11.2 HIGHER LEVEL SANCTIONS

11.2.1 The purpose these four types of sanction is to ensure that students whose fitness to practise is sufficiently impaired are dealt with effectively, including possibly being removed from the course.

11.2.2 A sanction also gives the student an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

11.2.3 Panels will consider whether the particular sanction will sufficiently protect patients and the public and will maintain professional standards.

11.2.4 Panels will consider whether the behaviour involves dishonesty, offences of a sexual nature, or a lack of insight in which case lower-level sanctions are unlikely to be appropriate.

11.2.5 Sanctions will remain on a student's record in line with the UCO's Retention Schedule (i.e. last action on the case + 6 years).

A) UNDERTAKINGS

11.2.6 An undertaking is a promise given by the student in writing to the Student Fitness to Practise Panel that they will not behave in a certain way in the future.

11.2.7 This sanction applies when there is a finding that the student's fitness to practise is impaired.

11.2.8 The student will be asked to consent to disclose this sanction to the appropriate people.

11.2.9 If the student does not comply with the undertaking, they may be dealt with by other sanctions.

11.2.10 Undertakings should be proportionate, workable and measurable.

11.2.11 Panels may consider giving a student an undertaking if:

- a) it will be sufficient to protect patients, the academic community and the public;
- b) it covers all the conditions the panel would otherwise have imposed;
- c) the behaviour did not involve dishonesty or a sexual offence;

- d) the student has shown insight into the seriousness of the problem and is willing to respond positively to any interventions;
- e) the student has apologised and expressed genuine regret.

11.2.12 Examples of undertakings include (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) increased supervision;
- b) regular monitoring of student progress;
- c) a critically reflective account of the concern and/or further training.

B) CONDITIONS

11.2.13 A condition is a requirement imposed on a student by a Student Fitness to Practise Panel that the student must comply with.

11.2.14 Panels may consider giving a student a condition if there is significant concern about their fitness to practise and the panel is satisfied that the student might respond positively to remedial tuition and increased supervision.

11.2.15 The panel will consider any evidence such as reports on the student's performance, health or behaviour when determining a condition.

11.2.16 If the panel has found that a student's fitness to practise is impaired because of poor physical or mental health, the conditions may include additional clinical supervision as well as academic supervision and an expectation of evidence of further reflective development.

11.2.17 Students will be asked to consent to disclose this sanction to the appropriate people.

11.2.18 Conditions should be proportionate, workable and measurable, and be time limited.

11.2.19 Panels may consider giving a student a condition if:

- a) patients will be put at risk as a result of the student being allowed to continue on their course of study;
- b) the behaviour did not involve dishonesty or a sexual offence;
- c) the student understands the seriousness of the problem and is willing to respond positively to any interventions;
- d) the student has apologised and expressed genuine regret.
- e) there is a realistic chance that the student will positively engage to change their behaviour.

11.2.20 Examples of conditions include (this list is not exhaustive):

- a) increased supervision;
- b) regular monitoring of student progress;
- c) a reflective account of the concern and/or further training.

C) SUSPENSION

- 11.2.21 A suspension prevents a student from continuing with their course of study or attending the UCO for a specified period. Depending on the length of time of the suspension, the student may also be prevented from graduating at the expected time.
- 11.2.22 A suspension is appropriate for a fitness to practise concern that is serious but not so serious to justify expulsion from the UCO.
- 11.2.23 Student Fitness to Practise Panels may consider giving a student a suspension if:
- a) a less severe sanction is not appropriate;
 - b) the behaviour is unlikely to be repeated;
 - c) the student has provided insight into the seriousness of the problem and is willing to respond positively to any interventions;
 - d) there is a realistic chance that during the period of suspension the student will positively change their behaviour.
- 11.2.24 The Student Fitness to Practise Panel may also impose conditions (see above) that the student must comply with when they return from the suspension.
- 11.2.25 Students will be asked to consent to disclose the suspension and any conditions to the appropriate people.

D) EXPULSION

- 11.2.26 Expulsion means to permanently exclude a student from the UCO resulting in their withdrawal from their course of study and termination of their registration as a UCO student.
- 11.2.27 Expulsion is the most severe sanction and should be applied by Student Fitness to Practise Panels if:
- a) a student's behaviour is considered to be fundamentally incompatible with continuing their studies or eventually practising as a nutrition professional;
 - b) this is the only way to safeguard patients, carers, relatives, colleagues or the public.
- 11.2.28 Students who are expelled will be offered support to enable them to transfer to another institution's course if appropriate. However, the nature of the expulsion may mean that a student may not be accepted at another institution, or on any other course.
- 11.2.29 Students will be asked for their consent for the UCO to disclose the expulsion to appropriate third parties, e.g. future employers, in academic references.

12. FITNESS TO PRACTISE AND THE AFN

- 12.1 Students are reminded that if they are found unfit for practise, they may not be eligible for direct entry to the AFN register.
- 12.2 Students are reminded that the AFN works on the principle of "professional self-regulation", meaning that students registering with the AFN upon completion of their course of study have

a personal responsibility, once registered, to maintain and manage their own fitness to practise³.

- 12.3 Students are required to self-declare any health condition or misconduct that would affect their ability to practise as a nutrition professional as part of the AFN registration process and are reminded that if they do not provide full and accurate information to the AFN, they will be making a false declaration and may be removed from the AFN Register⁴.

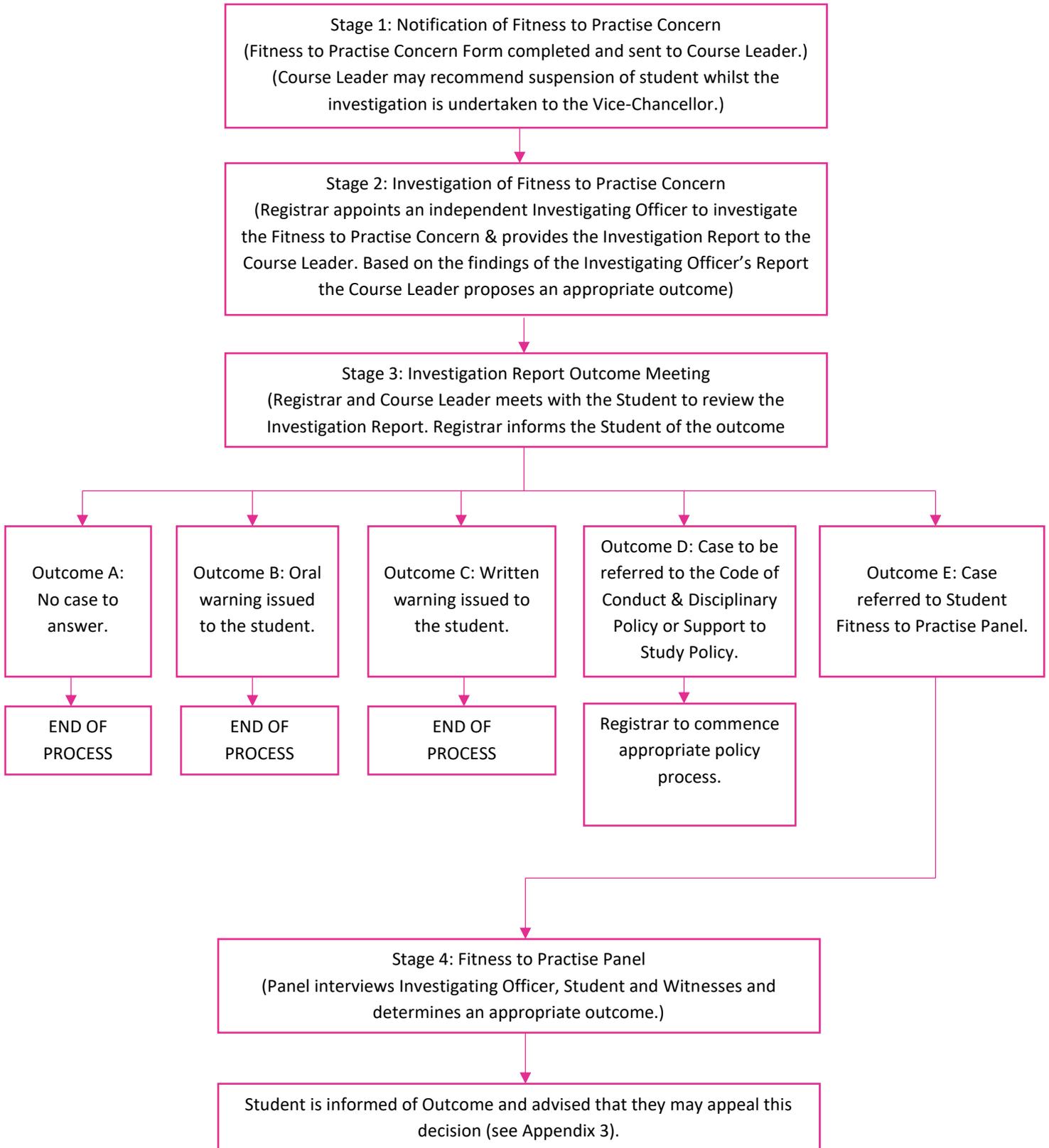
³ [AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, Dec 2013](#)

⁴ [AfN UKVRN Fitness to Practise Rules, Feb 2019](#)

APPENDIX 1: FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERN FORM

Fitness to Practise Concern Form (BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice)	
<p>This form should be used by any member of staff, student or service user who has reason to believe that a student has breached the UCO's Student Fitness to Practise (BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice).</p> <p>Before completing this form, please read the UCO's Student Fitness to Practise (BSc (Hons) Nutrition with Professional Practice).</p> <p>Please provide as much information as possible as it will help us to deal with your concern as quickly as possible.</p>	
<p>Section 1: About You</p> <p><i>Your personal details will be kept safely and confidentially.</i></p>	
Your Name:	
Your Correspondence Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
<p>Section 2: Description of the Fitness to Practise Concern</p> <p><i>In the space below please set out as concisely as possible:</i></p> <p>a) <i>The nature of the concern.</i> b) <i>The names of any other persons involved (staff, students, or others).</i> c) <i>When the concern (event or incident) occurred.</i> d) <i>The exact circumstances of the concern (event or incident).</i></p> <p><i>If you also wish to give further details, please do so (using a separate sheet if required).</i></p>	
<p>Section 3: Important Note</p> <p>Please note that some fitness to practise concerns may give rise to disciplinary action against students. There may also be circumstances in which the police may be notified.</p>	
<p>Section 4: Declaration</p> <p><i>(*Please delete as applicable)</i></p>	
<p>I*/We* have read*/not read* the UCO's Student Fitness to Practise Policy (BSc (Hons) Integrated Nutrition & Dietetics Students).</p> <p>I*/We* declare that the information contained on this form is correct.</p>	
Signature:	
Date:	

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE POLICY FLOWCHART



APPENDIX 3: APPEALS PROCESS FLOWCHART

