

## Faculty of Health Sciences Fitness to Practise Procedure 2023/24

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Students on the professional programmes (MB ChB, BDS, BVSc (including the Accelerated Graduate Entry Programme), Veterinary Nursing & Companion Animal Behaviour, Veterinary Nursing & Bioveterinary Sciences, Gateway to MB ChB, BDS and BVSc, BSc Dental Hygiene & Therapy, International Foundation Programme for Medicine & Dentistry and MSc Perfusion Science) in the Faculty of Health Sciences have responsibilities different from those of other students. Because of this, certain standards of professional behaviour are expected of them. The Faculty is responsible for ensuring that students have opportunities to learn and practise the professional standards expected of them. The University of Bristol rules and regulations for students are also available from: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>

1.2 All students on the professional programmes must refer to the following documentation (as applicable to their profession) in order to make themselves aware of the principles of professional behaviour and the professional behaviour expected of them:

- a) **MB ChB and Gateway to MB ChB:** The GMC produce guidance for students which can be found on their [website](#).
- b) **BDS, International Foundation Programme for Dentistry, Gateway to BDS and BSc in Dental Hygiene & Therapy:** The GDC produce guidance for students which can be found on their [website](#).
- c) **BVSc, Gateway to BVSc and Veterinary Nursing BSc programmes:** The RCVS produce guidance which can be found on their [website](#).  
The [RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons](#) is the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) main guide for veterinary surgeons and sets out the principles and values on which good practice is founded.  
The [RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Nurses](#) is the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons main guide for veterinary nurses and sets out the principles and values on which good practice is founded. Further guidance for Vet Nurses in training is available from their [website](#).  
The University of Bristol Veterinary Student and Veterinary Nursing Student Codes of Professional Conduct are also on the “Programme Information” Section of Blackboard for each year of BVSc and Veterinary Nursing programmes.
- d) **Perfusion Science (MSc):** The Society of Clinical Perfusion Scientists of Great Britain and Ireland and The College of Clinical Perfusion Scientists of Great Britain and Ireland have rules and regulations guidance on their [website](#).

1.3 Students should contact the relevant person listed below if they have any concerns about how to improve their professional behaviour skills:

- a) MB ChB students can contact one of the Programme Directors or Senior Tutors, their Professional Mentor, Professionalism Lead or Academy Deans;
- b) BDS students can contact the Senior Tutor, Professionalism Lead or Programme Director;
- c) BVSc and AGEP students can contact one of the Senior Tutors, or the Programme Directors or the Deputy Programme Director;
- d) Veterinary Nursing students can contact one of the Senior Tutors, the Programme Director or the Deputy Programme Director;
- e) Gateway students can contact the Programme Director, the Personal and Professional Development Unit Lead or the Senior Tutor;
- f) Dental Hygiene & Therapy students can contact the Programme Director, Clinical Senior Lecturer or Senior Tutor;
- g) Perfusion Science students can contact the Programme Director, Senior Tutor or Personal Tutor;
- h) International Foundation Programme students can contact the Programme Director or Personal Tutor.

1.4 Students must be aware that their behaviour outside the clinical environment, including in their personal life, may have an impact on their fitness to practise.

1.5 A student's fitness to practise is called into question when their behaviour raises a serious or persistent cause for concern about their ability to remain on their professional programme, or to practise in their profession after graduation. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a constructive framework for dealing with fitness to practise issues and to ensure that, where necessary, sanctions are applied fairly and consistently. It is hoped that by addressing any professional behaviour problems early, the student will be able to address any concerns raised. The procedure also aims to ensure that the Faculty is able to put support mechanisms in place to help the student improve their professional behaviour.

1.6 Many professional behaviour issues can be dealt with informally by a member of staff (or a fellow student) discussing any early concerns they have with the student. In many instances staff (or fellow students) will raise an issue before it reaches the point of involving the Faculty in this process. Students should take any concerns raised about professional behaviour skills as an early opportunity to improve before an issue is taken any further.

1.7 It is recognised that unprofessional behaviour may result from underlying health problems and for this reason Case Investigators and the Fitness to Practise Panel ("FTP Panel") may refer students for Occupational Health review.

1.8 Students are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation or proceedings conducted under fitness to practise procedures.

## **2. Raising Concerns & Referring Students**

2.1 If any individual has a concern about a student's professional behaviour, they can submit a Student Referral Form online at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/health-sciences/student-fitness-to-practise/>.

2.2 Referrals occasionally come to the attention of the Faculty via other routes e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously Criminal Record Bureau checks), plagiarism & cheating

procedures, University disciplinary procedures or following an Occupational Health review. Any referral, including those from outside of the University will require completion of a Student Referral Form.

2.3 The Faculty may choose to refer a student under the University's Student Disciplinary Regulations or the University's [Support to Study Procedure](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/) instead of or in addition to dealing with the matter under fitness to practise procedures. For cases involving allegations of plagiarism or cheating in summative assessment, the matter will normally be dealt first with under the plagiarism and cheating procedures outlined in the University Examination Regulations. Information on all of these University regulations and procedures is available from the website of the University Secretary's Office: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/>

2.4 We expect students and staff to provide their name and contact details when raising a concern. The reporter's contact details will not be provided to the student in question and are collected in order that we may contact a reporter for further information about their concerns. Under the Data Protection Act there is no guarantee that we can withhold the identity of the reporter as students have a right to see information held about them by the University. Anonymous concerns can be difficult to investigate or progress. Exceptionally, confidential referrals may be made at the discretion of the University Secretary. Please contact the Faculty Head of Student Administration Manager or Student Administration Manager for more details.

2.5 For information on the University's Policy on Whistleblowing, please see: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/whistleblowing-policy.pdf>.

### **3. Procedure**

3.1 Upon receipt of the Student Referral Form, the Case Investigators (CI) will triage the form, and investigate the issues raised. In doing so, the CIs will consider whether the behaviour is serious or persistent enough to call into question the student's ability to continue on the programme, or their fitness to practice after graduation. The CI will consider the initial evidence, any previous referrals for that student and will ask for further information if required.

When the CI has all the information required, they will consider the level and persistence of the concern, and either:

- a) Decide to take no further action. By way of example this could be because the issue could be handled differently; because it has already been dealt with elsewhere; or because the referral is not considered serious enough to warrant further action at this stage. In such cases the student will be notified of the referral and the CI's decision not to proceed further with the referral.
- b) Determine that the referral is health-related and request a referral for an Occupational Health assessment as appropriate (see Section 8). The outcome of this assessment and subsequent recommendations of the Multi-Disciplinary Team Meeting will be reported back to the CI for further consideration.
- c) Determine that the referral is in relation to pastoral or wellbeing support and refer the student to meet with the Senior Tutor, or the Student Wellbeing Service.

- d) Determine that the referral is in relation to professionalism concerns and refer the student to meet with a programme representative to discuss the referral. (See Appendix 1). The outcome of this discussion will be reported back to the CI for further consideration.
- e) Decide that the referral is complex or serious enough to proceed with at this point. In such cases, the student will be informed in writing of the referral raised and invited to meet with the CI. The purpose of this meeting is to give the student an opportunity to discuss the referral before the CI makes a recommendation on how the case will proceed. The student will also be given the opportunity to accept that the concern is valid or inform the CI that in the student's opinion the concern is not valid or is untrue. The student may be accompanied to the meeting by an advisor, friend or other representative. If the student is being accompanied to the CI meeting, they must inform the FTP Administrator in advance of the meeting. The CI will arrange for notes to be taken of the meeting. With the agreement of the student, another CI may attend the meeting for training and quality assurance purposes.

3.2 In all cases the Faculty will inform the student in writing of the above decision. For all students, the recommendation of a CI will be confirmed by a subset of the FTP Standing Committee.

3.3 Following a Case Investigator meeting (e), the CI will decide one of the following outcomes. Again, the recommendation will be confirmed by a subset of the FTP Committee:

3.4

- a) That no fitness to practise concern has been raised.
- b) That the student will be referred for Occupational Health assessment (see Section 8), the outcome of which will be reported back to the CI for further consideration.
- c) Not to proceed further with the referral, other than to refer the student for support as appropriate.
- d) That the referral is valid but not serious enough to be referred to an FTP Panel for formal action. In such cases, the CI will ask the student to accept a Formal Warning, which may be coupled with conditions or undertakings. Warnings are formal statements that indicate that the student's behaviour is unacceptable. Appendix 1 contains information about Formal Warnings.
- e) That the case will be referred to the FTP Panel for their consideration, with a copy of the Outcome Form.
- f) That the case will be referred under University disciplinary or support to study procedures, with a copy of the Outcome Form.

3.5 If the student is asked to accept a Warning by the CI, they may either accept or reject the Warning. If the student rejects the warning, the case will be considered by the FTP Panel under section 4 of this procedure.

3.6 Cases can take time to work through the process, especially when many colleagues or services are involved. However, referrers should normally expect to receive acknowledgement of their Student Referral Form within 5 working days of submission. Students should normally expect to receive an Outcome Form within 10 working days of resolution. Colleagues who refer students will also be notified once the case is closed but should not expect to receive details of any interventions.

3.7 If a student withdraws from their programme before the Fitness to Practise procedures have been completed, a Fitness to Practise investigation may be carried out, with or without that student's input into the proceedings. If the outcome of the investigation would require the Faculty to notify the

Professional Body and record the former student on the Excluded Students' Database, the Faculty will inform the former student of the outcome of the investigation and the transfer of information to the Professional Body.

### **Suspension from the programme or from clinical practice due to patient safety concerns**

3.8 If the concern is serious, particularly when the student's health or behaviour is a risk to patients or colleagues, a recommendation may be made to the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at any stage of this procedure to suspend the student from all or part of their programme while the matter is further investigated by the CI or pending a hearing by the FTP Panel or Occupational Health assessment.

3.9 Dependent on the student's year of study, or level of patient contact, a recommendation may be made to suspend the student from the clinical elements of their course only. The terms of the suspension will be individual to each case and will be notified to the student in writing. The decision will be conveyed to the student, in person wherever possible.

3.10 A student who is subject to a suspension under this policy, may request a review of this decision after ten working days by contacting [fohs-ftp@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fohs-ftp@bristol.ac.uk). The review panel will consider whether the decision made was fair and appropriate, and whether patient safety concerns persist. The panel will be made up of three members of the FTP Standing Committee, one of whom can represent the profession in question. The panel may request further information from the referrer or the student, including verifiable evidence of the student's behaviour, and the associated risk, which may include witness statements.

3.11 In most cases, details of the process and outcome will not normally be shared for reasons of confidentiality.

## **4. Consideration by the FTP Panel**

### **Composition of FTP Panel**

4.1 The Panel comprises at least three members of the Fitness to Practise Standing Committee and is made up of NHS and University staff and external members. Any FTP Panel considering the professional behaviour of a student shall include at least one member of the profession relevant to the student's programme of study. In the event of the Panel being divided in its view, the Chair will have a casting vote.

4.2 The Faculty Head of Student Administration or Student Administration Manager will normally act as clerk to the Panel (the "Clerk") and will arrange for a note of the proceedings to be taken. A member of the University Secretary's Office may also act as clerk to the Panel. The Panel will seek advice and support from the Secretary's Office as required, although in cases where a panel meeting is clerked by a member of the Secretary's Office, Were the CI is being advised by an individual from the Secretary's Office, this shall be a different individual to the one clerking the Panel.

4.3 The Student may choose to be present at the Panel hearing and may be accompanied by an advisor, friend or other representative [see: <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-support>]. If the student wishes to be legally represented, they must inform the Clerk as soon as possible and, in any event, not later than two weeks prior to the hearing.

4.4 The Panel will only impose a penalty upon a student if on the evidence before it, it is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the concerns raised are proved.

### **Procedure**

4.5 Subject to the provisions of this procedure, the conduct and order of the proceedings shall be at the discretion of the Panel. The Panel may ask for additional enquiries to be undertaken and may call for additional witnesses to attend. It may adjourn proceedings at any time if it considers it in the interests of justice to do so.

4.6 If two or more students are involved in related cases the Panel may at its discretion deal with their cases together.

4.7 The Panel will rely only on evidence presented at the hearing. The deliberations and decisions of anyone previously considering the matter shall not be binding on the Panel.

4.8 The CI (who will normally present the case at the hearing) will set out the concerns raised about the student, in writing, in advance of the hearing. A copy of the Written Concerns will be sent to the student at least three weeks before the hearing.

4.9 The student will be informed at least two weeks in advance of the hearing of any witnesses to be called by the CI or the Panel. The student and/or their representative must inform the Clerk at least two weeks in advance of the hearing, of any witnesses that they wish to call and provide copies of any documents on which they intend to rely.

4.10 The Clerk, on behalf of the Panel, may call for written witness statements in support of the Written Concerns in advance of the hearing. If such statements are obtained, members of the Panel will be entitled to see them in advance of the hearing and copies will be made available to the student and to the CI or other case presenter at least one week before the hearing.

4.11 Witness evidence presented at the hearing will normally be oral, given by witnesses appearing in person, even if witness statements have been provided prior to the hearing. The Panel may accept a witness's written statement in evidence where both parties agree that the witness need not attend, or where it is impracticable for the witness to attend, or where in the opinion of the Panel it is for some other reason in the interests of justice to do so.

4.12 Either the CI or the student (or any representative of the student) may make a written submission to the Panel. Any such submission must be made available to all parties at least one week before the hearing.

4.13 Copies of any documentary evidence, including medical or other reports, submitted to the Clerk in advance of the hearing will be made available to members of the Panel and to all parties at least one week before the hearing. Documentary evidence submitted late will only be admitted with the permission of the Panel.

4.14 The case presenter shall be entitled to address the Panel before calling witnesses and at the conclusion of the evidence called on behalf of the student. The student, or their representative, may address the Panel before calling witnesses and after the case presenter's final address.

4.15 The Panel may impose time limits on oral addresses and submissions.

4.16 The concerns raised about the student will be presented first. The case presenter may ask questions of each witness giving evidence in support of the concerns. The witness may be cross-examined by the student or their representative. Witnesses may be re-examined, but concerning only those matters raised in cross-examination, for the purpose of clarification. The Panel may also ask questions of the case presenter and of any witnesses.

4.17 At the conclusion of the evidence in support of the concerns raised, the student, or their representative, may submit that there is no case for the student to answer. The case presenter has the right to reply. If the Panel finds on the evidence that there is no case to answer in respect of any or all of the concerns raised, it must dismiss the relevant concern or concerns.

4.18 If the case proceeds, the student may then give evidence. At the conclusion of the student's evidence, they may be cross-examined by the case presenter. The student may give evidence to clarify matters raised in cross-examination. The student, or their representative, may call further witnesses, who may be similarly cross-examined and re-examined. The representative cannot give evidence on behalf of the student or witnesses. The Panel may ask questions of the student or of any witnesses called by the student.

4.19 A witness may be recalled to give further evidence only with the permission of the Panel.

4.20 The Panel may refuse to admit evidence that is in its opinion irrelevant to the issues raised.

4.21 The Panel shall have power to adjourn a hearing to another date, as it thinks fit.

4.22 At the conclusion of the evidence, the Panel will make its decision as to whether the concern(s) have been proven.

4.23 If the Panel decides that the concerns are proven, the student or their representative will be entitled to address the Panel on the question of penalty and to raise any mitigating factors. The case presenter has the right to reply.

4.24 The Panel will make a decision as to the outcome as set out in section 5.

4.25 The student will normally be informed orally of the outcome immediately after the hearing and will receive a copy of the report referred to in paragraph 4.26, normally within two weeks.

4.26 The Chair of the Panel will write a report of the meeting, setting out the grounds for concern, a brief summary of the evidence, the decision of the Panel and the reasons for the decision. A copy of the report will be sent to the student, the CI, the Dean, and any other appropriate member of the University. In most cases, details of the process and outcome will not normally be shared for reasons of confidentiality.

4.27 If there are any further actions to be taken these will be the responsibility of the student or members of staff as directed by the Panel.

4.28 Recording devices may not be used during the hearing.

## **5 Outcomes**

5.1 The FTP Panel may make any one or more of the following decisions as detailed in Appendix 1:

- a) Issue no warning or sanction
- b) Issue a formal warning
- c) Issue a sanction which requires an undertaking on the student's part
- d) Issue a sanction which consists of conditions
- e) Suspend the student from the programme
- f) Expel the student from the programme
- g) Refer the student for Occupational Health assessment (see Section 8)

## **6. Nominees**

6.1 References in this procedure to a particular job title or role shall be construed to include any person or persons nominated by the role holder to act on their behalf.

## **7. Record Keeping, Data Protection and Confidentiality**

7.1 The University [Record Retention Schedule](#) details the retention periods for FTP records.

7.2 Referrals or cases investigated referred for supportive measures or resulting in no further action will be held on file until student graduation or departure.

7.3 Cases investigated, where a student accepts a warning will be held on file until 6 years after student graduation or departure.

7.4 Cases referred to an FTP Panel which have resulted in a formal written warning, with or without conditions will be held on file until 12 years after student graduation or departure.

7.5 Cases referred to FTP Panel where FTP issues are proven, resulting in sanctions (undertakings, suspension, expulsion) will be held on file until 40 years after student graduation or departure.

7.6 All matters arising during a student's programme of study at the University are confidential and may not be disclosed to third parties, including parents, without the express permission of the individual student. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the University may take into account any previous concerns, reports or warnings in assessing student's professional behaviour.

7.7 The University may also disclose details of any concerns, reports and or warnings relating to the student's fitness to practise which have arisen during a student's programme of study (where required to do so by law or in the public interest) such as; to another Further or Higher Education institution; the national body responsible for regulating the relevant profession to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards of professional practice.

7.8 The Fitness to Practice Standing Committee will discuss an anonymised summary of student cases at each of its meetings to assure consistency of decision making and monitor any emerging trends.

## **8. Co-ordination between the Fitness to Practise Procedures and Occupational Health**

There are two routes by which a student's health or disability might require Fitness to Practise involvement.



8.1 Following a standard in-course Occupational Health assessment (that has been arranged without any requirement by Fitness to Practise) a meeting will be arranged with representatives from the student's programme such as the Senior Tutor and School Disability Coordinator, and a representative from the Faculty. This group will consider the adjustments recommended by Occupational Health in their report. If the meeting attendees consider that, due to the nature or extent of the disability or health issue and/or the student's insight into their health, the student may not be able to complete their professional programme or be fit to practise, the student will be referred to Fitness to Practise. The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of this meeting and what adjustments will be implemented for them.

8.2 Following the requirement to have an Occupational Health assessment as part of the Fitness to Practise procedure, a Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting will be arranged with representative(s) from the student's programme such as the Senior Tutor, Programme Director and School Disability Coordinator; a representative from the Faculty; and, where appropriate, Disability Services. This group will consider the adjustments recommended by Occupational Health in their report, and will provide a report back to the CI stating the adjustments that will be put in place to support the student in the clinical environment, and whether there are concerns about whether they will be able to complete their professional programme or be fit to practise. The CI will review this report and consider whether the original concerns from the referral have been managed and whether the case can be closed. If the CI is still concerned that due to the student's health or disability they may not be fit to practise, they may choose to continue the Fitness to Practise investigation.

## **9. Appeals**

9.1 An appeal under this procedure must be made to the University Secretary within twenty-eight days of the conclusion of the proceedings. The student must set out in writing the ground(s) on which the appeal is based. The appeal will be heard by a Committee of Council (the "Appeal Committee") constituted under the provisions set out in the Student Complaints Procedure.

9.2 A student may appeal against the decision of the FTP Panel on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) that there is new evidence which could not reasonably have been presented at the hearing of the FTP Panel;
- b) that the outcome is not reasonable in all the circumstances;
- c) that there was a material irregularity in the decision-making process sufficient to require that the decision be re-examined;

9.3 If the student appeals on ground 9.2 (a) the Appeal Committee may, with or without the necessity for a hearing, remit the matter back to the FTP Panel for reconsideration. In all cases, the Appeal Committee may overturn the decision of the FTP Panel if it considers it just to do and may substitute a decision of its own.

9.4 There will be no entitlement to a rehearing of the case, which will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances. The student may present the appeal in person or in writing as they choose, and may be represented by an advisor, friend or other representative.

9.5 Those hearing an appeal against penalty may impose a lesser or greater penalty taken from those set out in paragraph 5, having considered whether the original penalty imposed was fair and reasonable

in the light of all the circumstances of the case, and the student's means and general personal circumstances.

#### **10. Duty of disclosure**

10.1 Students on professional programmes may be required to disclose to the relevant regulatory body, whether on first registration or in response to enquiries, that they have been subject to any disciplinary proceedings or investigations, including student fitness to practise proceedings.

10.2 Students are encouraged to seek advice from the appropriate professional body or an appropriate member of staff on this duty of disclosure.

## Appendix I - Possible Outcomes of the FTP procedure

The possible outcomes of the process will relate to the route which the referral takes.

### 1. Referral to Programme Representative for professionalism concerns

If a student is referred to a programme representative for professionalism concerns, they will be invited to a meeting to discuss the referral. The aim of the meeting is to provide specific support and intervention to enable the student to reflect on and alter their behaviour. The student should be asked to reflect on the referral in advance of the meeting and will be sent details of the referral. The outcomes at this stage will be specific to the student and the referral but may include

- a) Completion of written reflection;
- b) Setting an action plan for completion within a set timescale;
- c) Referral to appropriate support services or Occupational Health assessment. (See Section 8)

Outcomes will be shared with the Case Investigator and monitored, and any student who does not respond to, or engage with this process, may be referred for a meeting with a Case Investigator.

### 2. Meeting with a Case Investigator

If a student is invited to meet with a Case Investigator, they will be informed in writing of the referral raised. The purpose of this meeting is to give the student an opportunity to discuss the referral before the CI makes a recommendation on how the case will proceed. The student will also be given the opportunity to accept that the concern is valid or inform the CI that in the student's opinion the concern is not valid or is untrue.

All outcomes at this stage are to be agreed by the student. If the student does not accept the outcome, the case will be referred to a full FTP Panel.

The possible outcomes are:

- a) Formal Warning:

A warning is the lowest level of penalty which is formally issued under this procedure. It may be coupled with undertakings or conditions, by agreement of the student with the CI following the initial consideration of the case (see section 3 of this procedure). A warning is a formal statement that indicates that the student's behaviour is unacceptable and is given when a student's behaviour raises concerns but is not so serious that their FTP is impaired. Normally, a warning will be appropriate when the behaviour in question does not involve dishonesty, or offences of a sexual nature or a lack of insight or responsibility; and where there have been no previous concerns about the student's FTP.

The warning is not intended to punish the student, but to let him or her know that their current professional behaviour is not at the level required and where appropriate to offer support in addressing any issues raised. Any subsequent incidents may be considered in light of earlier warnings.

A warning will remain in place until the student has completed their programme of study and may need to be disclosed to the relevant professional body at the point of registration.

b) Undertakings:

An undertaking is a promise given by the student, in writing, that they will behave in a certain way in the future and normally applies when there is a finding that the student's fitness to practise is impaired. This type of sanction will be issued for what are considered as more serious and/or repeated problems. The student may be given a more structured support plan for a set period of time and have their progress monitored. The purpose of this sanction is not to punish the student but to let him or her know that their current professional behaviour is not at the level required by the Faculty and to offer appropriate support in addressing the issues raised. On receipt of sanctions the student may be required to meet with a nominated member of the University to work with the student to put an action plan in place and to ensure that they are in a position to honour the undertakings given. Monitoring of professional behaviour may be carried out by the most relevant staff members.

If a student does not engage with the Undertakings, this will be reported back to the Case Investigator.

c) Conditions:

Conditions are appropriate when there is significant concern about the behaviour of the student and will normally be issued if the CI is satisfied that the student might respond positively to remedial support and/or increased supervision. This type of sanction will be issued for what are considered as serious and/or repeated problems. The student will be given a structured support plan for a set period of time and have their progress monitored. The purpose of this sanction is not to punish the student, but to let him or her know that their current professional behaviour is not at the level required by the Faculty and to offer appropriate support in addressing the issues raised.

If a student does not engage with the Conditions, this will be reported back to the Case Investigator.

- d) Referral for support or for Occupational Health assessment, the outcome of which will be reported back to the Case Investigator. (See Section 8).

### **3. Fitness to Practice Panel**

This is a formal hearing, in front of a panel, to which the student may attend, with a representative. The outcomes at this stage will be:

- a) No further action
- b) Formal Warning (as above)
- c) Undertakings (as above):

If undertakings are imposed by the Panel, towards the end of the set monitoring period, or at some other time specified by the FTP Panel, the case will be reviewed by the FTP Panel who may decide

whether or not the undertakings have been honoured and to close the matter provided there are no further concerns raised during the monitoring period; or may decide to impose a further monitoring period or alternative sanction if the undertakings given have not been honoured or professional behaviour remains a concern. The Panel may also choose to reconvene for a further hearing of the case, adopting the procedure set out in section 4.

d) Conditions (as above):

If conditions are imposed by the Panel, towards the end of the set monitoring period, or at some other time specified by the FTP Panel, the case will be reviewed by the FTP Panel who may decide that the conditions have been honoured and to close the matter provided there are no further concerns raised during the monitoring period; or may decide to impose a further monitoring period or alternative sanction if the conditions given have not been honoured or professional behaviour remains a concern. The Panel may also choose to reconvene for a further hearing of the case, adopting the procedure set out in section 4.

e) Suspension from the Programme:

Suspension from the programme prevents a student from continuing with the programme for a specified period of time and graduating at the expected time. Suspension is appropriate for misconduct that is serious but not so serious as to justify expulsion. Suspension would normally be for a calendar year or until the start of the new academic year. Students who are suspended will be required to comply with any further conditions set by the FTP Panel. The case will be reviewed by the FTP Panel at a time specified by the Panel.

f) Expulsion from the Programme:

This is the most severe sanction and will be applied only if the student's behaviour is considered to be incompatible with continuing on the programme or with practising in the relevant profession. The FTP Panel will expel the student if they consider this is the only way to protect patients, clients, colleagues or the public. If a student is expelled by the FTP Panel the Faculty or School, will, as appropriate, offer help in transferring to another non-professional programme. However, the nature of the student's behaviour in any particular case may be such that it is considered inappropriate to assist with such transfer or for another Faculty or School to accept the student onto certain, or even any, other programmes. In the interests of the safety of the general public, the University may be under an obligation, and reserves the right, to inform other professional programme providers that a student has been expelled from a professional programme under this procedure.

g) Referral for Occupational Health assessment (See Section 8).

## Appendix II – Submitting a Referral

### 1. Referral relating to Professional Behaviour

Professional behaviour concerns about a student may be raised by using a Student Referral Form. However, you should always attempt to deal with the issues informally by discussing the concern with the student, so that the student is given the opportunity to address the issues raised. This course of action should be considered before completing the referral.

The referral should include a clear description of the incident(s) which have led to you submit a referral form, including the date(s) or time period of the relevant events. The referral should provide enough information for us to be able to understand the nature of your concern and for the student to be able to respond to it. Referrals should be supported by documented evidence where available. If the concern relates to more than one student, please submit a referral for each student concerned.

Students will be made aware of the referrals submitted about them. Normally, the student referral form is provided to the student, once the reporter's contact details have been removed, to help them to prepare for any subsequent meetings. Please bear this in mind when completing the referral and please try to use factual statements, and appropriate language.

If the concern about a student is serious and may put patient safety at risk immediate contact should be made with the relevant Programme Director, the Faculty Head of Student Administration, Student Administration Manager or if they are not available the Dean, or Faculty Manager who will take action as appropriate.

The referral could relate to a number of areas:

- a) Relationships with patients and clients – e.g. not respecting confidentiality, being discourteous;
- b) Working with others – e.g. being disrespectful towards other students or colleagues, continually disrupting teaching and learning;
- c) Probity – e.g. dishonesty, fraudulent or illegal behaviour;
- d) Learning – e.g. not engaging in administrative or academic requirements of the programme;
- e) Health – e.g. physical or mental health issues, which are not appropriately managed, alcohol or drugs problem;
- f) Cruel or abusive behaviour towards animals.

We expect students and staff to provide their name and contact details when raising a concern. Under the Data Protection Act there is no guarantee that we can withhold the identity of the reporter as students have a right to see information held about them by the University, although we will not pass your contact details on to the student in question. Anonymous concerns can be difficult to investigate or progress. If you have concerns, or wish to make a confidential referral, this will be at the discretion of the University Secretary. Please contact the Faculty Head of Student Administration or Student Administration Manager for more details.

For information on the University's Policy on Whistleblowing, please see:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/whistleblowing-policy.pdf>

University staff or students who make malicious or deliberately misleading statements concerning a student may be themselves referred to the relevant University disciplinary procedures or the Faculty's Fitness to Practise procedure. No action will be taken against a member of staff or student who raises a concern in good faith.

## **2. Referrals which do not relate to professional behaviour**

If the concern does not relate to professional behaviour and is an academic concern (e.g., the student may be struggling academically) the student should be encouraged to contact the programme team such as Programme Director, Year Lead, or Unit Lead.

If the concern is in relation to health and wellbeing, the student themselves should be encouraged to contact the Student Wellbeing Service, or Senior Tutor as appropriate, or one of the support services listed on the Faculty and/or University websites. However, if it is felt that a student (or another person) is at risk of harm, contact should be made with the Senior Tutor, relevant Programme Director or Student Wellbeing Service directly who will consider what action may be appropriately taken. Students or staff distressed by a colleague's situation may seek support from one of the support services listed on the University of Bristol website [www.bristol.ac.uk/student-services/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/student-services/).