

## **FITNESS TO PRACTISE PROCEDURE**

### **Purpose**

1. The Fitness to Practise Procedure applies to University of Suffolk students enrolled on courses which lead to professional registration and/or licence to practise and where Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are normally required. These courses are likely to involve a practical professional placement as a required part of the course. Such courses include, for example, teaching, nursing, midwifery, radiography and social work. Other courses may also be subject to this Procedure. Students on such courses have additional responsibilities placed upon them regarding their professional suitability, as outlined in the codes of practice of the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB). Failure to meet these requirements may lead to the Fitness to Practise Procedure being invoked. Students will be made aware if they are on a course covered by this Procedure through their Course Handbook and during induction to the course.

2. Concerns relating to a student's academic failure in practice should be dealt with through normal assessment procedures.

3. Fitness to Practise procedures are necessary to:

- comply with the requirements of the PSRB codes of practice;
- protect the welfare of individuals with whom the student comes into contact during their training;
- demonstrate that students are fit to practise their future profession, having developed professional attitudes and behaviour;
- provide a means of ensuring that students do not proceed into a career for which they may not be suited, given the time, commitment and expense involved in the process of qualification;
- enable the University to promote the highest standards of behaviour among students;
- ensure the University has taken all possible steps to prevent harm to any individual by a student in the course of that student's training.

4. This Procedure is not intended to replace the Academic Misconduct Policy, Criminal Convictions Policy or Student Discipline Procedure, although the outcome of a case raised under these procedures might also raise issues of fitness to practise.

## Scope

5. Concerns about a student's fitness to practise may be raised from any source, including any member of staff, student, placement partner, member of the public, the Occupational Health Service or other agencies such as the Police or Social Services. Normally the allegation will relate to behaviour whilst the student is on the Institution's premises or in attendance at a placement setting related to the course. However, if it is reasonably believed that a student's behaviour off site has damaged or compromised relevant professional standards, action may be taken in accordance with this Procedure.

6. Concerns about fitness to practise may involve a range of actions or omissions relating to professional conduct or professional suitability and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. actions that have the potential to harm service users, other members of the public or service providers
- b. actions that are likely to constitute an unacceptable risk to the student or others
- c. failure to disclose information about previous matters relating to their professional suitability prior to registration on the course, including health, previous convictions and cautions
- d. concerns raised as a result of action under the Academic Misconduct Policy about professional issues such as lack of honesty or integrity rather than the academic offence
- e. contravention of the relevant professional code of conduct
- f. actions that are prejudicial to the development or standing of professional practice
- g. allegations of inappropriate behaviour
- h. alcohol, drugs or substance misuse
- i. concerns about health, disability or wellbeing, including a failure to seek appropriate medical treatment or other support; unreasonable failure to follow medical advice or care plans and treatment resistant conditions which might impair fitness to practise. This does not include pre-existing medical conditions or disabilities that the student has already disclosed and where reasonable adjustments have been made to enable the student to access their study. Cases will be considered where disability prevents the student meeting the core competencies after adjustments have been considered or made, or where this has implications for the safety and protection of patients, clients and/or the students
- j. allegations, primarily occurring in placement settings, of repeated failures to achieve competence despite opportunities to develop, practise and rectify faults. Whilst each individual incident may be less serious on its own, a pattern has emerged which calls into question overall competence

7. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) provide guidance regarding good health and good character (Guidance on professional standards of practice and behaviour NMC (2015) and Guidance on conduct and ethics for students HCPC (2012)). This guidance uses the following definitions:

- Good health means that the student is capable of undertaking safe and effective practice. It may not be the student's health per se that renders them unfit to practise, but it may be their level of insight into their health condition and their ability to manage their health needs.
- Good Character: Honesty, integrity and trustworthiness are the cornerstone of professional practice. Good character therefore will be based on how the student conducts themselves and behaves, within the academic arena as well as placement. But it can also have implications for how they conduct themselves in their personal life. Consideration may be given to the level of insight a student can demonstrate if they or their family are service users (this particularly applies to Social Work students). An important aspect of professional practice is upholding the reputation of the profession. A person's character must be sufficiently good for them to be capable of safe and effective practice without the need for direct supervision.

8. In the case of concerns about post registration students, the Dean of School in consultation with the Academic Registrar shall determine whether a referral should be made to the relevant PSRB.

9. In the event of alleged criminal activity or matters relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, refer to Appendix 1.

### **Commitments**

10. In considering any allegations, appropriate attention will be paid to the requirements of the Equality and Diversity Policy. In particular, reasonable adjustments will be made for those with disabilities, specific learning difficulties or long-term medical conditions.

11. It must be borne in mind that an allegation raising concern about fitness to practise is a serious and potentially defamatory one. Consequently it is essential that the proceedings should be conducted on the basis of strict confidentiality. All parties to the allegation and individuals who have been involved in any related investigation and/or the management and/or the administration of the allegation will observe the requirements for confidentiality. Whilst confidential information

may need to be disclosed in order to consider the allegation, this will only be to those staff involved in the consideration of the allegation.

12. Students can access impartial and confidential advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre and Student Services. They may also seek support from their PSRB if they are a member.

## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT A STUDENT'S FITNESS TO PRACTISE**

13. Concerns about a student's fitness to practise shall be made in writing, on the Reporting a Cause for Concern Form, to the Dean of School (or equivalent) with responsibility for the course on which the student is enrolled. Concerns may also be raised through internal University processes, including the Academic Misconduct Policy and Criminal Convictions Policy.

14. Paragraphs 16 to 45 set out the normal route that fitness to practise concerns take. However allegations deemed to be of major risk may proceed straight to formal stage (part 1). Procedures may vary depending on the urgency: the Dean of School may consult with the Fitness to Practise Group (FTPG) if time permits, or inform the FTPG of any decisions for cases requiring urgent action that require an Investigating Officer to be appointed.

15. Audio recordings of meetings will not normally be allowed, although reasonable adjustments may be made if required in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy. Requests for adjustments must be made in advance to the Office for Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct (OSACC).

### **Initial consideration**

16. On receipt of the concern, the Dean of School (or equivalent), in consultation with the relevant Course Leader and supported by OSACC, shall evaluate the risk to the protection of the public, clients and/or to the student and take such immediate action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances to safeguard all relevant parties, but without prejudice to the outcome of the enquiry. This may include recommending to the Vice-Chancellor/Principal, in consultation with the Academic Registrar, that the student be suspended from practice placement and/or academic study and/or restrict the student's access to the Institution's premises pending the outcome of an investigation into the allegation. A student may at any time be suspended. The student shall be informed in writing of the suspension by the Vice-Chancellor/Principal. The Academic Registrar shall keep any such suspension under review. Suspension is not a sanction and does not imply guilt; it is used only for the protection of patients, clients and/or the students.

17. If the Dean of School determines that there is no risk or that the risk is minor, the concern will be considered under the relevant School's informal processes. The School's informal processes will determine whether the course team should monitor the student or take no further action.

18. If the Dean of School determines that the risk may be moderate or major, in consultation with the Academic Registrar, the concern should proceed to the formal stage (part 1) for consideration by the Fitness to Practise Group (FTPG).

### **Formal Stage (part 1)**

19. Where a concern proceeds to the formal stage (part 1), the Dean of School shall pass all relevant documents, along with an exact allegation, to OSACC, who will convene a meeting of the FTPG.

20. The FTPG shall comprise:

- the Dean of School or Head of Subject or nominee (Chair)
- One academic who is a registrant of the same professional group as the student
- One academic from a relevant school
- A representative from the professional placement provider (representation from the professional placement is desirable but not essential, recognising that requiring such attendance may hinder timely resolution of the case)

When specialised input is necessary, others with the requisite knowledge may be co-opted with the agreement of the Chair of the FTPG, for example the Disability and Mental Health Adviser. A representative from OSACC will be in attendance to record the FTPG's decision and justification for that decision. Membership of the FTPG will be approved by the Academic Registrar.

21. At the formal stage (part 1), the role of the FTPG is to undertake a risk assessment based on the evidence it has to determine whether there is a minor, moderate or major risk or whether to refer the case to other procedures relevant to the circumstances, for example the Student Discipline Procedure or Academic Misconduct Policy.

22. Normally within five working days of receipt of the allegation from the Dean of School, OSACC will inform the student of the allegation made, the action to be taken and the procedure for dealing with the allegation.

23. The student will be asked to submit a statement in response to the allegation along with any documentary evidence, where relevant, to OSACC within ten working days of the date of the allegation letter. Should a statement not be received within the deadline, the allegation will be considered on the evidence provided.

24. The FTPG will meet (either virtually or face-to-face) to consider the allegation, normally within five working days of the deadline for the student to submit a statement. The FTPG will consider all allegations based on the documentary evidence provided.

25. The FTPG, having considered the evidence, will decide whether:

- there is no risk or a minor risk and whether the course team should monitor the student in accordance with the School's informal processes; implement an action plan or take no further action
- there is a moderate or major risk and an Investigating Officer should be appointed who will normally be from the student's subject area but not directly associated with the student

26. Where the FTPG determines there is no risk or a minor risk, the Chair of the FTPG, via OSACC, will inform the student of the outcome and any further action to be taken within five working days of the meeting.

27. Where the FTPG appoints an Investigating Officer, that officer will assemble impartially the evidence relevant to the allegation and prepare a written report which shall not pass judgement for or against the student nor recommend a particular course of action.

28. In assembling such evidence, the Investigating Officer may interview those involved and shall consider any relevant records or other written information. Interviews may be conducted by telephone where appropriate. A representative from OSACC should normally be present to take the minutes of any meetings. As a matter of good practice, the student under investigation and others interviewed should be requested to read and sign minutes of their meeting(s) with the Investigating Officer to the effect that the statement represents a true record.

29. The Investigating Officer when interviewing the student concerned about his or her conduct shall explain the allegation and question the student in detail. The Investigating Officer shall inform the student beforehand that he or she may be accompanied by a friend. A friend is defined as a member of staff of the University of Suffolk or one of the partner colleges in the University of Suffolk Learning Network, or a registered student of the University, or a member of staff or sabbatical officer of the Students' Union. The friend may also be a representative of the union of

the student's PSRB, if the student is a member. The role of the friend is to act as an observer, give moral support and to assist the student to make their case. The friend should not also be a witness to the alleged breach/incident. In addition, where reasonable adjustments are required, a student may be accompanied by a supporter e.g. a sign language communicator or a note-taker, and a student with difficulty in understanding English may be accompanied by an interpreter.

30. The Investigating Officer will submit their report to the FTPG, normally within twenty working days of the case being referred to him/her. If the investigation takes longer than this the student will be kept informed of progress.

31. The FTPG will consider the Investigating Officer's report and determine that either:
- there is not sufficient evidence to support the allegation against the student, in which case the Chair of the FTPG shall inform the student in writing. In such cases, the FTPG may request the course team to monitor the student in accordance with the School's informal processes or implement an action plan, or there may be no further action;
  - there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation against the student, but the concern can be addressed and monitored through action plans and regular meetings over a specified period of time. If concerns remain at the end of this review period, the case may proceed to Formal Stage (part 2) of this Procedure;
  - there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation against the student, and therefore the case will proceed to Formal Stage (part 2) of this Procedure.

### **Formal Stage (part 2)**

32. The Chair of the FTPG shall refer the case as expeditiously as possible to the Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC), which shall be appointed by the Academic Registrar.

33. The FTPC shall comprise:
- a Dean of School (Chair);
  - three academics who were not members of the FTPG with at least one registrant from the relevant subject area within the School who will be able to advise the FTPC with regard to PSRB requirements and standards of conduct. Neither the student's personal tutor/adviser/supervisor nor the Investigating Officer shall be members of the FTPC
  - one representative from the professional placement provider who was not a member of the FTPG

Membership of the FTPC may be amended as necessary to comply with the relevant PSRB requirements. A representative from OSACC will be Secretary and record the FTPC's decision and justification for that decision.

34. The Chair and members of the FTPC shall have had no previous involvement in the case. Wherever possible, the FTPC shall be of mixed gender.

35. The Secretary shall convene a meeting of the FTPC as soon as possible, and shall send copies of the evidence to members of the FTPC and to the student concerned ten working days before the meeting.

36. The student and Chair of the FTPG may nominate witness(es) and shall inform the Secretary of the name(s) at least five working days prior to the FTPC. The decision of the Chair of the FTPC regarding witnesses to be called shall be final. In reaching a decision about witnesses to be called, the Chair will take into account their number and relevance to the matter in hand. The Secretary shall inform witnesses of the date, time and venue of the FTPC but is not responsible for ensuring their attendance. The unavailability of witnesses shall not restrict or delay the FTPC unless the Chair determines that their evidence may be material to the decision of the FTPC. Unavailable witnesses may submit a statement to the Secretary for consideration by the FTPC. Exceptionally, a witness may be accompanied by a friend as defined in paragraph 29.

37. The student may also provide the Secretary with a statement concerning the allegation(s) against him/her and/or any additional written evidence as he or she considers relevant to the case. Such information should be submitted at least five working days before the meeting and will be circulated to the FTPC and the Chair of the FTPG by the Secretary.

38. The Secretary shall send a summons to the student, at least three working days before the meeting, which will be delivered to the student's institution email address and contact address. The summons should include details of:

- the nature of the allegation
- membership of the FTPC
- the name of the presenter of the case (who will normally be the Chair of the FTPG)
- the name(s) of any witness(es) called
- the date, time and place of the FTPC

39. The FTPC shall proceed in a quasi-judicial fashion. The conduct of the FTPC shall proceed as outlined in Appendix 3. The FTPC shall allow the student against whom allegations have been made to present his/her case in person and, if the student wishes, to be accompanied by a friend to help him/her in presenting his/her case to the FTPC as defined at paragraph 29.



40. The FTPC shall consider the oral and/or written evidence submitted by the Chair of the FTPG and any oral and/or written statement or evidence provided by the student. It shall have the power to seek such other evidence as it deems necessary and may be adjourned to allow for such evidence to be gathered.

41. The FTPC will operate on the principle of the balance of probability. The case will be deemed to be proven where this is the majority decision of the FTPC. Where there is a split decision, the outcome should fall in the student's favour.

42. If the FTPC decides that the fitness to practise allegation is unproven, it will dismiss the case and no record will be held on the student's file.

43. If the FTPC decides that the fitness to practise allegation is proven, it shall have the power to do any one of, or a combination of, the following:

- a. Permit the student to continue on the course with no further action required
- b. Permit the student to continue on the course with adjustments
- c. Issue a formal warning
- d. Discontinue the placement and make arrangements for locating an alternative placement if this is permitted under the relevant assessment regulations
- e. Require the student to intercalate from the course for a defined period of time with return subject to conditions
- f. Require the student to withdraw from the course because they are unfit to practise
- g. Impose such other action as it considers appropriate, provided that no such action requires or implies a concession or exemption under the relevant assessment regulations

44. The Secretary shall inform the student and Dean of School (or equivalent) in writing within five working days of the FTPC, giving clear and detailed reasons for the decision. The student shall be informed of the right to appeal against the decision of the FTPC in accordance with paragraphs 46 to 56 of this Procedure.

45. The Dean of School, in consultation with the Academic Registrar, shall consider whether the decision of the FTPC should be reported to the relevant placement provider and/or PSRB before the period of appeal has elapsed.

## **PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS OF THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE**

46. Written notice of appeals against a decision of the FTPC must be lodged with OSACC within five working days of the student having been informed of the decision of the FTPC.

47. The grounds on which an appeal against the decision of the FTPC can be considered are:

- the FTPC did not make reasonable efforts to acquire all relevant information
- that new evidence has become available that could not have reasonably been provided for the FTPC and which could materially have affected the decision(s) of the FTPC
- there was evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the hearing by the FTPC
- there was prejudice and/or bias and/or appearance of prejudice and/or bias in the conduct of the hearing of the FTPC
- the penalty imposed is not reasonable or proportionate to the offence

48. In the event of an appeal, the Academic Registrar shall consider whether the grounds for appeal are covered by the provisions of paragraph 47 above and warrant further consideration by the Fitness to Practise Appeal Panel (FTPAP).

49. If the Academic Registrar determines that there are no grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the matter shall be referred to a senior representative of the awarding institution for consideration. If the senior representative of the awarding institution agrees that there are no grounds for further consideration, the Academic Registrar shall inform the student in the form of a completion of procedures letter within ten working days giving the reasons for that decision. This decision is final and there is no further right of appeal. Students may be able to seek a review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (see paragraph 57).

50. If the Academic Registrar or senior representative of the awarding institution determines that the appeal does warrant further consideration, the Academic Registrar shall appoint a FTPAP.

51. The FTPAP shall comprise:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair) or nominee
- one academic who has had no previous involvement in the case (was not a member of the FTPG or FTPC) but who is a registrant of the relevant PSRB
- one academic from the relevant subject area from the awarding institution
- one representative from the placement provider who was not a member of the FTPG or FTPC and not associated with the teaching of the student

A representative from OSACC will be Secretary to the FTPAP and record the FTPAP's decision and justification for that decision.

52. The FTPAP shall carry out a paper based review of all documents considered at the FTPC, together with the written statement submitted by the student setting out the grounds for the appeal. The FTPAP shall not proceed by way of a re-hearing but shall have the power to require the presentation of such further evidence as it deems necessary. The student will be informed of when the FTPAP will meet but will not be present.

53. The FTPAP shall have the same powers as the FTPC and may confirm the decision of the FTPC or substitute such other decision as it considers appropriate.

54. When the FTPAP has reached its decision, the Secretary shall inform the student in writing through the issue of a completion of procedures letter, copied to the Dean of School (or equivalent) and Academic Registrar, within five days of the FTPAP meeting.

55. If any action had been taken under paragraph 45 above to inform the relevant PSRB, the Dean of School (or equivalent) and the Academic Registrar shall decide whether any further report should be made to the placement provider or PSRB concerned in the light of the decision of the FTPAP.

56. The decision of the FTPAP is final and there is no further right to appeal. Students may be able to seek a review by the OIA (see paragraph 57)

### **Further right to appeal**

57. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal against a decision of the FTPAP may be able to seek a review by the OIA should the case be eligible under the OIA's rules (see <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>). Details will be provided in the completion of procedures letter advising the student of the final outcome of their appeal.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

58. The University of Suffolk will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Fitness to Practise Procedure and reflect upon the outcomes for enhancement purposes. A report will be submitted annually to the Equality and Diversity Committee, the Quality Committee and Senate. The report will include equality monitoring data.

## APPENDIX 1

### PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY OR MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The following procedure applies where the alleged concerns of fitness to practise, if substantiated, would also constitute an offence under criminal law and/or concerns a reportable child or vulnerable adult protection matter.

- If the alleged offence is reported to the Police, the Vice-Chancellor/Principal may decide to defer action until the Police and courts have dealt with the matter. In cases where there is a child or vulnerable adult protection issue, the matter will be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and no investigatory action will be undertaken until advice from the appropriate authority has been received.
- In such cases, no internal disciplinary action other than suspension from the Institution will normally be taken until either a prosecution has been completed or a decision not to prosecute has been taken or in the case of child or vulnerable adult protection matters, advice has been received from the appropriate authority that an investigation is appropriate.
- The Institution has the right to report any criminal offence to the Police or any child or vulnerable adult protection matter to the relevant authority and will normally do so when the offence is judged by the Vice-Chancellor/Principal or Safeguarding Officer as serious, or reportable in relation to child or vulnerable adult protection issues according to the Safeguarding Policy.
- When an allegation of fitness to practise is proven under this procedure, and a student has also been sentenced by a criminal court on the same facts, the penalty imposed by the criminal court will also be taken into account in deciding the penalty under this procedure.
- On receipt of a written allegation about a student's fitness to practise, the Dean of School (or equivalent) concerned in consultation with the relevant Course Leader and OSACC, shall take such immediate action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances to safeguard all relevant parties. This may include recommending to the Vice-Chancellor/Principal, in consultation with the Academic Registrar, the suspension of the student concerned or restriction of the student's access to the Institution's premises pending the outcome of criminal proceedings or child protection investigation. A student

may at any time be suspended. The student shall be informed in writing of the suspension by the Vice-Chancellor/Principal. The Academic Registrar shall keep any such suspension under review. Suspension is not a sanction and does not imply guilt; it is used only for the protection of patients, clients and/or the students.

## APPENDIX 2

### FITNESS TO PRACTISE PROCEDURE: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **The Academic Registrar shall:**

- be informed that an allegation has been made
- ensure that the FTPC and the FTPAP procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTPC and FTPAP
- receive and consider (in consultation with a senior representative of the awarding institution) appeals against decisions of the FTPC
- if it is decided (with the agreement of a senior representative of the awarding institution) that an appeal does not warrant consideration by an FTPAP, inform the student in writing giving the reasons within ten working days
- if an allegation of fitness to practise is proven, in consultation with the Dean of School, consider whether the outcome of the decision should be reported to the relevant professional or statutory body
- report outcomes of Fitness to Practise cases to the University of Suffolk Senate annually

#### **Chair of the Fitness to Practise Group (FTPG) shall:**

- take immediate action to safeguard all relevant parties
- appoint a senior member of academic staff to act as Investigating Officer
- receive a written report from the Investigating Officer in order to recommend the next course of action
- attend the FTPC to present the case

#### **The Investigating Officer shall:**

- assemble impartially the evidence relevant to the allegation from a full range of parties including the student
- prepare a written report for the FTPG which shall not pass judgement for or against the student nor recommend a particular course of action
- attend the FTPC and FTPAP as a witness if required

#### **The Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC) shall:**

- ensure that the FTPC proceeds in quasi-judicial fashion and allows all relevant parties including the student the opportunity to present their case
- ensure that all relevant evidence is considered and ensure that the FTPC has all of the information it needs in order to reach a decision

- call witnesses to the FTPC and request further information/evidence required for the FTPC to reach a decision
- ensure that the FTPC reaches its own decisions based on the evidence before it from all relevant parties and is not overly reliant on the judgement of third parties (for example, placement providers)

**The Secretary to the Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC) shall:**

- ensure the FTPC procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTPC
- convene a meeting of the FTPC as soon as possible
- receive and send copies of all written evidence to all relevant parties
- send the summons to the student
- be present for the proceedings of the FTPC to advise parties on procedure, take notes and record the FTPC's decision and reasons for the decision
- inform the student and Dean of School of the FTPC's decision in writing including informing the student of their right of appeal against the decision of the FTPC

**The Chair of the Fitness to Practise Appeals Panel (FTPAP) shall:**

- ensure that all relevant evidence is considered and ensure that the FTPAP has all of the information it needs in order to reach a decision
- ensure that the FTPAP does not proceed as a re-hearing

**The Secretary of the Fitness to Practise Appeals Panel (FTPAP) shall:**

- ensure the FTPAP procedures are fully and properly followed
- be a source of independent advice to all parties in the FTPAP
- convene a meeting of the FTPAP as soon as possible
- receive and send copies of all written evidence to all relevant parties
- be present for the proceedings of the FTPAP to advise parties on procedure, take notes and record the FTPAP's decision and reasons for the decision
- inform the student that there is no further right to appeal and provide information on how to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)



## APPENDIX 3

### ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS AT THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE (FTPC)

1. At the start of the hearing, the FTPC will have a preliminary discussion in private. The Secretary shall then invite into the room:

- the Chair of the FTPG presenting the case
- the student who is the subject of the hearing
- any accompanying friend as permitted by the Procedure

2. If the student fails to appear, the FTPC will consider whether or not to proceed with the case immediately and may do so provided it is satisfied that the student has been properly informed of the time and place of the meeting.

3. Any witnesses whom the FTPC has invited to attend shall remain outside the room in which the FTPC is sitting until called to give evidence.

4. The Chair shall state briefly why the FTPC is sitting.

5. The proceedings at the FTPC will usually follow the pattern described below:

- all written evidence will be taken as read;
- the Chair of the FTPG will present their case;
- the student will present their case;
- the Chair of the FTPG and the student may question each other and may each be questioned by the FTPC upon his/her statements or evidence, both written and oral;
- witnesses are called one at a time and are questioned first by the FTPC then by the person who nominated them and finally by the other party;
- following the withdrawal of any witnesses who have been called, the FTPC may ask any further questions of the student or the Chair of the FTPG;
- the Chair of the FTPG may make a closing statement if wished (and may leave the hearing for a few minutes to prepare this);
- the student may make a closing statement if they wish (and may leave the hearing for a few minutes to prepare this);
- the student and Chair of the FTPG will leave the hearing;
- the FTPC make a decision and the hearing closes.

6. The order of proceedings will be at the discretion of the Chair of the FTPC. The ruling of the Chair on any point of procedure shall be final.
  
7. The FTPC may at any time either before or during a hearing decide to adjourn the hearing for a period not normally exceeding seven working days
  
8. The decision of the FTPC shall be sent in writing to the student and to the Dean of School by the Secretary within five working days of the meeting of the FTPC.