

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

Approved by:	Effective date:	Next review:
Faculty Executive Board Academic Board	1 September 2024	1 March 2025

Procedure

This applies to all students undertaking a course leading to eligibility to apply for entry to the Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC), Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), Social Work England (SWE) or General Medical Council (GMC) registers. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care (the Faculty) Low-Level Concerns and Student Fitness to Practise (SFTP) Policy.

Who needs to know about the procedure?

Whilst undertaking a professional course, students must adhere to the professional conduct requirements of the relevant Statutory Regulatory body and the University's Code of Student Conduct. The Procedures set out the arrangements for addressing and applying the Policy and take account of the perspective of multiple stakeholders. The intention is to reassure students, the University and the general public that students and graduates are fit to practise through the appropriate implementation of the associated procedures. Identifying and addressing low-level concerns will utilise the Low-Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedures in assessing concerns.

Purpose of the procedure

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that all students whose behaviours raise concerns are supported and managed equitably. The intention is to provide transparent and consistent processes regardless of how the concerns are raised. The Procedures include matters relating to a student's health, circumstances and conduct which may affect their fitness to practise.

Contacts

The Faculty Quality and Compliance team is responsible for:

- Providing advice and assistance
- Guidance and templates
- Accessing training

The team can be contacted by emailing: health.sftpp@canterbury.ac.uk

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Stages for dealing with concerns.....	3
3. Stage 1 – Identification or notification of a potential issue or student behaviour which has raised concerns.....	5
4. Stage 2 – Establishing and addressing Low-Level Concerns with a view to early resolution at this stage.....	6
5. Stage 3 - Serious or persistent causes for concern requiring referral to the Professional Capabilities Committee.....	6
6. Stage 4 – Student Fitness to Practise Procedures (SFTP).....	8
7. Terms of Reference of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel.....	9
8. Membership of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel.....	10
9. Process for convening and hearing a Student Fitness to Practise Panel.....	10
10. Decision making by the Student Fitness to Practise Panel.....	11
11. Right of Appeal.....	14
12. Appeal arrangements.....	14
13. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.....	16

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. These procedures set out the arrangements the Low-Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedures.
- 1.2. Throughout the process, a student will be actively encouraged to seek support as described on the Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) Student Support and Wellbeing page.
- 1.3. Associated letters, documents and checklists to support this procedure can be accessed on the Quality and Compliance SharePoint.
- 1.4. The term 'student' applies to all undergraduate, postgraduate and post registration students and apprentices.

2. Stages for dealing with concerns

- 2.1. Students must be offered support from the academic team with meetings planned every two weeks, at each stage and until conclusion of the process. This support will usually be given by the personal academic tutor (PAT). Students should also be signposted to the CCCU Student Health and Wellbeing Services.
- 2.2. The process follows the stages described below:
- 2.3. **Stage 1** is the identification or notification of a potential issue or student behaviour which has raised concerns.
- 2.4. **Stage 2** is the process for establishing and addressing low-level concerns with a view to early resolution at this stage within the School – for example meeting with the Course Director, Lead Midwife for Education (LME), Head of Year, Cohort Lead or appropriate nominee.
- 2.5. **Stage 3** is where there are repeated low level concerns, lack of engagement with a plan made for early resolution of low-level concerns or a concern of a potentially more serious nature which requires referral to the Professional Capabilities Committee.
- 2.6. **Stage 4** is the referral to formal Student Fitness to Practise Procedures.
- 2.7. Students can be supported at any meetings by a member of staff providing that there is no conflict of interest, member of a Students' Union (CCSU Advice) or another student from CCCU. Legal representation for the student at any hearing will depend on the case's seriousness and the potential for the student's withdrawal from the course¹It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend. The meeting organiser must be made aware of any additional attendee at least

¹ AB v. University of XYZ. England and Wales High Court (Queens Bench Division) Mar 19,2020; AB v. XYZ. England and Wales High Court (Kings Bench) May 16,2023; OIA Good Practice Framework (2022) pg.10. (26)

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

2 working days before the meeting unless the student has been provided with less than 7 working days' notice of the meeting date. In such instances of short notice meetings, the student must make the meeting organiser aware of additional attendees at least 24 hours before the meeting.

- 2.8. Information from any previous concern or case may be introduced, provided there was not a previous decision that there was no case to answer and it was closed without any record being made.
- 2.9. The student must be informed in writing if it is foreseeable that previous findings and outcomes will be introduced and must be provided within the specified time limit.
- 2.10. At any time during its proceedings, the Professional Capabilities Committee may refer the student's case directly to Stage 4 Fitness to Practise Procedures.
- 2.11. If a student does not accept the outcome of the Professional Capabilities Committee, the student can request for the case to be referred directly to Stage 4 where the Formal Investigating Officer will investigate the case as outlined in section 6.
- 2.12. If a case requires referral to Stage 4, the Chair of the Professional Capabilities Committee will recommend to the Head of School or nominee, whether the student should remain in attendance on the programme or if they need to undertake attendance with conditions because of a potential risk to others (such as patients, the public, other students and staff, or themselves). This may apply to clinical and non-clinical learning activities, university facilities or both. Students will be supported by their PAT and Student Wellbeing while the investigation is ongoing as well as other university services described already.
- 2.13. At the completion of each Stage, the student will be told in writing within 5 working days of the outcome or how the matter will proceed next.
- 2.14. If the student fails to engage with the process or self withdraws and reasonable attempts have been made to contact them, then proceedings will continue in their absence.
- 2.15. If a student formally intermits during an open case the case may be paused. When they re-join the course, they will be required to continue with the procedures outlined in this document until the case is resolved
- 2.16. The intention is to complete the procedures as quickly as possible. It is aimed to undertake Stage 3 within 20 working days of the referral being made. The general exception to this is where notification is received outside the published term dates for the programme, when the aim is to undertake Stage 3 within 40 working days. Should there be any delays in the investigation (for example awaiting receipt of an Occupational Health report or outcome of a court case) the student will be kept informed.
- 2.17. At all stages within the procedures, there is an expectation that the appropriate redacted evidence held in relation to alleged issue(s) will be shared with the student concerned 7 working days in

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

advance of any meeting they are invited to attend. Where there are high levels of concern, the student may be provided with less than 7 working days' notice of a meeting, in which case the appropriate redacted evidence should be shared with the student as soon as practicable. This may include within the meeting itself in some cases.

3. Stage 1 – Identification or notification of a potential issue or student behaviour which has raised concerns

3.1. A potential concern relating to a student's health or professional conduct may be reported using a decision-making tool, the original source may include:

- self-referral by the student, for example the declaration of a criminal matter
- members of CCCU staff
- staff who work in placement provider organisations
- fellow students
- the police
- members of the public
- anonymous complaints, through a raising concerns process or through the media

3.2. If there is already a formal investigation by an outside agency, this should be completed prior to investigations under Stage 4 of these CCCU procedures.

3.3. The Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice will review the decision-making Tool and based on the evidence, and if necessary, in consultation with Course Director/LME/Year/Professional Lead or nominee, will determine if the matter should be referred to a higher stage. If the issue does not indicate a breach of professional standards or require the matter to proceed, the Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice will close the case and make a record of the decision which will be held locally, as follows:

- There is no impact on fitness to study or practise or any other breach of academic conduct or discipline, and resolvable in line with the University Student Code of Conduct <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/asset-library/policy-zone/Student-disciplinary-procedure-student.pdf>. The case will be considered closed. There will be no entry on the student record.
- There is no impact on fitness to study or practise, but a breach of academic conduct or discipline. The Course Director/LME/Year/Professional Lead or nominee will determine how to address the matter and a record made of the resolution. There will be no further proceedings under this Policy.
- The issue is considered singular and resolvable at Stage 1 via a conduct or health route, or both routes. There will be a record made of the decision.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

4. Stage 2 – Establishing and addressing Low-Level Concerns with a view to early resolution at this stage
 - 4.1. The Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice can refer the student to Stage 2 to establish and address low-level concerns. The Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice is responsible for coordinating the case at Stage 2 and may seek input into the management of the case from Student Support and Wellbeing Services, the student's Head of school, Course Director/LME/Year/Professional Lead, or their Personal Academic Tutor.
 - 4.2. The purpose of the referral to stage 2 is to be supportive in enabling the student to respond to low-level concerns and to accept remediation before progress is impaired or escalation to Stage 3 is required.
 - 4.3. This Stage may:
 - Conclude following discussion(s) with the student
 - Implement support mechanisms, including an assessment by Occupational Health Services
 - Be escalated to a higher stage
 - 4.4. An agreed record of the decision will be maintained digitally within a secure file only accessible to staff directly involved in the management of this process. The record will form part of the student file and can be considered in conjunction with any future concerns.
 - 4.5. If a student declines to engage with the support, the matter will be referred to the Professional Capabilities Committee (Stage 3).
5. Stage 3 - Serious or persistent causes for concern requiring referral to the Professional Capabilities Committee
 - 5.1. The primary intention of any course of action determined by the Professional Capabilities Committee (PCC) will be to support the student and their continued training towards graduation.
 - 5.2. Students are not required to report referral to this Committee to the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) in any Transfer of Information process except where the outcome of the PCC has made a recommendation to do so.
 - 5.3. Where misconduct has been proven under the relevant PSRB Student Code of Conduct, or where there has been a breach of Student Academic and Integrity Policy, the PCC will consider any capability or Fitness to Practise implications and action as appropriate.
 - 5.4. In particular, the PCC will:
 - Receive and consider allegations/referrals of students' unprofessional behaviour/poor conduct.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

- Receive and consider reports of students' behaviour or performance which may pose a possible risk to patients, the public, colleagues, or themselves.
 - Receive and consider reports of students' performance or progress which raises concerns about students' continued training towards being fully qualified health care professional.
 - Receive and consider reports of consistent low-level concerns which have not been remediated through previous stages of the procedures.
 - Have due regard within its decisions of the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between individuals in accordance with the public sector duty of the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.5. Where serious concerns with immediate patient safety issues are raised and/or concerns about final year students with no time for remediation, these will be referred directly to Stage 3 and 4 Fitness to Practise Procedures concurrently.
- 5.6. The PCC should include a minimum of one clinical academic with current relevant PSRB registration.
The PCC members will also include:
- Course lead from another course/programme (Chair)
 - Practice Educator, Academic Assessor or Personal Academic Tutor
 - Course Director
 - CCCU Student Support and Wellbeing Representative (in attendance, at student request only).
 - The PCC will be serviced by a member of the Quality and Compliance Team.
- 5.7. The student will be informed in writing of the referral (which should include reasons for referral) by the Quality and Compliance Team and invited to attend. They should be supported by their PAT and given the opportunity to submit supporting evidence, for example evidence of mitigation, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.
- 5.8. All documentation that is being made available to the committee must also be shared with the student in line with 2.12.
- 5.9. Students can be supported at any meetings by a member of staff providing that there is no conflict of interest, member of a Students' Union (CCSU Advice) or another CCCU student. It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend. The Secretary to the Committee must be made aware of any additional attendee at least 2 working days before the meeting unless the student has been provided with less than 7 working days' notice of the meeting date. In such instances of short notice meetings, the student must make them aware of additional attendees at least 24 hours before the meeting.
- 5.10. If a student declines to attend the PCC meeting, then reasons for the referral and actions to be taken will be discussed and made in absentia.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

5.11. The process for the PCC is as follows:

- The student's situation will be discussed in their presence if they attend and any evidence that has been submitted in advance should be considered at this time.
- PCC members and the student or representative should have the opportunity to ask questions.

5.12. The PCC will then consider the facts presented in private and, having considered all the circumstances, will reach a decision.

5.13. Should additional concerns arise during discussion, this may require the PCC to reconvene later. This will be agreed with the student.

5.14. The PCC may decide that there is no professional capability concern, in which case, the matter is closed, and no further action is taken. A record of this will be retained in the case file.

5.15. Where the PCC considers that the concern is proven, it may set a series of actions which can include:

5.16. Requiring the student to produce a written reflection on the issue(s), setting out the professional learning from the experience.

5.17. Requiring the student to make a learning agreement to address the issues in practice, and to provide evidence of improvement and reflection.

5.18. A further referral to Occupational Health for review of fitness to study and reasonable adjustments relating to the learning, teaching and assessment environment including practice.

5.19. Requiring the student to take specified remedial action not otherwise listed.

5.20. Referral to Stage 4 Fitness to Practise proceedings.

5.21. The student is notified of the decision in writing, normally within 5 working days of the Committee meeting. The letter records the decision, the reasons for it and options available to them should they disagree with the decision.

6. Stage 4 – Student Fitness to Practise Procedures (SFTP)

6.1. Where it is determined at any prior Stage that there are potential breaches by the student of the threshold for professional standards, Stage 4 procedures will begin with a formal investigation.

6.2. A Formal Investigating Officer (FIO) will be appointed from a pool of suitably trained staff within CCCU. The FIO will not be the Dean, Course Director, LME, Personal or Clinical Academic Tutor, or anyone else deemed to have a conflict of interest in acting as the FIO. The FIO gathers evidence to decide on the following:

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

- There is no case to answer and to close the case.
 - The need for an Occupational Health assessment
 - The case should be referred to the PCC as it does not appear to breach student threshold for professional standards requiring further action at Stage 4.
 - The issue has likely breached the student threshold for professional standards and should be referred to a Stage 4 Student Fitness to Practise Panel.
- 6.3. The FIO will aim to complete their decision and prepare a written report for the Panel, which includes a timeline of events and pertinent evidence within 20 working days of referral. If there are any delays the student must be informed with the reasons and the likely date by which the report will be made available
- 6.4. To complete the report, the FIO will work closely with the placement provider to gather evidence related to the allegations made against the student. The student needs to be made aware of this and assured that all information about them will be confidential and disclosed only to those involved with the investigation and panel hearing. Personal information will not be passed to the panel members until their membership has been confirmed²
- 6.5. In the case of post registration students or apprentices, the FIO can approach the employer with information related to the allegations.

7. Terms of Reference of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel

- 7.1. To hear the case from the FIO and the student's response regarding the matter that has been referred.
- 7.2. To determine if the evidence is found proven or not proven.
- 7.3. To determine whether any proven evidence indicates the student has breached required regulatory and professional standards.
- 7.4. To determine any sanctions as appropriate that may be independent or in addition to any described by the PCC.
- 7.5. To clearly document the decision-making process and the rationale for the determination taken.
- 7.6. To communicate the outcome to relevant parties indicating explicit reasons for the determination as appropriate.

² <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/fitness-to-practise/>

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

8. Membership of the Student Fitness to Practise Panel

- 8.1. All Panels will be assigned a Chair and a Secretary by the CCCU Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practise (or nominee).
- 8.2. The Panel Secretary (Servicing Officer) is provided by the Faculty and must be present during the meeting but they are not part of the decision-making process. The Servicing Officer will minute the meeting and maintain the records.
- 8.3. None of the decision-making Panel will have any conflict of interest with the case or the student concerned.
- 8.4. The composition of the Panel shall be as follows:
 - a senior member of staff from CCCU, who will act as Chair
 - a professionally qualified member of staff from the same discipline as the student (who holds a current licence to practice)
 - a senior staff member from outside the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care
 - a Professional Services representative to advise on procedural matters (advisory capacity only).

All panel members will be appropriately trained.

- 8.5. Any external registered practitioners on the Panel should not be a substantive CCCU staff member or have any links to the student (for example through a previous practice placement experience) or have any other potential conflict of interest in being a member of the Panel.
- 8.6. All Panel meeting attendees will sign a confidentiality agreement.

9. Process for convening and hearing a Student Fitness to Practise Panel

- 9.1. The Panel will meet as soon as reasonably practical to consider a concern referred to it. This will normally be held within 20 working days of referral to Panel. The student must be informed if this is not possible.
- 9.2. The Panel meeting will either take place on CCCU premises or be held virtually.
- 9.3. The FIO will be responsible for presenting the student case to the Panel. The written report, which includes a timeline of events and pertinent evidence will be circulated to the Panel and the student 10 working days in advance of the Panel meeting.
- 9.4. Only when there are serious extenuating circumstances, such as unavoidable absence from work will an alternative to the FIO attend the Panel.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

- 9.5. The student will be advised of their right to submit a written statement and any other relevant evidence before the Panel meeting; this must be sent to the Secretary at least 7 working days before the meeting date.
- 9.6. The student, their representative (see below), and the FIO are required to attend the Panel meeting and speak about the concerns raised. The student may attend by alternative means e.g., video conference.
- 9.7. Students can be supported at any meetings by a member of staff, member of a Students' Union (CCSU Advice) or another student. It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend. The meeting organiser must be made aware of any additional attendee at least 2 working days before the meeting.
- 9.8. In the case of the non-attendance of the student, the Panel will proceed in the student's absence. If the student or other witness is unable to attend for a good reason, the Chair of the Panel should be notified. The Chair of the Panel will consider whether the reason for non-attendance is sufficient to require rescheduling the Panel.
- 9.9. Additional information should normally be provided a minimum of one full working day in advance of the Panel. This may be permitted to be tabled at meeting at the discretion of the Chair, or in certain cases the Panel may need to be reconvened at a later date for the information to be properly considered.
- 9.10. Members of the Panel may ask questions of the student and the FIO.
- 9.11. The student and FIO may also ask questions of each other to clarify factual matters only.
- 9.12. The Chair may adjourn proceedings if necessary and inform the student in writing of the arrangements for the reconvening of the Panel.
- 9.13. When all presented evidence has been heard the Panel will discuss the case in private and decide the outcome.

10. Decision making by the Student Fitness to Practise Panel

- 10.1. Evidence associated with any case referred to the Panel will be thoroughly considered. The resultant outcome must be based on all the evidence presented. In order to apply sanctions, the Panel must be satisfied by the presented evidence that the student is not fit to practise. The standard of proof is the same applicable to civil proceedings, that of the balance of probability. The burden of proof is on the University.
- 10.2. Panel members must exercise their professional judgement in reaching a conclusion regarding the outcome and sanction. They must ensure that if they require a sanction, it is proportionate to the breach of professional standards that initiated the procedure, and that it will deal justly and fairly

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

with the fitness to practise issue(s). Sanctions must give primacy to the protection of the public and upholding public confidence in the relevant profession.

- 10.3. If the student has a criminal conviction, the relevance i.e., those which are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended), seriousness and circumstances in which the offence was committed must be taken into account. For example:
- the degree of risk posed to patients/ service users/ public
 - whether the conviction or caution was disclosed
 - the relevance of the offence to the chosen profession
 - the circumstances surrounding the offence
 - the student's explanation of the offence
 - the student's commitment to work safely and effectively, upholding the trust and confidence of patients/ service users.
 - When the offence took place?
 - Repeat or singular offence, evidence of learning?
- 10.4. The possible outcomes of the Panel hearing are as follows:
- 10.5. Following consideration of the evidence the case is not proven. In this case the student receives no warning or sanction. However, the student should be supported to reflect on their situation and experience by a member of CCCU staff or a mutually agreed member of staff from the University.
- 10.6. Following consideration of the evidence the case is proven (in part or in full). In this case the Panel will determine whether the facts as deemed proved constitute misconduct and impairment of fitness to practise, along with reviewing any mitigating or aggravating factors.
- 10.7. If the case is proven and the Panel determine that the student's fitness to practise is impaired the Panel will decide a sanction or agreement of undertakings, beginning with the least severe, and proportionate to the risk to patients, service users and the public. The Panel may:
- agree undertakings
 - apply conditions
 - exclude/suspend the student from the course
 - dismiss the student from the programme
- 10.8. In the event that the Panel advise that the student is dismissed – the final decision and communication is sent from the Vice Chancellor or nominated person.
- 10.9. If the student is to be dismissed from the course the procedure to follow is set out in the 'dismissal checklist'.
- 10.10. With all outcomes following a stage 4 Panel hearing, the student will be met face to face by the Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice to be told verbally the outcome. The student should be

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

supported by their PAT at this meeting. The date and time for the meeting will be given to the student at the Panel meeting. The outcome letter can be sent to the student following this or handed to the student at the meeting. Students must not be informed on a Friday or prior to a public holiday or University closure when ongoing support is not available.

- 10.11. Where a sanction is applied the student will be offered ongoing support from a mutually agreed member of staff from the Faculty together with support from Student Support and Wellbeing.
- 10.12. The list of sanctions is indicative; alternative sanctions may be made as appropriate to individual cases.
- 10.13. Where the sanction applied involves, the student undertaking remedial action (e.g., through a formal learning agreement), the Panel should specify how compliance with the conditions will be measured and who will be responsible for monitoring. It should also make clear to the student the consequences of breaching any conditions.
- 10.14. The Panel chair will be responsible for informing the practice partners of the outcome of the Panel. Within 10 days.
- 10.15. If the Panel comes to a view that wider public interests may be involved, the Panel may recommend to the University that case should be referred to other agencies, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 10.16. The outcome of the Panel will be recorded, and then communicated by the Chair, to the student, and other relevant parties. The determination letter should also make clear the requirements for disclosure to the PSRB when the student applies for registration and when they complete a Good Health Good Character form.
- 10.17. The outcome of the Panel will be attached to the student's file. Any subsequent incidents may be considered in light of earlier warnings. The outcome will be kept on the student's file for six years after the end of the student's registration.
- 10.18. If something comes to light during the Panel proceedings that raises concerns and/or highlights risk to the student, service users or others and requires disclosure to an external agency, a decision will be taken by the Panel and actioned by the Chair and will be recorded in the minutes.
- 10.19. Following the Panel hearing the minutes will be reviewed by the Chair for accuracy. In the absence of the Chair the other Panel members will be asked to undertake this task.
- 10.20. Within 10 working days, the Secretary informs the student in writing of the Panel's decision. The student will also be sent a copy of the minutes. The student has the right to appeal within 10 working days of this notification. The student will be told of the procedures for appealing. Appeals relating to Fitness to Practise are managed by the Student Resolution and Protection at CCCU.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

11. Right of Appeal

- 11.1. The student must make their appeal within 14 working days of the date of the written notice by submitting a Student Fitness to Practice Appeal Form (available from health.sftpp@canterbury.ac.uk) to the Student Resolution and Student Protection (SRSP) team at casehandling@canterbury.ac.uk
- 11.2. Delays in the submission of an appeal will need to be fully explained. Appeals submitted after two months from the date of the Panel will not normally be considered unless there is accompanying evidence to demonstrate the reason for the delay.
- 11.3. The grounds for the appeal are:
 - the decision-making process did not follow the procedures
 - the Panel reached an unreasonable decision, and the sanctions are disproportionate
 - there was bias or reasonable perception of bias during the procedure
 - there are new material facts that become known only after the meeting of the Panel.
- 11.4. The student can request an appeal as noted in the paragraph above at 11.3, which needs to include explaining the reasons for contesting the decision.
- 11.5. If the SRSP Case Officer decides that there are grounds for appeal, the case will be considered following the procedures set below:

12. Appeal arrangements

- 12.1. A nominee will be appointed by the Student Resolution and Student Protection as a Reviewer, (this will be a member of staff from outside of the Faculty) for the appeal.
- 12.2. The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the decision-making process followed the procedures.
- 12.3. If the Reviewer decides that procedures were followed and/or that any new material facts that have become known after the meeting of the original SFTP Panel met do not affect the decision made by the SFTP Panel, then no further action should take place, and this represents the completion of the internal procedures.
- 12.4. The aim is to complete the review within 20 working days of acknowledgement of receipt. The general exception is outside the published term dates. The aim is to complete the investigation within 40 working days of the acknowledgement. If there are any delays the student will be notified.
- 12.5. On completing the internal procedures, the student may complain to the OIA. CCCU will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter within 25 working days of the date of the Reviewer's decision.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

- 12.6. The outcome should be entered on the student record. Any subsequent incidents may take account of earlier warnings. The outcome, together with the Panel papers, remain on file for one year after the last registered date of entry
 - 12.8 Details on next steps and submitting a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education will be provided to the student within the outcome letter. At this point, students have completed the University's internal procedures. Students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome have the right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. A complaint must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date the Completion of Procedures (CoP).
13. Appeal arrangements if the penalty leads to exclusion/suspension or dismissal
- 13.1. A Panel Secretary (Servicing Officer) appointed by the Director of Student Resolution and Student Protection at Canterbury Christ Church University establishes an Appeals Panel, which consists of three members. The Panel will include, a senior member of staff from outside the Faculty of Medicine, Health, and Social Care, for cases concerning a student on a programme accredited by a PSRB the Panel will include a senior member of the profession accredited by the same PSRB who is recognised as a qualified professional by that PSRB and who holds a current licence to practise with that PSRB (or equivalent authority to practise), a senior member of Academic Faculty outside the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care.
 - 13.2. The Secretary notifies the student in writing the arrangements for the hearing.
 - 13.3. The Secretary convenes a panel meeting with the student for ten working days after notification of this procedure to the student. If there are any delays the student will be notified.
 - 13.4. The purpose of the meeting is not to reverse or amend the decision made by the original SFTP Panel, it may only recommend that a new SFTP Panel should be convened if it judges that a matter within its remit requires this to happen.
 - 13.5. When attending in person, the student can be accompanied by a member of staff providing that there is no conflict of interest, member of a Students' Union (CCSU Advice) or another student at the University. It is a student's responsibility to arrange for a supporter to attend. In all cases, they may speak on behalf of the student at the student's request/instruction.
 - 13.6. If the student declines the offer of the panel, the panel will take place in their absence. The basis for the review will be the evidence collected and provided to the Appeals Panel.
 - 13.7. If the Appeals Panel considers the decision-making process of low-level concerns or fitness to practise concerns followed the procedures, this represents the completion of the internal procedures. If the Appeals Panel does not consider that the decision-making process followed the procedures, the Appeals Panel will determine that there should be a fresh SFTP Panel to hear the case.

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

13.8. The final decision is to be sent to the student in writing within seven working days of the meeting unless there is a need to collect further information. Notification of the need to collect further information is also sent to the student within seven days of the meeting.

14. Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

14.1. On receipt of an outcome letter, students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome, may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). A complaint must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the University's final decision. Further details of how to submit a complaint to the OIA will be provided in the Completion of Procedure. The OIA will normally only consider complaints after the University's internal Procedures have been completed.

Document information	Description of document information
Document title	Low-Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedures
Department owner	Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care
Document category	Administrative Practice - Documents of an administrative or operational nature Equality and Diversity - Documents relating to the promotion of equality and diversity Ethics and Compliance - Documents concerning appropriate conduct or compliance with legal or regulatory requirements Health, Safety and Environmental - Documents relating to the health, security and safety of staff, students and visitors Human Resources - Documents impacting working relationships with the University for members of staff irrespective of status Information Technology - Documents relating to IT systems, data, and related issues Students - Documents directly affecting student life at the University
Document owner	Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care
Document manager	Faculty Lead for Student Fitness to Practice
Related University policies	Student Academic Integrity Policy Student Low Level Concern and Fitness to Practice Privacy Notice
Related University procedures	Student Academic Misconduct Procedure Student Conduct Procedure
Approved by	Faculty Executive Board

Low Level Concerns and Fitness to Practise Procedure

Document information	Description of document information
Date approved	2 September 2024
Date of commencement	9 September 2024
Version	V4 Updated to include addition of Lead Midwife Education April 2025
History of revisions of the document	V1 - 14 June 2022 V2 – 26 July 2022 V3 – January 2025
Web address	