

Fitness to Practice and Study

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT	CATEGORY	Policy
	AREA	Curriculum Delivery
	PURPOSE	This policy outlines the College's commitment to ensuring that students enrolled on programmes requiring vocational competence, theoretical or physical, and/or leading to professional registration are fit to practise. It safeguards the public, supports students, and ensures compliance with professional standards and regulatory requirements.
	Controlled Document Number	CS-FPS-POL-033-2.0
	Strategy Alignment	Curriculum Strategy
	Version Number	2.0
	SLT Lead	Director of Curriculum
	SMT Lead	Assistant Director of Curriculum
	Approved by	Policy Review Group
	Approval Date	21.10.25
	Review Date	Oct 2027
	Distribution	Internal College wide

DOCUMENT HISTORY				
Date of Issue	Version	Date Approved	Summary of Changes	Approved by
19.11.25	2.0	21.10.25	Change of SMT lead. Inclusion of fitness to study within scope. Removal of procedural detail	Policy Review Group

Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	4
2. Scope	4
3. Definitions.....	4
4. Roles and Responsibilities	4
5. Document Control (Policy Detail).....	5
5.1 Commitment to Professional Standards	5
5.1 Safeguarding Public and Student Interests	5
5.2 Principles of Fairness and Transparency	6
6. Related College documents	7
7. References	7
6. Appendices.....	9
Appendix 1: Courses where Fitness to Practice and Study are applicable	9
7. Document Development	10

1. Policy Statement

The College is committed to ensuring that students undertaking programmes can demonstrate appropriate academic ability, personal suitability, and professional conduct. This policy ensures that students are fit to study and/or practise in their chosen field, protecting the public and maintaining professional standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, academic staff, and placement supervisors involved in programmes where professional registration is a potential outcome. It includes behaviour both within and outside academic and placement settings.

3. Definitions

- **Fitness to Practise:** A student's suitability to engage in professional practice, including academic, behavioural, and health-related factors.
- **CAM:** Curriculum Area Manager responsible for overseeing Fitness to Practise processes.
- **Precautionary Suspension:** Temporary removal of a student from College, including on campus, online and/or placement attendance, pending investigation.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Curriculum Area Manager:** Oversees investigations and convenes Fitness to Practise Panels.
- **Fitness to Practise Panel:** Reviews cases and determines appropriate actions.
- **Students:** Must disclose relevant convictions and/or health concerns and/or competencies.

5. Document Control (Policy Detail)

The College recognises its responsibility to ensure that students enrolled on programmes leading to professional practice or registration are fit to both study and practise in their chosen field. This policy sets out the principles and expectations that underpin professional and/or vocational suitability, safeguarding public interest, and maintaining the integrity of the professions represented.

5.1 Commitment to Professional Standards

Students must consistently demonstrate the personal and professional attributes required for safe and effective practice. These include:

- Ethical behaviour and integrity
- Emotional resilience and maturity
- Respect for others and inclusive practice
- Sound judgement and decision-making
- Effective communication and interpersonal skills

Fitness to Practise is not limited to academic performance or placement conduct; it encompasses all aspects of a student's behaviour, including actions outside the College that may impact public trust or professional reputation.

5.1 Safeguarding Public and Student Interests

The policy exists to:

- Protect the public by ensuring students are safe and suitable to engage in professional or vocational roles.
- Support students by identifying concerns early and offering appropriate guidance or intervention.
- Uphold the standards required by professional and regulatory bodies
- Maintain confidence in the College's programmes and alumni/graduates.

Where concerns arise regarding suitability of an applicant or student, the College will act proportionately and fairly, balancing the rights of the student with the need to protect the College, including staff and students, and uphold professional standards.

5.2 Principles of Fairness and Transparency

All decisions relating to Fitness to Practise and Study will be:

- Based on clear, evidence-informed criteria
- Made in good faith and with due regard to equality legislation
- Communicated transparently to all relevant parties
- Subject to regular review and quality assurance

The College promotes a culture of openness and encourages early disclosure of any issues that may affect a student's fitness to practise. Support mechanisms are in place to help students navigate challenges and maintain their professional trajectory.

5.3 External Reference Points and Sector Guidance

This policy is informed by a range of national frameworks and sector guidance to ensure alignment with best practice in professional suitability, safeguarding, and academic integrity. The following reference points have been considered in its development:

- **Education and Training Foundation (ETF)**
Sets professional standards for teachers and trainers in the FE and skills sector, including expectations for ethical behaviour and inclusive practice.
- **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) & Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)**
Define fitness to practise in terms of health, conduct, and competence for regulated professions
- **Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)**
Offers guidance on candidate behaviour, malpractice, and professional standards in assessment contexts.
- **Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition**
Provides regulatory expectations for awarding organisations, including standards for qualification validity, malpractice, and learner conduct.
- **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE)**
Provides a Good Practice Framework for handling fitness to practise concerns fairly and proportionately.

- **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)**

Sets out expectations for academic standards and student conduct in programmes leading to professional registration.

These reference points ensure that the College's approach to fitness to practise and study is consistent with national expectations and supports the integrity of vocational and professional programmes.

6. Related College documents

- 6.1 Curriculum Strategy
- 6.2 Fitness to Practice Procedure
- 6.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- 6.4 Safeguarding Policy
- 6.5 Student Code of Conduct
- 6.6 Student Criminal Convictions Policy
- 6.7 Student Positive Behaviour Policy

7. References

- Education and Training Foundation (ETF), 2025. Professional standards for teachers and trainers in education and training. [online] Available at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/professional-standards/teachers/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), 2025. Fitness to practise: What we investigate. [online] Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/what-we-investigate/fitness-to-practise/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].
- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), 2025. Information for candidates and guidance on malpractice. [online] Available at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), 2025. An introduction to fitness to practise. [online] Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/concerns-nurses-midwives/what-is-fitness-to-practise/an-introduction-to-fitness-to-practise/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].

- Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE), 2025. Good practice framework: Fitness to practise. [online] Available at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/fitness-to-practise/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].
- Ofqual, 2025. General conditions of recognition. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), 2025. UK Quality Code for Higher Education. [online] Available at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2025].

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Courses where Fitness to Practice and Study are applicable

- Applied Science
- Animal Care/Management
- Barbering
- Beauty Therapy
- Child Care, vocational route where license to practise applies
- Counselling
- Creative Media Practice. TV and Film pathway only
- Dental Nursing
- Electrical Installation
- Hairdressing
- Health and Social Care, vocational route where license to practise applies
- Motor Vehicle
- Sport
- Uniformed Protective Services
- Youth Work

This list is not exhaustive, and professional judgement will be applied by College staff when assessing the suitability for a student to undertake a course of study, as detailed in the Fitness to Practice and Study Procedure.

9. Document Development

9.1 Working Group

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this document:

Name	Position	Issue No.
H Hagan H Hampsey L Monteith S McCartney	Quality Manager Assistant VP Teaching & Learning Head of Teaching & Learning Excellence Head of Student Experience	1.0 (2023)
L Monteith H Hampsey A Ballantyne L Sloan M Murray P Wallace S Price	Chair of Policy Review Group Assistant Curriculum Director Head of Department Head of Department Head of Department Head of Work Based Learning Head of Department	2.0 (2025)

9.2 Consultation

9.2.1 Internal Consultation

Role/Dept/Forum	Reason for consultation	Date	Issue No.
Quality and Academic Standards Committee	Review of new policy	March 2023	1.0 (2023)
Teaching and Learning Directorate Meeting	Review updated policy and identify any related changes needed in areas such as admissions or student services.	05.11.25	2.0 (2025)

9.2.2 External Consultation

Organisation	Reason for consultation	Date	Issue No.

9.3 Key dates

Governance Activity	Date	Issue No.
Equality Screened	20.10.25	2.0 (2025)
Quality Screened	07.11.25	2.0 (2025)
Policy Review Group Approval	21.10.25	2.0 (2025)

9.4 Communication plan for implementation

9.4.1 Internal Communication

Communication Activity	Date	Issue No.
Quality and Academic Standards Committee	04.11.25	2.0 (2025)
Senior Management Team	25.11.25	2.0 (2025)
Governing Body or relevant subcommittee	17.11.25	2.0 (2025)
Publish on Canvas for Staff access	20.11.25	2.0 (2025)
Publish Student Hub for Student access	20.11.25	2.0 (2025)

9.4.2 External Communication

Communication Activity	Yes/No	Date	Issue No.
Publish on NRC Website	Yes	20.11.25	2.0 (2025)