**Fitness to Practise Guidelines for Investigation Meetings**

2019-20

The role of the Investigating Office is to gather evidence to inform a decision on whether the student’s fitness to practise is impaired. The Investigating Officer does not decide the outcome of the investigation.

Please see checklist below for the investigation meeting process.

**Investigation meeting with the student**

1. Meetings should be held face-to-face (in person or via Skype etc.). Telephone meetings should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
2. Prior to the meeting, the Investigating Officer will:
   1. Review all documentation submitted.
   2. Seek out any required additional information.
   3. Prepare questions to ask the student.
   4. Provide the student with adequate notice of the meeting.
   5. Organise for a note taker to be present (if support in this is required).
   6. Contact Legal Services for support (if the student has indicated that they wish to have legal representation at this meeting).
3. At the start of the meeting, the Investigating Officer will:
   1. Welcome the student and make introductions.
   2. Explain that a note taker is present to take notes of the meeting.
   3. If unaccompanied, confirm student is happy to continue with the meeting.
   4. Inform the student that they may take breaks if/when required.
   5. Encourage the student to ask for further clarification if unsure of anything during the meeting.
   6. Explain that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Fitness to Practise procedure and ask the student if they have reviewed (and understood) the procedure. If the student does not understand the process, briefly explain this step of the procedure. *It would also prove beneficial to provide the student with a hard copy of the procedure.*
   7. Explain purpose of this meeting.
   8. Detail the possible outcomes that the Head of School (or nominee) and Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominee) can decide on. Quote directly from 7.1 of the Fitness to Practise Procedure.
   9. Remind the student that they are expected to act honestly throughout the process and any dishonesty would be considered in deciding an appropriate outcome for the case.
   10. Advise that no electronic or digital audio or visual recordings may be taken of the meeting (unless already obtained written consent to do so).
   11. Ask the student to confirm that they understand the process.
   12. Briefly explain to the student the allegation/concern that has been raised.
4. During meeting:
   1. The student will be invited to provide a statement/initial response to the allegation(s)/concern(s) raised.
   2. The Investigating Officer will ask the student questions to clarify any queries, obtain the facts of the case and to identify any mitigating factors.
5. At the end of the meeting, the Investigating Officer will:
   1. Ask whether the student has anything further they wish to say.
   2. Explain the next steps of the investigation (that the Investigating Officer will complete their investigation (this may involve meeting with other individuals and/or requesting specific evidence) and produce a report for consideration by the Head of School and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs (or nominees) who will determine an appropriate outcome for the case).
   3. Explain timescales
   4. Permit the student to review and provide comment on the Notes. The student should be asked to confirm that the Notes are accurate by signing them
   5. Confirm that the student is permitted to provide additional evidence to support their case (give deadline for this).
6. Type up the meeting notes. These will become a part of the investigation documentation.

**Investigation meeting with other involved individuals (those raising concern, witnesses etc.)**

1. At the start of the meeting, the Investigating Officer will:
   1. Welcome the individual and make introductions.
   2. Explain that a note taker is present to take notes of the meeting.
   3. If unaccompanied, confirm individual is happy to continue with the meeting.
   4. Inform the individual that they may take breaks if/when required.
   5. Encourage the individual to ask for further clarification if unsure of anything during the meeting.
   6. Explain that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Fitness to Practise procedure. . If the individual does not understand the process, briefly explain this step of the procedure. *It would also prove beneficial to provide the individual with a hard copy of the procedure.*
   7. Explain purpose of this meeting.
   8. Explain that what is said within this meeting cannot remain anonymous/fully confidential as the student will be provided with a copy of the notes/ record of statement.
   9. Remind the individual that they are expected to act honestly throughout the process.
   10. Advise that no electronic or digital audio or visual recordings may be taken of the meeting (unless already obtained written consent to do so).
   11. Ask the individual to confirm that they understand the process.
2. During the meeting, the Investigating Officer may:
   1. (If meeting with witnesses) Briefly explain to the student the allegation/concern that has been raised (this should be on a need to know basis)/ provide some background to the reason for this meeting.
   2. Ask the individual to provide their recollection of events and to answer any queries.
   3. Ask the individual to provide details of the advice/warnings previously given to the student before this investigation was triggered.
3. At the end of the meeting, the Investigating Officer will:
   1. Ask whether the individual has anything further they wish to say.
   2. Explain that they will not be provided with a copy of the outcome of this investigation.
   3. Permit the individual to review and provide comment on the Notes. The individual should be asked to confirm that the Notes are accurate by signing them
   4. Confirm that the individual is permitted to provide additional evidence to support their case (give deadline for this).
4. Type up the meeting notes. These will become a part of the investigation documentation.