

## FITNESS TO PRACTICE STATEMENT

The following is the UCD DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology Fitness to Practise Statement which takes effect from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

**UCD Fitness to Practise Policy:** For the most up-to-date information on UCD's Fitness to Practise Policy please see UCD's website.

<https://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentfitnessstopractise/>

**Fitness to Practise Definition:** Fitness to practise means having the skills, knowledge, health and character necessary to undertake and complete a programme with professional practise, experiential learning or clinical work safely and effectively, fulfilling the responsibilities within the scope of practise in a chosen field.

### **Aims of the Fitness to Practise Statement:**

The fitness to practise statement aims to

1. Ensure postgraduate students on the UCD DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology have a clear understanding of the standards of professional attitudes and behaviour required of them through-out all aspects of their training, and are supported in their continuous attainment of these standards.
2. Ensure the well-being of any members of the public or service users that our postgraduate students have contact with during the course of their clinical placements or other applied experiences.
3. Meet the requirement of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) accreditation criteria that the UCD DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology have fitness to practise guidelines.
4. Apply University College Dublin's Fitness to Practise Policy to the DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology

### **Expected Fitness to Practise Standards:**

The following positive attitudes and behaviour are expected of postgraduate students in clinical psychology training.

- 1. Fitness to Practise is demonstrated continually during the course of clinical training in all settings.* Graduate students demonstrate their fitness to practise in all aspects of their behaviour through-out the three years of their training in clinical psychology. Open, positive and constructive interaction with members of the public, service users, clients, research participants, supervisors, other staff on placement, classmates and other postgraduate peers, the course team, and other university staff is the expected norm. While on placement graduate students should adopt the dress code of their host agency.
- 2. Training in clinical psychology requires openness to the acquisition of new knowledge, new skills and the continuous adoption of new roles.* This requires the graduate to be open to new learning experiences and to demonstrate the ability to receive and respond to feedback in a constructive and non-defensive manner. In instances where there is a concern that a graduate student is unreasonably defensive and unresponsive to constructive feedback offered to them then the specific feedback given and the response of the postgraduate should be clearly documented.
- 3. Fitness to practise will reflect the ethical guidelines of the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Code of Ethics.* Through-out all aspects of their work while completing their clinical training postgraduates will demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to the PSI Code of Ethics (3<sup>rd</sup> Revision, May 2008). The four main organising principles of which are that in their work psychologists 1. will respect the rights and dignity of the person; 2. will practise within their level of competence; 3. will behave with responsibility; and 4. will behave with integrity.
- 4. As a condition of acceptance onto the UCD DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology postgraduate students must undergo and receive Garda Clearance.* Relevant documentation indicating Garda Clearance must be lodged by the postgraduate student with the DPsychSc Clinical Psychology Course Administrator. After the receipt of their initial Garda Clearance and prior to the completion of their DPsychSc degree in circumstances where a postgraduate in clinical training is subsequently subject to a Garda caution, allegation of criminal activity, or criminal prosecution they are required to notify the DPsychSc Clinical

Psychology Course Director in writing as soon as possible and no later than seven days after they become aware of its occurrence. In the event of an alleged incident the Course Director may require the graduate student to discontinue their placement and other course work until such time as the issue is resolved. Failure to notify the Course Director or to agree to temporarily discontinue clinical training while an outstanding legal issue is resolved will result in the initiation of formal fitness to practise procedures.

5. *As a condition of acceptance onto the UCD DPsychSc in Clinical Psychology graduate students must declare themselves physically and psychologically well in order to competently execute the various academic coursework, placement, research and other training requirements.* On an annual basis graduate students are required to declare themselves fit to practise. They do this as part of their annual on-line registration with the university. In the event that a graduate student experiences a change in their physical or psychological health effecting their ability to execute their responsibilities they are required to notify the Course Director in writing within seven days. In such circumstances the Course Director and Course Team will work with the graduate student to develop an appropriate plan to manage their changed circumstances in a supportive manner. Failure to notify the Course Director of a significant change in their physical or psychological health which effects an individuals capacity to carry-out their various responsibilities in clinical training may result in the initiation of formal fitness to practise procedures.

6. *The Course Director (or members of the Course Team designed by the Course Director) has a duty to inform current or subsequent clinical placement supervisors of any fitness to practise hearings, and their outcome, to which a graduate may be referred.* In the event that the Course Director or his/her designate are informing a supervisor of the outcome of formal or informal fitness to practise procedures which has resulted in the graduate's continuation in clinical training this information should be conveyed in a manner that supports the graduate in achieving and maintaining the appropriate standard of practise in a supportive, clear and goal-directed manner.

#### **Fitness to Practise Causes of Concern**

Issues that might impair fitness to practise are wide ranging. The following are examples of areas of concern or circumstances that might render a graduate student unfit to practise. The list is not exhaustive, however, it is representative of common categories of concern:

- a criminal conviction or caution;
- substance misuse: drunk driving; alcohol or drug consumption that affects study, work or the work environment;
- aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour: assault; sexual assault; physical violence, bullying; abuse;
- a persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour: poor time management; infrequent or non-attendance, poor communication, failure to accept and follow educational advice, failure to follow health and safety requirements or the regulations of the School or University or Placement Agency;
- Impaired judgement;
- lack of competence;
- unprofessional behaviour or attitude: breach of confidentiality; harassment; bullying; unlawful discrimination;
- health concerns and lack of insight or management of these concerns: failure to seek medical treatment or other support; refusal to follow medical advice or care plans including monitoring and reviews, in relation to maintaining fitness to practise; failure to recognise limits and abilities or lack of insight into health concerns. In this context ill health means a long term, untreated or unacknowledged physical or mental health condition that impairs a person's ability to practise without supervision. Good health means that person is capable of safe and effective practise without supervision. It does not mean the absence of any disability or health condition.

#### **Fitness to Practise Procedures:** <https://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentfitnessstopractise/>

*Fitness to practise issues should usually be resolved co-operatively and informally in the first instance.* In most instances where a post-graduate in clinical training encounters some form of difficulty in any aspect of their training the default approach will be to deal with this issue in a sensitive, supportive and informal manner. This will usually involve the postgraduate student, their supervisor or other person bringing the issue of concern to the attention of the Course Director and the development of a clear, goal directed plan that resolves the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned parties.

*Formal Fitness to Practise Investigation Procedures may be initiated.* In circumstances where a serious fitness to practise issue has arisen, or the public are deemed to be at risk, or the informal supportive strategy outlined above has clearly not resolved the issue, the postgraduate in clinical training will be

referred to the University's formal fitness to practise procedures. This process is initiated by the matter being reported to the relevant Dean and a "Preliminary Report Form" (see below) may be used for this purpose.

**Formal Fitness to Practise Investigation Procedures**

<https://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentfitnessstopractise/>

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**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE CONCERNS**



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***Please consult the Student Fitness to Practise Policy and Guidelines before completing this form***

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Name of student:

Student Number:

Name of Reporting Academic Staff member:

1. Outline fitness to practise concerns in detail:

2. Outline any actions taken to date (if any):

3. Proposed review date:

4. Date on which report was submitted to Chair of the Programme Fitness to Practise Programme Board: