



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

FITNESS TO PRACTISE: A GUIDE TO INVESTIGATIONS



This information sheet is for:

Responding Students - students who have received an allegation of fitness to practise.

I Have Been Required to Attend an Investigation Meeting - Do I Have to Go?



Yes. This is an important meeting. It is your opportunity to hear the concerns that have been raised about your conduct and to give an explanation or provide information to the Investigating Officer. You should let the Investigating Officer know about any difficulties you have encountered which may have affected your conduct.

- If you are unable to attend, you should inform the Investigating Officer immediately. You must be able to give a good reason for not attending and should provide corroborating evidence (e.g. medical evidence).
- If you fail to attend, without a good reason, the Investigating Officer may proceed with the investigation without your input.
- The Head of School may consider your failure to engage with the Fitness to Practise when making their decision

Can I Bring Anyone with Me to the Meeting?

Yes. You have the right to be accompanied at any interview and/or meeting by:

- A registered student of the University
- A Students' Union Sabbatical Officer
- A member of University staff or
- University Chaplaincy.

You are strongly advised to seek help from SU Advice at an early stage.



Preparing for an Investigation Meeting.

- Read the Fitness to Practise Regulations and the details of the fitness to practise concerns raised against you carefully.
- Seek advice and support from [SU Advice](#).
- Make sure that you arrive on time - taking into account possible delays caused by traffic, public transport delays etc.
- Bring the papers with you - including any supporting evidence that you wish to discuss/present to the Investigating Officer.
- You may wish to prepare a statement to present to the Investigating Officer in response to the concerns raised.
- Be honest and open. Failure to be honest may raise additional fitness to practise concerns in relation to your probity.
- If you have a disability and need special arrangements, please let the Investigating Officer know as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.
- If you are attending virtually, ensure that you have a strong internet connection and have a private, quiet space from which to attend the virtual meeting.

What Will Happen at an Investigation Meeting?

The investigating officer will explain the concerns that have been raised about your conduct and will give you an opportunity to respond. This is your opportunity to explain what happened, to give the investigating officer the name/s of any witnesses or people who may have relevant information or to let the investigating officer know of any factors which affected your behaviour.

You may wish to consider the following:

1. Whether or not you accept any allegations, criticisms or concerns.
2. What explanations you have for your actions.
3. How you plan to change your behaviour in the future (if you accept that change is needed).
4. Information about mitigating circumstances (events beyond your control, like a health problem, or financial, accommodation or personal difficulties).
5. Favourable information such as previous good behaviour or evidence that your behaviour has improved.
6. In cases of ill health, how you plan to manage your health problems in the future.



What do I need to do after the Investigation Meeting?

Following your investigation meeting, the Investigating Officer will share with you:

- A (redacted, where necessary) copy of the Formal Statement of Fitness to Practise Concerns form or equivalent written statement; and
- Any additional documentation or evidence submitted by the Reporting Person(s), including witness statements or records of investigation meetings.

The Investigating Officer will set a deadline for you to provide a written response to the fitness to practise concerns and to present any additional evidence in support of your case.

It is very important that you submit all necessary documentation ahead of the deadline.

What are the next steps?

The Investigating Officer will gather information and may speak to any other person involved or anyone who may have information to contribute to the investigation. This may include:

- Requesting witness statements and/or interviewing relevant individuals.
- Gathering factual information about your progress on the programme.
- Requesting that you attend Occupational Health to seek advice on your fitness to practise on medical grounds.

This list is not exhaustive.

Once their investigation is complete, the Investigating Officer will submit an investigation report to your Head of School (or nominee) for consideration.



Outcome of the Investigation

Your Head of School (or nominee), in consultation with the Director of Academic Services (or nominee), will consider the Investigating Officer's report and make a decision on your case (see section 6 of the [Fitness to Practise Regulations](#) for details of the possible outcomes). You will be sent a letter which will explain the decision and the next steps.

Further Information

Please visit the Fitness to Practise webpages where you can find full information about Fitness to Practise Regulations and Procedure.

