



Patients must be able to trust and respect their doctors. Society rightly expects doctors to behave in an appropriate manner. They are expected to have high moral values and to work within a code of practise determined by the profession itself and by the law.

The Medical School has a duty to ensure that its graduates are fit to enter the medical profession. It fulfils this duty by enabling students to acquire the knowledge and develop the skills and attitudes appropriate to their future role as doctors and the vast majority of students achieve this.

However, occasionally the School must act when a student appears to have problems or exhibits behaviour which is not compatible with their future role. In common with other medical schools and in line with GMC guidance, the School has therefore set up a procedure which will be followed when a student's health and /or behaviour is causing concern. Students should be aware that the outcome of Fitness to Practice procedures may not necessarily be punitive and that these procedures can be beneficial for students both in monitoring problems and in identifying the need for support.

The student is referred in the first instance to the Medical School Divisional Tutor, who acts as the Investigating Office for Fitness to Practise issues.

What sort of problems lead to referral to the Divisional Tutor?

The first priority of the School is to offer students support for their problems. The School recognises that students are subject to all sorts of pressures and some will find the medical course stressful at times; the majority will cope but a minority may find it difficult for a variety of reasons. Some may cease to cope, others may try to cope by turning to alcohol or drugs or by behaving antisocially. The Divisional Tutor has a broad remit and routinely reviews the progress of students experiencing difficulties.

If the Divisional Tutor feels that the student's behaviour does not constitute a disciplinary offence but that the student needs additional support for their problems, the Divisional Tutor may recommend that the student be placed under Close Supervision.

If the Divisional Tutor decides that a student's behaviour can be defined as "misconduct" under UCL Regulations, the student may be referred to the office of UCL's Vice Provost (Education) and dealt with under UCL's Disciplinary Code and Procedure in Respect of Students.

(<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c1/disciplinary-code/UCLStudent-Disciplinary-Code-and-Procedure-in-Respec-of-Students.pdf>)

The Divisional Tutor will also report the decision to the Medical School Initial Fitness to Practise Panel, which will then decide whether the student should also be referred to a full Fitness to Practise Panel. If the Divisional Tutor feels that the issue does not constitute a disciplinary offence but has a bearing on a student's fitness to practise, then the student may be referred directly to the Initial Fitness to Practise Panel.

What sort of problems raise concerns about Fitness to Practise Medicine?

These include physical and mental health problems which may make a student unfit to practise medicine, unacceptable behaviour (e.g. violence and harassment) alcohol and/or substance misuse and criminal behaviour.

Key points:

- **SEEK HELP**
 - If you develop a problem be prepared to acknowledge it early.
 - Do not ignore warning signs.

- **ACCEPT HELP**
 - It is the Medical School's top priority to provide student' with appropriate support, but you will have to work with us.

Failure to work with the Medical School in trying to solve your problem may result in a Fitness to Practise issue and a referral to the Initial Fitness to Practise Panel, which has the option of recommending further support, carrying out a continuing review of a student's performance, or referral to UCL Medical School's Fitness to Practise Panel.

Students should be aware that information about their Fitness to Practise may be shared with other bodies (e.g. Placement Providers, GMC, UKFPO, Trusts, other employers) in the public interest and within the provisions of data protection legislation, as set out in the Medical School's Privacy Notice. In such instances, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and students are informed.