

Suitability / Fitness to Practise Procedure

Procedure 09: 2025 Version 1.0
Effective from: 1 August 2025



Date	Supersedes	Description of Change
08 July 2025	2023 Version 1.0	Additional programmes, clarification of requirements of formal investigation meeting and undertaking stages. Update of titles and OIA Guidance
12 April 2023	2019 Version 1.3	Updated to mention relevant partners and professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
1 February 2021	2019 Version 1.2	Minor amendments to wording, and a timescale included for any investigations into suitability or fitness.

Document Owner	Approved By	Date Approved	Review Frequency
Registry: Quality & Standards.	Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee.	08 July 2025.	Every three years.

Note: In exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the Chair of the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee, responsibilities assigned to Schools, Heads, of School, School Officers or School Committees in these Regulations may be assumed by the College, Head of College, College Officers or College Committees respectively, as appropriate.

Suitability / Fitness to Practise Procedure



Introduction

1. This procedure relates to individuals who are currently (or who were during the period in question) undertaking professional programmes. Professional programmes are those that by design may lead to a career in fields including, but not limited to those aligned within the College of Medicine and Health and those within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. These include programmes within the Schools of Business, Law, Education, Health Sciences, Policing, Psychology and Sport Science, and the North Wales Medical School at Bangor University. This Procedure covers incidents whilst at University and elsewhere, including whilst on placements.
2. This procedure is informed by the relevant professional guidance, regulations and codes of practice. Students should be made aware of the support available to them at each stage of this procedure and confidentiality must be maintained appropriately throughout. Records of any meetings, discussions, findings and outcomes must be adequately documented. Reasonable adjustments must be considered on a case-by-case basis and staff and students can consult with staff in the Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service for advice.
3. The University, in conjunction with its external partners, has a responsibility to ensure that students are suitable for the professional programme that they are studying and for the professions that they may enter on graduating. An investigation into suitability or fitness under this Procedure can occur at any time during a student's period of study at the University and can also be commenced or continued should the individual no longer be a student as long as the allegation(s) relate(s) to their time as a student on a relevant programme at Bangor University covered by this Procedure. Where an allegation spans registration at one or more institutions, each may consider the allegations either separately or jointly and either may formally investigate if deemed appropriate. A decision about whether a case will be resolved informally, or referred to the investigation stage will normally be reached within 10 working days of informing the student of the concerns.
4. This Procedure does not cover applicants for these programmes, whose suitability for the programme is considered under relevant admissions processes. However, the university expects applicants to inform admissions staff of any relevant concern or change in their circumstances, such as if they are under any form of investigation prior to their registration at Bangor University. Once registered, such changes in circumstances must be reported to the school immediately.

5. Where this Procedure assigns duties specifically to Schools, Heads of School, School Officers or School Committees these may be undertaken at College level by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee), College Officers or College Committees respectively, and as appropriate.
6. There may be several reasons why a student may not be suitable to practise; examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Capability and / or performance issues beyond student competency concerns that may normally result in placement failure rather than a S/FTP referral;
 - ii. A criminal offence including any caution or reprimand or an ongoing investigation by the police or a relevant professional, regulatory or statutory body;
 - iii. A failure to advise the University of any safeguarding concerns, criminal investigations, or offences including a caution or reprimand;
 - iv. Physical or verbal abuse or intimidation of fellow students, patients, clients, colleagues, members of staff or members of the public;
 - v. Failure to rectify behaviour that has been subject to any disciplinary actions under the University's regulations;
 - vi. Repeated unprofessional behaviour;
 - vii. Falsification of documents, clinical, personal or academic records, data or research material;
 - viii. Publishing, including via social networking sites, inappropriate material including statements and images;
 - ix. A suspected or confirmed drug/alcohol related problem;
 - x. Being barred or disqualified from working with a particular group of people (see paragraph 8);
 - xi. Being investigated under another University regulation, code or procedure such as the Academic Integrity Procedure, the Student Discipline Regulation or the Student Code of Conduct;
 - xii. Physical or mental health condition which, despite reasonable adjustments or treatment, affects a student's fitness to practise;
 - xiii. Breaches of confidentiality;
 - xiv. Bringing the University or the profession into disrepute.
 - xv. Financial irregularity and or fraudulent activity.

The burden of proof to be applied to this Procedure is that on the balance of probabilities the University is satisfied that on the evidence presented, the occurrence of the event was more likely than not.

All processes conducted under this procedure must be non-discriminatory and unbiased, and privacy and confidentiality must be maintained at all stages, with the information only shared with those who have a right to see it, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations.

Any allegations made under this Procedure must be factual and be supported by documentary evidence. Any conflicts of interest must be declared to the relevant Head of School or Registry: Quality & Standards as appropriate before members of staff play any part in the processes that form part of this Procedure.

7. Processes will be undertaken in accordance with this Procedure to:

- Uphold professional standards and the interests of all individuals involved, including, but not limited to, relevant partners and professional, statutory or regulatory bodies such as College of Policing, Social Care Wales (SCW), British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society, Partner Health Boards, NHS Wales, Education Workforce Council (EWC) Wales, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the General Dental Council (GDC), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the General Medical Council (GMC), Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), Chartered Banker Institute (CBI) and other Business, Legal, Banking or Financial bodies;
- Protect children (people under the age of 18), and school pupils who have reached the age of 18;
- Protect adults at risk, and carers;
- Protect the public;
- Protect the University;
- Ensure that students entering and/or progressing on their programme are of good character;
- Ensure compliance with any relevant professional code.

8. To ensure the suitability of students, the University has specific procedures and arrangements when admitting students to the degrees covered by this Procedure, and during the student's time at the University. These may include the following (not all of which are relevant for every programme covered by this Procedure):

- Criminal Records checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and non-UK checks where applicable;
- Prohibition order checks from the Department for Education;
- A requirement that students declare that neither they nor, as far as they are aware, members of their household are disqualified from childcare;
- A requirement that students declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013);
- Advice to applicants regarding relevant considerations in relation to their ability to meet the rigour and demands of the relevant profession;
- A student contract, which includes reference to the issue of suitability and the Suitability / Fitness to Practise Procedure;
- Advice to students regarding standards of professional behaviour;
- Readiness assessments for placements;
- Information on professional body requirements for eligibility to register or qualify;

- Monitoring of attendance and punctuality;
- Health screening.

9. This procedure should be used in relation to, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

- Where there are allegations of conduct or practices that are not consistent with professional standards, reported to Bangor University.
- Where there are allegations of conduct or practices that contravene the rules/regulations of a partner / placement location.
- Where there is any reasonable concern that a student or individual might not be suitable for the programme of study.
- Where there is reasonable concern that a student might be unsuitable for the professions for which the programme of study provides entry.
- Where a student does not pass any relevant readiness for placement assessment, where this is applicable to their programme of study.
- Where a student breaches any relevant professional code of practice or similarly applicable standards.

10. Inappropriate conduct in relation to suitability includes, but is not limited to:

- Failing to comply with the policies and procedures of the placement provider or hosting agency, including policies on the use of email, internet, social media, digital storage, portable equipment and mobile phones.
- Failing to comply with confidentiality principles and policies.
- Falsification of records, including dishonest accounts of work undertaken, competency assessments, timesheets or for financial reclaim.
- Exhibiting bullying, aggressive, violent, discriminatory, inappropriate, intimidating, or harassing behaviour including inappropriate use of social media.
- Repeated drug or alcohol misuse affecting behaviour and/or random tests.
- Exploiting the vulnerability of a child, parent, individual using services, carer, patient, or any other person in the context of a placement setting.
- Establishing an inappropriate personal relationship with a member of staff, child, service user, carer, patient, adult at risk or any other person.
- Becoming involved with or contacting others who have engaged in inappropriate conduct, as listed here, and where there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the student has not also engaged in such behaviour.
- Failing to rectify behaviour that has been subject to any actions under the University's regulations, procedures and codes.
- Committing a criminal offence, leading to notification from the police of an arrest, caution, or conviction, excluding those protected convictions or cautions that are not subject to disclosure by the DBS.
- Unexcused absences, working during periods of sickness absence and poor attendance record.

11. The procedure would not normally be used in the following circumstances although there may be reasons why this Procedure may run alongside the processes outlined below in certain circumstances, which should be made clear to the student:

- Where concerns about suitability are raised during the application process, before a student has registered for the programme. In such cases the University's admissions procedures should be used. These include the Policy and Code of Practice for Student Recruitment and Admissions (Admissions Policy), relevant policies in relation to criminal convictions, and all procedures defined for individual programmes.
- When a student engages in academic misconduct in either examination or non-examination conditions. In such cases, the Academic Integrity Procedure should be used.
- Vexatious or malicious reports/complaints, in which case the Regulation for Student Discipline could be appropriate.
- When there are concerns about a student's academic progress. In such cases the concerns should be addressed via that student's Personal Tutor and, where appropriate, by the Examining Board.
- Where, on health grounds, a student is causing significant concern and/or presenting a risk of harm to themselves or others. In such cases, the Fitness to Study Procedure could be appropriate.
- When a student is unable to pursue their studies for personal reasons that are unrelated to the student's suitability to practise. In such case, the University's procedures for considering extensions to submission deadlines or interruption of study should be used.
- Where a student has disclosed concerns appropriately, including by whistleblowing, this must not ordinarily be considered a breach of confidentiality unless the disclosure itself is made inappropriately such as to an inappropriate person, platform or body.

12. Where there is a need to clarify whether a particular case should be considered under this procedure or another procedure or process, for example, where the conduct may have also breached one or more of the Bangor University regulations like those requiring disciplinary procedures, advice can be sought from regulations@bangor.ac.uk, including guidance on the timing and order of proceedings. Advice must also be sought from the relevant external partner and documented.

13. If at any stage, there are concerns that a student's conduct is endangering others or otherwise impacting negatively on the School, placement location, external partners, or Bangor University, the student may on the authority of the Head of School, Head teacher, Director of the hosting agency, Professional Lead, Suitability/Fitness to Practise Co-ordinator or any other authorised person be removed from the placement immediately, pending the outcome of the procedures described. The Head of School and the Programme Lead (who may be a University member of staff or an external

partner member of staff dependent on the programme¹) must be notified of any student who is removed from a placement. The student has a right to know the case against them and to be given a fair opportunity to reply to that case before any decision as to their suitability to practise is made, however in certain circumstances there may be a need to temporarily remove the student from placement pending the outcome of the investigation.

Early/Informal Resolution

14. The expectation is that causes for concern about a student's suitability / fitness to practice are initially addressed, as soon as possible, through whichever internal process is relevant to the Programme. Concerns about a student's suitability / fitness to practise may be addressed by the Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor, Placement Lead, Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead or any person with designated responsibility. This may take place in an informal setting, such as during or after classes, during pastoral or development meetings, during scheduled or unscheduled meetings or discussions etc. but must be recorded on the student's record.

These meetings/discussions are distinguishable from the Investigation at College/School level, Stage One Meeting, and Stage Two Panel because:

- i. they are held in an informal setting at Programme level;
- ii. the intention is to try and resolve the concerns at this stage;
- iii. it is likely that the issues raised can be managed through the usual process of supporting students in their studies such as by an action plan.

Students are expected to engage fully at each stage of the procedure. Failure to engage sufficiently at any stage, or to not fulfil the conditions or requirements of any action plan without good reason may result in investigation at school/college level.

Investigation at Programme / School level

15. If concerns are not resolved at the Early/Informal Resolution stage, then an investigation may be conducted to determine whether a Suitability/Fitness to Practise Stage 1 meeting is required.

16. During this investigation, the Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead or Head of School or a nominee will investigate the concerns with any relevant internal or external parties in order to gather information.

17. In advance of any investigation meeting with the student, the student must be:

- a. Informed of the allegations which have led to the investigation. The student must be provided with sufficient detail of the allegation in writing to enable

¹ e.g. where the policy is instigated for a student on a programme with a Statutory Lead the Programme Lead must be the Statutory Lead and must be consulted on all matters that affect the students education.

them to respond fully.

- b. Informed that they have the right to be accompanied at the Panel by one individual, for example, a fellow student, friend, member of staff, a representative from the Students' Union or professional union. Only if the individual accompanying the student is a representative from the Students' Union or professional union, will they have the right to speak on their behalf at the Panel meeting.
- c. Informed about who will be present at the investigation meeting and whether the meeting will be recorded;
- d. Provided with a copy of this Procedure.
- e. Provided with a copy of the specific code of practice/programme guidance/professional requirements to which the specific issue(s) relate(s);

18. In cases where the allegation is determined to be of a complex, sensitive, or confidential nature, or where there are concerns about the safety and/or wellbeing of the student or others, then it may not be appropriate to provide an explanation in writing at this stage. In such exceptional cases, the student must be invited to a brief preliminary meeting with an appropriate staff member who will outline the allegation verbally. This is also an opportunity for the student to ask any questions.

- i. The timing of this meeting should be guided by the severity of the allegations and the needs of the student, and it should be made possible for the student to access this meeting as soon as possible after being made aware of the investigation (e.g. same day).
- ii. This meeting is for information-giving only and should not form part of the investigation. This means that the student must not be asked to respond to the allegations during this meeting.
- iii. This meeting should reiterate the key points from the investigation meeting invite and remind the student that the investigation meeting will be their opportunity to respond to the allegation.
- iv. The staff member in the meeting should risk assess the student at the end of the meeting and take any action as appropriate. This could include signposting to the Wellbeing Service, to other support organisations, and/or instructing the student that they must not contact a specific person/client/patient/placement/etc, or any other action as deemed appropriate.

19. The outcome of the investigation meeting may result in one of the following:

- a. No further action is required and concludes matters at this point.
- b. An action plan is agreed with all parties. and concludes matters at this point.
- c. Referral to a Stage One Suitability/Fitness to Practise Panel.

Students are expected to engage fully at each stage of the procedure. Failure to engage sufficiently at any stage, or to not fulfil the conditions or requirements of any action plan without good reason may result in immediate escalation to the next stage of the procedure.

Stage One Meeting: Formal Consideration at College / School level

20. If a case is referred to Stage One, those with designated responsibility will arrange appropriate meetings to discuss the concerns further. These meetings should normally involve the Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead and a representative from the relevant partnership, it may also involve the relevant Head of School or nominee. A Chair should be selected from the academic staff to lead the meeting and a Secretary appointed who shall make a record of the meeting.
21. Prior to the meeting the Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead or Head of School or a nominee appointed to present the concerns at the meeting may gather information in an appropriate and timely manner which must include discussions with the relevant external partner and determine any witnesses to be invited to the meeting as appropriate.
22. In advance of any such meeting the student must be:
- Provided with a minimum of five working days notice of the meeting. The student may choose to meet sooner if it is possible for staff to do so. Informed that they may be accompanied by a representative of the Students' Union or relevant Professional Union who may speak on behalf of the student;
 - Informed that they may bring a friend or family member that has no connection to the case for support. This individual will not have any speaking rights;
 - Informed of who will be present at the meeting and whether the meeting will be recorded;
 - Provided with specific evidence of concerns and any previous correspondence setting out those concerns;
 - Provided with a copy of the specific code of practice/programme guidance/professional requirements to which the specific issue(s) relate(s);
 - Provided with an explanation of how the allegations, if upheld, are considered to have breached the individual sections of relevant professional guidance, regulations and codes of practice.
 - Provided with a copy of this Procedure;
 - Invited to submit a written statement regarding the areas of concern.
23. The role of the meeting will be as follows:
- To establish the facts of the case.
 - To determine whether the allegations have been substantiated.
 - To consider the relevant codes of practice, guidelines, and any specific policies or procedures related to a placement or other location where relevant to the allegations.
 - Determine the outcome for the student as defined by paragraph 19.
 - To prepare a report on the proceedings.
24. The conduct of the meeting will normally be as follows:
- a) A Closed Session, where the Chair will advise the members of their role.

- b) The Chair will invite the Case Presenter, the student, representative, and witnesses (where relevant) to join the meeting.
- c) The Chair will invite the Case Presenter to present the case.
- d) The members will be invited to ask questions of the Case Presenter.
- e) The student or representative will be invited to present a response regarding the allegations.
- f) The members will be invited to ask questions of the student.
- g) The student's representative may respond on their behalf at the invitation of the student.
- h) The student and Case Presenter may ask questions of each other.
- i) The witnesses will be called to respond to questions put to them by the members.
- j) The student, their representatives, the Case Presenter, and any witnesses will withdraw.
- k) The members will deliberate their findings.
- l) The meeting will seek to ensure that the Case Presenter, the student, and representative are present to hear the findings if timings permit.

Any questions put to the student by the Case Presenter, or any questions put to the Case Presenter or any witnesses by the student must be made through the Chair unless agreed otherwise by the Chair.

25. In exceptional cases, the Panel meeting can be adjourned, normally for no more than 10 working days, in order for additional evidence, as defined by the Panel, to be provided.

26. The Panel must choose one of the following outcomes, either in whole or in part:

Following the discussion with the student the Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead / Head of School or nominee, in consultation with the external partner(s) will decide as follows:

- i. The situation is deemed to merit no further action at that point. OR
- ii. A set of actions have been identified to resolve the situation(s), which may include continuations of the placement or the arrangement of an alternative placement where necessary. The placement may include formal monitoring. OR
- iii. The student should be offered an opportunity to change programmes to one without a placement if such an opportunity exists. OR
- iv. The situation cannot be resolved and/or there is sufficient concern for the matter to be referred to Stage Two of this Procedure which will involve consideration by a Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel. OR
- v. An adjournment should be introduced to allow for further investigation. The adjournment should be for no longer than 10 working days, where practicably possible.

Arrangements to pursue the outcome specified in Section 26 will be determined and agreed at the conclusion of the meeting and will be recorded in a report which should

be placed on the student's record. The student must also be provided with a copy. In the case of 26(b) above, the report should include specific details of the arrangements agreed to monitor and review progress. A timeline should be identified for the monitoring arrangements, and monitoring should be undertaken regularly in line with those arrangements with outcomes recorded. The Head of School must be informed of the outcome.

27. Where necessary, the meeting can be reconvened at any time at the discretion of the Programme/Professional/Statutory Lead / Head of School or by an external partner. Reasons for reconvening include:

- i. To review the success or otherwise of the monitoring and review arrangement and to formally modify/strengthen them.
- ii. To review the situation at the conclusion of the timeline.

28. Where monitoring subsequently demonstrates that adequate improvements have not taken place, or the incident is of sufficient concern or severity in the opinion of the Programme / Professional / Statutory Lead / Head of School, having consulted with the relevant external partner, the case may be referred to Stage Two of this Procedure.

Stage Two Panel: Formal Referral of a Student to a Bangor University Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel

29. Where concerns remain following Stage One with the student, or the incident is of sufficient concern or severity, the Programme / Professional / Statutory Lead or the Head of School will ask a School Officer (the "Case Presenter" normally a member of academic staff from the relevant School) to coordinate the referral of the case to a Bangor University Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel.

30. The Case Presenter will inform the student, that concerns about suitability / fitness to practise exist, or remain, and that these concerns will be reported for consideration by a University Suitability /Fitness to Practise Panel. The student should be signposted to sources of support at this stage e.g. Students' Union.

31. The Case Presenter will:

- Collate evidence for submission to the Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel.
- Identify the witnesses who will be invited to attend the Panel.
- Liaise with the external partner / placement provider if applicable.
- Liaise with regulations@bangor.ac.uk who will confirm the details of the Stage 2 Panel Secretary.

32. The Case Presenter, reporting to the Head of School (or nominee), will prepare a report, with supporting evidence, for submission to a Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel.

33. The report must include the following sections:

- a) Details of the concerns and how they relate to the relevant Code of Professional Practice or similar.
- b) The report from any previous meetings with the student if in relation to the concerns.
- c) Any representations from the student or their Union Representative if already obtained.
- d) The evidence supporting the allegation, which should be indexed and cross-referenced.

34. The Case Presenter will:

- Submit the report and evidence, once suitably redacted to the Secretary.
- Provide the Secretary with a list of any witnesses to be invited to attend the Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel and ensure that they have consented to being included.
- Name the person (normally the Case Presenter) who will present the allegations against the student at the Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel.

35. The report once suitably redacted should be submitted to regulations@bangor.ac.uk within 10 working days, where practicably possible, of the date on which the Stage 1 Meeting concluded its outcome.

Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel ("Panel")

36. After receiving a referral from the Case Presenter, the Secretary will convene a Panel.

37. The Secretary will:

- Inform the student that concerns about their conduct or suitability have been referred to a Panel. The student should also be informed that information relating to this referral has or will be shared with the placement provider and / or the professional body.
- Provide the student with a copy of this Procedure and remind the student of their right to submit a statement to the Panel (as described in paragraph 39).
- Inform the placement provider and/or the professional body if they have not been made aware previously.
- Where relevant, inform the Case Presenter that further work on the report is required, if there are omissions in the evidence, or if the submission does not fulfil the requirements as defined in this Procedure.
- Arrange a meeting of the Panel. The date of the Panel should normally be set for no later than 1 calendar month, where practicably possible, after the case has been referred to the Secretary.
- Notify the student of the date of the Panel, ensuring that the student is given a minimum of 10 working days' notice of the date of the Panel meeting, where practicably possible, unless by agreement with the student an earlier date can be arranged.
- Ensure the impartiality of the members of the Panel.

- Provide the Panel, where appropriate, with a copy of this Procedure and the relevant professional standards.
- Serve as Secretary to the Panel and produce a report of the Panel for approval by the Chair of the Panel.

38. The Suitability to Practise Panel will be constituted as follows:

- Chair: A Pro Vice-Chancellor, or Head of School from another College, who is a member of Senate.
- An academic member of staff from the relevant School, with knowledge of the relevant professional code of practice. This member of staff must not have had any prior dealings with the case.
- At least one or a maximum of two external members. A key criterion will be that the external member(s) will have authoritative knowledge of the relevant professional standards and will not have had any previous involvement with the student. The external member(s) will normally be selected from a relevant external partner but can also be selected from another University in exceptional circumstances.
- The President of the Students' Union or a Sabbatical Officer or a staff member nominated by the President that has an appropriate understanding of the role.
- A Secretary to the Panel.

Members of the Panel must be impartial and cannot have had any previous involvement with the case.

39. The rights and responsibilities of the Student are as follows:

- The student can ask the Secretary, Programme / Professional / Statutory Lead, Personal Tutor, or Placement Tutor for advice on how the Procedure and the Panel will be conducted.
- The student has the right to submit a statement to the Panel and to bring to the attention of the Panel any matters pertinent to the case including submitting verifiable statements from witnesses.
- The student must ensure that all relevant information is provided to the Secretary a minimum of 10 working days before the Panel meeting. New information presented by the student at the Panel meeting will be considered at the discretion of the Chair, however any new information deemed to require wider investigation to substantiate or which in the opinion of the panel requires a right of reply must result in adjournment.
- Normally the student will have access to exactly the same documents as the Panel members. In accordance, with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, these documents may be redacted to protect the personal information of others.
- The student has the right to be accompanied at the Panel by one individual, for example, a fellow student, friend, member of staff, a representative from the Students' Union, professional union or a legal representative. The individual

accompanying the student will have the right to speak on their behalf at the Panel meeting.

It will be the student's responsibility to ensure that the individual is given details of the venue, time, and date of the Panel and copies of all the relevant documents. The non-availability of the accompanying individual will not in itself be a reason to cancel the Panel meeting if the date has already been agreed, and a student if they wish, should find an alternative person to accompany them. The student must not be accompanied by a member of staff who has links in any way with the case.

- The student has the right to call witnesses (as defined in this Procedure) but must provide the Secretary with the names and contact details of all witnesses a minimum of 5 working days before the Panel. It will be the student's responsibility to ensure that named witnesses are given details of the venue, time and date of the Panel and copies of all the relevant documents. The non-availability of the student's named witnesses will not be in itself be a reason to cancel the Panel meeting if the date has already been agreed.
- The Secretary must be informed in writing a minimum of 5 working days before the Panel (or if an earlier date has been mutually agreed, as soon as is practicably possible) if the student intends to be accompanied by a representative of a professional organisation or by a legally qualified person. It should be noted that this is an internal process and therefore not one where the University would normally expect legal representatives to be present, but the University is willing to allow this as long as the appropriate notice period has been given. The name and professional status of that person should be given. The University reserves the right to appoint their own legal representative in cases where this is relevant.
- The student has the right to seek a postponement of the Panel meeting where there are mitigating circumstances. The student must request a postponement a minimum of 3 working days before the date of the Panel. Such mitigating circumstances may include serious personal illness, bereavement, divorce, separation, eviction, etc. In such cases, evidence may be requested for mitigating circumstances, such as a doctor's certificate (a self-certified medical note will not normally be acceptable).
- Information relating to a Panel will be retained by the University in accordance with published retention periods.

40. In the absence of mitigating circumstances, and with the agreement of the Chair, a Panel meeting can proceed in the absence of the student if the student does not attend at the appointed time and has not contacted the Secretary at least 3 full working days before the scheduled time for the Panel meeting to arrange a postponement. For the avoidance of doubt, a Panel meeting can only be delayed if the student is able to provide documentary evidence of mitigating circumstances that prevent attendance. The Chair of the Panel has authority to decide whether the mitigating circumstances presented by a student are sufficient to warrant a postponement of the Panel meeting. A Panel meeting should not be delayed more than once without significant reason.

41. The role of the Panel will be as follows:

- To establish the facts of the case.
- To determine whether the allegations have been substantiated.
- To consider the relevant codes of practice, guidelines, and any specific policies or procedures related to a placement or other location where relevant to the allegations.
- Determine the outcome for the student as defined by paragraph 44.
- To prepare a report on the proceedings.

42. The conduct of the Panel will normally be as follows:

- a) A Closed Session for Panel members, where the Chair will advise the Panel of its role.
- b) The Chair will invite the Case Presenter, the student, representative, and witnesses (where relevant) to join the Panel meeting.
- c) The Chair will invite the Case Presenter to present the case.
- d) The Panel members will be invited to ask questions of the Case Presenter.
- e) The student or representative will be invited to present a response regarding the allegations.
- f) The Panel members will be invited to ask questions of the student.
- g) The student's representative may respond on their behalf at the invitation of the student.
- h) The student and Case Presenter may ask questions of each other.
- i) The witnesses will be called to respond to questions put to them by the Panel.
- j) The student, their representatives, the Case Presenter, and any witnesses will withdraw.
- k) The Panel will deliberate its findings.
- l) The Panel will seek to ensure that the Case Presenter, the student, and representative are present to hear the findings of the Panel if timings permit.

Any questions put to the student by the Case Presenter, or any questions put to the Case Presenter or any witnesses by the student must be made through the Chair unless agreed otherwise by the Chair.

43. In exceptional cases, the Panel meeting can be adjourned, normally for no more than 10 working days, in order for additional evidence, as defined by the Panel, to be provided.

44. The Panel must choose one of the following outcomes, either in whole or in part:

- a) Unconditional continuation of studies and / or placement.
- b) Conditional continuation of studies and / or placement. This may include additional professional or academic conditions for instance an alternative placement, special supervision or a recommended programme of action where appropriate. This may also include the provision of additional training, pastoral or welfare support.

- c) Suspension of programme and / or placement until such time as the student is able to continue without concerns about Suitability/ Fitness to Practise. The Panel reserves the right to dictate how such Suitability / Fitness may need to be evidenced.
- d) Termination of studies and placement on the programme for which the student is registered, with an option to offer a non-professional exit qualification or a theoretically-based alternative programme without a practice element if one is available.
- e) Termination of studies and placement on the programme for which the student is registered, and recommendation to the Deputy Academic Registrar: Administration & Business Support (or nominee) that the student be ineligible for registration on any other programme at the University for a specified or unspecified period. This fact is to be recorded on the students record and included in any reference or transcript provided to alternate institutes from Bangor University.

If outcome 44(b) or 44(c) is chosen, the Panel report must include specific details of the arrangements agreed for monitoring and reviewing progress. A timeline will be identified for the monitoring arrangements. Monitoring should be undertaken regularly in line with those arrangements and should be recorded.

For all outcomes (and associated conditions) which include a return to a placement or similar, such outcomes remain subject to the agreement of the Placement Provider / Hosting Authority who have overall authority to permit or refuse continuation of the student within their locations. The panel can insist that a student undertakes further review of any applicable professional code of practice or similar.

45. The Secretary will confirm the Panel's decision and any conditions relating to the decision with the student, Case Presenter and the Head of School in writing within 10 working days of the Panel meeting, where practicably possible. The student will be provided with details of the Appeals procedure.

The school must inform relevant stakeholders, such as the placement provider, professional body, and the Programme Lead of the Panel's decision, and any conditions relating to the decision.

If applicable, the Secretary will oversee any recommendation to submit information to external authorities, such as to the Disclosure and Barring Service on behalf of Bangor University that may arise from Stage Two of this procedure.

Appeals Procedure

46. Appeals by the student against the decision of a Panel should be submitted in writing to appeals@bangor.ac.uk within 10 working days, where practicably possible, of the date on which the student receives written notification of the Panel's decision.

47. Appeals against the decision of a Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel will only be considered on the following grounds:

- i. There were defects or irregularities in the conduct of the Panel, where such defects, irregularities, or advice could have affected the Panel's decision.
- ii. The existence of exceptional personal circumstances which relate to the Panel's decision. The appellant must explain why such personal circumstances were not made known to the Panel before its meeting. Where a student could have reported exceptional circumstances to the Panel prior to its meeting, but did not do so, those circumstances cannot subsequently be cited as grounds for appeal.
- iii. That the decision was unreasonable and could not be sustained by the facts of the case.
- iv. That new relevant evidence unknown to the Panel when making their decision, has come to light, where the student can show good reason why they could not have provided the evidence at the Panel.

The appeal will be submitted to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) or their nominee.

48. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) will investigate the concerns in order to gather full and relevant information before making a judgment on the appeal, this may include discussions with relevant external partners. The Pro Vice-Chancellor's decision will normally be issued within 10 working days, where practicably possible, of the date when an appeal is received. If this timeframe is expected to be longer, the student will be informed at the earliest opportunity and given a revised expected date for an outcome.

49. The Pro Vice-Chancellor may reach one of the following conclusions:

- That the appeal is not upheld. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will instruct Registry: Quality & Standards to inform the appellant that the appeal was not upheld and that the University's procedures have been concluded. A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued to the student at this stage.
- That the appeal is upheld. The Pro Vice-Chancellor will instruct Registry: Quality & Standards to arrange a Panel, with different members to the original Panel, to consider the case. In the instructions, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will identify the grounds upon which the appeal was upheld.

50. Once the Suitability / Fitness to Practise Procedure has been completed, a student may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Bangor University is a member of this scheme. If the student is unhappy with the outcome from Bangor University, they may be able to ask the OIA to review their case. They can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and cannot look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>. The student will normally need to have completed this procedure before they complain to the OIA.

Bangor University will send the student a letter called a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' when they have reached the end of these processes and there are no further steps that they can take internally. If the complaint/appeal is not upheld, Bangor University will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If the complaint/appeal is upheld or partly upheld they can still ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter from Bangor University if they want one. Students can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when they should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters/>.

To bring a complaint to the OIA, students need to submit a completed OIA Complaint Form within 12 months of the date of Bangor University's final decision (usually the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter), and they will normally need to send the OIA a copy of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

Termination of Proceedings

51. Termination of any Bangor University proceedings against a student, or former student, will have no bearing on proceedings currently underway by any professional body or Partner Agency who may continue with their own investigations and actions.
52. The University may be required to provide information to these investigations relating to its Suitability / Fitness for Practise cases under these circumstances.