

Policy on Assuring Student Fitness to Practise 2022/23

Introduction

UCB recognises that its academic awards may result in a professionally recognised qualification; and that academic success does not necessarily equate with the requirements for professional accreditation which might include, for example, mental, physical, moral or behavioural matters. Students who are admitted to the professions relevant to such awards below will occupy positions of trust and care in relation to their pupils/patients/clients. UCB therefore has a responsibility to put procedures in place to ensure that only those students who meet the high standards of conduct and professional behaviour required by those professions are assessed as fit to practise them.

Awards subject to Fitness to Practise procedures are identified below.

1 Principles

- a) Awards and programmes of study which are subject to Fitness to Practise procedures are approved by the academic regulations sub-committee of Academic Board. The complete list of these programmes is available from the Registry.
- b) The UCB generic Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise will be updated by programmes as relevant to refer to any related code developed by the relevant professional or accrediting bodies. All adaptations are subject to approval by the Academic Board.

2 Applicants, Students and the Code

- a) UCB will make every effort to ensure that it is recruiting students to programmes that they are capable of successfully completing. On programmes subject to Fitness to Practise regulations, 'successful completion' includes eligibility for membership of a relevant professional body or achievement of the requirements for employment in a particular profession. Any decision to offer a place must therefore take into account an assessment of the likelihood that the applicant will be able to satisfy the requirements for Fitness to Practise laid out by the relevant professional body by the end of their programme.
- b) Applicants to programmes subject to Fitness to Practise regulations may be treated differently to applicants to other programmes at UCB if their applications or references raise questions about their likely fitness to practise.
- c) Any application that raises such questions may be referred to a relevant expert who will be asked to provide advice to the Admissions Unit and Executive Dean of School (or nominee) in their making of a decision to offer a place on a programme subject to Fitness to Practise requirements.

Where the application clearly indicates that the requirements for Fitness to Practise will not be met (for instance, a serious criminal conviction in the case of an applicant for a PGCE place) then a referral may not be necessary for the application to be rejected.

- d) Students registered for programmes of study which are subject to fitness to practise procedures may be treated differently to other students of UCB if their actions or information about them or their actions calls into question their professional competence.
- f) All new entrants to programmes of study subject to fitness to practise procedures must sign the relevant Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise within four weeks of commencing their programme of study. They must also provide all of the information required to enable the completion of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced check application. Programme teams will explain the relevant professional requirements and the appropriate Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise during induction and the implications of failure to comply.
- g) Failure to confirm compliance with the Code or provide information which would enable UCB to make the DBS Enhanced check application may result in a student being asked to withdraw from the programme of study.
- h) Within the first four weeks of the start of each new academic year, all continuing students will be reminded of the requirements placed upon them by this Policy and their Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise.
- i) The Head of Department the programme(s) will provide MIS with a list of those students who have signed the Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise. MIS will record this and make this information available to programme teams in the form of a list of those who have/have not signed. The Senior Lecturer is responsible for ensuring that all the students have signed the Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise and those who have not signed are aware of the consequences.

3 Applicants and publicity

- a) Where fitness to practise procedures apply to a programme of study this will be noted in any publicity material, including the UCB prospectus and a copy of the Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise will be made available on request.
- b) Applicants will be made aware when fitness to practise procedures apply to the programme of study for which they have applied and the implications of this. A copy of the Code of Professional Conduct and Fitness to Practise currently in force will be provided to applicants when the offer of a place is made.

4 Breaches of the Code

- a) Where information that comes to light (such as that provided in an enhanced DBS check, or from the Police or other agency) raises doubts about a student's fitness to practise, the relevant Executive Dean of School (or nominee) will decide if the matter is serious enough to invoke the Code of Practice on Discipline as given in the General Student Regulations. If it is not, the Executive Dean (or nominee) will deal with the case as below.
- b) Where a minor breach of the Code occurs, an Executive Dean of School (or nominee) or senior manager will investigate the issues. Should the investigation confirm that the student has breached the Code, the Executive Dean (or nominee) will determine an appropriate course of action e.g. counselling, and an appropriate deadline by which this should take place. Students in this situation will be made aware of the support services available to them through the University and the Guild of Students.
- b) If, on expiry of the deadline, the issue remains the Executive Dean of School (or nominee) will write formally to the student outlining an intention to invoke the the Code of Practice on Discipline as given in the General Student Regulations. and giving the reasons for this.
- c) The disciplinary process will follow the Code of Practice on Discipline as given in the General Student Regulations, including any right of appeal that may be possible.