

LTC09D011

FITNESS TO PRACTISE (FTP)

Revised Guidance 2009/2010

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Professional behaviour and fitness to practise structures for the MB/BS degree programme at the University of East Anglia

The General Medical Council's document 'Medical Students: professional values and fitness to practise' (2nd edition: 2009) should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

Background

The overall expectation of the public, students and professionals is that FTP procedures will be just, transparent, but ultimately protective of the public. On the basis of the revised GMC guidance, the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice has updated its professional development reporting and reviewing structures for its undergraduate medical students.

This revised guidance includes a clear code of conduct and direction as to the types of behaviour considered problematic. The School's medical students should parallel the behaviours expected of doctors after graduation. The School's expectations of its students are supported by teaching and learning opportunities in the MB/BS curriculum, and by tutor supervision and feedback. The mechanisms by which the School collates and reviews evidence relating to progress and fitness to practice issues will now be supported by a new committee structure; this will review problems linked to professionalism requirements, and will also recommend appropriate remediation and ensure support is in place. This committee can make the recommendation to the Head of School that formal procedures need to be undertaken if significant concerns emerge about a student's fitness to practise. Health issues, disciplinary problems, and attitudinal/behavioural problems are included, as well as criminal behaviours.

The 'new' structure and procedures include:-

- Appointment of a 'Professional Development Lead' from senior Faculty, whose duties complement those of academic (Course Director) and pastoral care (Senior Advisor) leads.
- The creation of a Professionalism Committee which will be chaired by the Professional Development Lead.
- Firmer commitment to proactive and supportive efforts to educate and adapt when problems arise.

- Clear procedures and documentation thereof, in order to establish evidence for decisions over a student's period of study.
- Clarification of threshold where formal procedures/'investigation' become active, and warnings given become declarable at GMC registration
- Formal 'Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability' panels, with a recommended membership for those involved in investigation and adjudication.

Structures

Membership of the Professionalism Committee:

- Professional Development Lead (Chair)
- Senior or Deputy Senior Adviser (to advise on health and related pastoral matters)
- Plagiarism Officer
- Disability Officer
- MB/BS Course Director
- Up to 2 members of NHS staff (to contribute expertise and support review of students, and to include a Foundation doctor if possible)
- Faculty Manager, Faculty of Health (Secretary)
- Others may be co-opted by the Chair for their specific expertise where appropriate.

In attendance:

- Minute Secretary.

It would be preferable if one of the NHS members of staff could be a Foundation doctor to provide a recent student perspective on the issues considered. Candidates can put themselves forward, and would need to reveal any possible conflict of interest, through close knowledge of any student reviewed.

NB: To be quorate (*) must be in attendance, including one member of NHS staff. (to be agreed at first meeting of Professionalism Committee)

The responsibilities of the Professional Development Lead are:

- Overview of learning and assessment that supports professional development.
- Chair the Professionalism Committee.
- Assist the Course Director, his or her deputies, the Head of School and the Senior Adviser/Deputy Senior Adviser, in areas of student fitness to practise - acting as a member of the MB/BS 'senior executive' who can be called on to advise in event of a major problem with a student.
- Assist with issues related to FTP and GMC provisional registration.
- Liaise with the Plagiarism Officer following cases of collusion and plagiarism; such cases to be reported to the Professionalism Committee.
- Liaise with the Senior Adviser/Deputy Senior Adviser on areas where health may affect fitness to practise, and be able to refer to UEA Occupational Health Service those where there are significant health concerns.
- Review relevant reports from UEA Occupational Health Service and action recommendations.
- Assist staff reporting to the Progress Boards and Boards of Examiners on FTP issues which need to be noted.
- Liaise with the Faculty Manager, Head of School, and the Investigating Officer to instigate formal investigations.
- Give account of previous findings when formal fitness to practise 'panels' are convened for major FTP issues.
- In consultation with the Faculty Manager, to be the academic lead for the MB/BS degree programme for ongoing UEA Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability regulations and GMC requirements which may impact on the School's procedures and teaching.

Remit of Professionalism Committee:

To meet up to four times yearly, once in September/October to ensure remediation plans are in place for all students identified as needing these, once before the mid year Progress Boards (January) and once or twice as needed in May/June exam period, in order to:

- consider significant conduct issues, and recommend levels of action
- examine the evidence for instigating formal investigations, and make recommendations to the Chairs of the Progress Board and End of Year Boards of Examiners

- note the outcome of any investigations undertaken and the rulings of any 'panels', be these School, University or external bodies, which relate to MB/BS student fitness to practise, and to consider any follow-up actions needed within the School
- review MB/BS students where health concerns are affecting their performance [this will NOT include students with recognised chronic health issues or special needs unless reported; e.g. prolonged or repeated absence, difficulty in fulfilling professional requirements, causing staff concerns]
- receive and scrutinise students who have had problems notified below 'threshold' for warnings, to ensure remediation is under way.

To note: in the 'setup' phase, this Committee will develop the remit, consider details of GMC guidance, and work through the interface between the Committee, University regulations and any resulting formal committees/panels.

Formal Warnings

Only the Head of School (or their alternate) can issue Formal Warnings. Where possible the Head of School should not have been involved in detailed review of any case prior to considering a case. Recommendations to issue a Formal Warning will be issued in year (i.e. prior to the meeting of the relevant Exam Board) by the Professionalism Committee. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to convene a Professionalism Committee in a timely fashion, this recommendation can be made by either the Professional Development Lead, the Course Director, or in their absence by a Deputy Course Director. The final decision to issue a Formal Warning rests with the Head of School. Should the Head of School decide not to issue a warning, this decision will be reported to the Professionalism Committee.

At the end of each academic year, the Professionalism Committee will provide a report to each Exam Board. As now, the Fitness to Practise report will occur after consideration of academic results and extenuating circumstances. The Fitness to Practise report will provide detailed FTP information on all relevant students in each year. The Exam Board will consider this information and will make recommendations as to appropriate course of action. Where necessary they will recommend that the Head of School issues a Formal Warning.

Progression to warning

Any student where the Professionalism Committee, Professional Development Lead, Course Director or Deputy Course Director believes a formal warning is upcoming would have their student records reviewed by a senior member of the Committee (normally Chair or Course Director). Whenever there is the possibility of a Formal Warning, or need for further information, the student concerned would be interviewed. A senior member of the administrative team will take notes of this interview and a report would go to the Professionalism Committee. This Committee would review this report prior to issuing a recommendation to the Head of School.

Exceptional behaviour and Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability regulations

Students whose behaviour is an exceptional cause for concern can be immediately suspended under the University's Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability (PMU) regulations. In addition, a second recommendation to Formal Warning supported by the Head of School could also trigger a PMU review by the University.

Reporting thresholds

Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability panels (called Fitness to Practice Panels by the GMC) as recommended by the GMC come under Regulation 14 for Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability at UEA and will be convened only where a second 'formal' warning has been issued and/or for serious misconduct. A PMU panel would have a clinician from MED and one from the NHS.

Internal/Course Level reporting:

Tutor reports (from PBL Tutor/GP Tutor):

- One or more '**needs improvements**' recorded on **Tutor Report Forms**:
This should be dealt with by the student and their Personal Adviser. It would be appropriate that this be flagged on the student feedback form as needing to be discussed, and the assumption should be that student and Personal Adviser should discuss these and take action in same way as they would do for any other assessment.

➤ **First ‘unsatisfactory’ Tutor Report:**

Student reviewed by Course Director or Deputy Course Director. Note logged on student record system that student has received an unsatisfactory tutor report.

Course Director or Deputy Course Director agree remediation plan with student and the GP/PBL tutor, this is placed on student record. Student to review with Personal Adviser at next meeting and plan recorded.

In such cases the following year’s PBL/GP tutor (as appropriate) should be notified to ensure that appropriate remediation can be continued between years. This is most likely to be necessary if the ‘unsatisfactory’ is recorded in an end-of-year final term tutor report.

➤ **Second ‘unsatisfactory’ Tutor Report:** (*Note: this is a second ‘unsatisfactory’ Tutor Report received at any time during a student’s studies*)

Both of the reports and the original remediation plan to be reviewed by the Professionalism Committee. This review may lead to one of the following outcomes:

1. Notification of FTP issue to Head of School with recommendation to issue Formal Warning
2. Meeting between Professional Development Lead and student to discuss remediation. Action plan to be filed in student record. Letter sent to student (copied to Personal Adviser) explaining remediation expected. Student to review with Personal Adviser at next meeting.
3. Notification of this issue to the following year’s PBL/GP tutor, as appropriate.

Note: whilst two “unsatisfactory” reports may (depending on severity) lead to a Formal Warning, a third “unsatisfactory” report would automatically lead to a Formal Warning.

Staff concern forms

Staff concern forms can be submitted to the Professional Development Lead at any time concerning a student by anyone who has a concern about a student’s health and/or behaviour¹. These will be reviewed by the Professional Development Lead or a delegated member of the Professionalism Committee, and usually will lead to further

¹ There is a parallel form which can be completed by students the ‘student concern form’: this form is available for them express concerns about incidents with staff or students, including concerns about patient safety.

information gathering and student file review, followed by a meeting with the Professional Development Lead. Subsequently, one of the following actions will occur:

- No further action, but note added on student record
- Remediation plan agreed, and note added on student record
- Review by Professionalism Committee

Students who have more than one student concern form submitted during the course of their studies will automatically be reviewed by the Professionalism Committee.

Preceding this meeting they will meet with the Professional Development Lead to discuss the circumstances of the second (or subsequent) concern form.

Absence

This should be read in conjunction with the new MB/BS Attendance regulations. Absence of junior doctors is causing considerable concern in some FY posts: similarly, student absence is having a detrimental impact on delivery of the MB/BS curriculum. Absence regulations have therefore been changed and will now directly lead to FTP action.

Absence recording will occur by academic year, it will be reviewed at the mid-point and end of each year. Those students whose attendance is below 80% for any component (lectures-seminars/PBL/primary care/secondary care/anatomy/consultation skills) will be reviewed by a member of the senior staff working on behalf of the Professionalism Committee. In addition, all those with 3 or more unauthorised absences, or 7 or more total absences by the time of the Progress Board will be reviewed. All those identified will be expected to provide written explanation (kept in student record) for their absence, their reason for not reporting this [in the case of unauthorised absence], and their plans to make up missed work. This written explanation will be reviewed by the Professional Development Lead. The Professional Development Lead will consider their previous absence record when considering the appropriate response. The Professional Development Lead can take any of the following actions (see below):

- Liaison with the Senior or Deputy Senior Adviser to discuss the student
- Meeting with the student and remediation plan agreed
- Referral to Occupational Health Service for review
- Review by the Professionalism Committee

- Additional clinical placement days (as detailed below)
- Letter acknowledging their absence and no further action required

If a student self-reports seven days or more of absence between the Progress Board and the end of year they will be asked to submit a written report to be considered by the Professional Development Lead explaining the reason(s) for their absence(s) and their plans to make up missed work. The Professional Development Lead will consider their previous absence record when considering the appropriate response. Action by the Lead can include any of the six actions described above.

End of year absence totals:

Those students identified as having 14 or more days absence, or five or more days unauthorised absence, will automatically be reviewed by the Professionalism Committee. The student’s previous absence record will be considered at this time. Action by the Committee can include:

- Meeting by a Committee member or deputy Course Director with the student and remediation plan agreed
- Referral to UEA Occupational Health Service for review
- Additional clinical placement days (as detailed below)
- Letter acknowledging their absence and no further action required
- Recommendation to the Head of School to issue a Formal Warning

Additional clinical attachments

All those absent from primary + secondary care for more than five days in any one module (unit) will be expected to attend additional clinical attachments in the next holiday period, as follows:

5-10 days clinical absence = 5 days additional secondary care
 11 -16 days clinical absence = 10 days additional secondary care

The above criteria are automatically applied to any student absent from clinical placements for five days or more. Exceptionally, the Professional Lead (or Course Director) may reduce the additional days required. Attendance at these additional days will not be considered an alternative to attendance during normal course time (i.e. – will not reduce absences already noted). Attendance is compulsory and must be completed

before progression to the next year. Timing of these additional placements will be determined by the Clinical Skills Unit at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH) and will not be flexible to a student's other holiday commitments. Students who miss clinical time should therefore be aware of the need to make up this time and should not book other holiday or work for the relevant holiday period (Easter or Summer) till they have agreed this additional placement with Dr Lesley Bowker, Clinical Skills Director, NNUH.

[Note: Given that no year has more than 84 days clinical time: 60 secondary care days, 24 primary care days; those absent for more than 16 clinical days will not be allowed to progress as they will have been present for less than 80% of secondary or primary care.]

Below the 80% threshold for attendance in the year

Those students who are absent for more than 20% of the year in total, or who fail to attend 80% of a component will not be allowed to progress to the next year. These students will be reviewed by the Professionalism Committee.

Plagiarism

The **Plagiarism** Officer has in place a set of criteria for the level of penalty for plagiarism and collusion: the Plagiarism Officer's recommendations will normally be accepted.

If the severity of a problem or the frequency of less serious but persistent problems warrants it, the Professionalism Committee, Professional Development Lead, or the Head of School can instigate a formal investigation, which is the precursor of a formal warning if the investigation justifies this. The Investigator will not be a member of the Professionalism Committee, as members of the latter are likely to be asked to provide evidence as to previous or recent problems with students. A major violation or recurrence after formal warning will lead to a University Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability process being set in motion (* see diagram).

MB/BS Code of conduct

** this will appear in the student handbook and should be reiterated yearly*

The UEA MB/BS is a professional qualification, and all our students need to develop themselves as professionals while they are undertaking the course. In general, we find our students to be excellent: they are hardworking, reliable, friendly, appreciative, and supportive of others, try to improve things that could be better, and learn fast from any problems. We reward good progress in professionalism on an annual basis by a recognised 'pass' in this area, which can be declared in a CV, and exceptional achievement may also be recognised over time.

However, there are some areas where we have seen problems, and the following sets out examples and possible penalties. It is impossible to specify all the ways in which a professional code of conduct can be violated: the student must interpret the principles and make their own judgements, as will staff. However, the following examples of each principle indicate areas where medical schools have encountered problems, and are areas where students need to take care.

The students of the UEA MB/BS are expected to:

1. **Comply with the spirit and principles set out by the accrediting body, the General Medical Council**, in their documentation – in particular, 'Duties of a Doctor' and 'Medical Students: professional values and fitness to practise'

2. **Ensure patient safety and wellbeing in every way you can.**

EXAMPLES:

- Be on time for sessions where you are booked to see patients, ensure they are still willing to see you, check if there is anything they need your help with that you can do (e.g. pass on relevant information to staff).
- Be safe for practice – clean hands, clean clothes, healthy, not under influence of drugs, preventive immunisations in place.
- Do not exceed the limits of your competence.
- Do not develop personal relationships with patients: do not arrange to see them out of the NHS setting, without tutor knowledge, do not exchange personal details.
- Check out/seek help if you see patients distressed.
- Speak up if you see examples of poor practice which may be upsetting or dangerous for patients or staff.
- Maintain confidentiality, while sharing essential information for patient safety.

3. Be honest and truthful in all areas of your interaction with staff, other students and patients

EXAMPLES:

- Declare any cautions or criminal offences at the admissions stage, or as they occur during your studies.
- Declare any special needs or health problems that need to be known to staff in order to ensure student and/or patient safety (for example, an infectious illness, an identified occupational health risk, addiction, deteriorating mental health).
- Avoid plagiarism or citing other people's work without due attribution to them.
- Never falsify others' signatures.
- Ensure that staff and patients know that you are a medical student and not a doctor, and declare any limit to your competence.
- Use premises and resources only as allowed.
- Make staff aware of any unintended access to confidential material, by yourself or others; e.g. assessment papers, patient records.
- Be truthful and open about reasons for absence.
- Report absence in a timely manner.

4. Be responsible about all formal requirements of the MB/BS

EXAMPLES:

- Comply promptly with all occupational health requirements.
- Submit assessments and other compulsory paperwork by the deadline given.
- Complete course work and compulsory evaluations in a timely and thoughtful fashion.
- Attend all teaching provided OR notify lead staff promptly if illness or transport problems prevent this.
- Complete the annual declaration and student-held record promptly and fully.

5. Be respectful of the needs and efforts of others

EXAMPLES:

- Support peers and any staff members involved in your teaching and learning.
- Be polite and appreciative when staff and patients have put aside time and effort to arrange learning and assessment.
- Should criticism be necessary, do this with due consideration and focus on how to resolve the problem, rather than being rude or aggressive to the person.

- Ensure that patients are given due time and attention, that you make their comfort and safety your first priority, and thank them for their involvement with your learning.
- Avoid late arrival, chatting and telephone use during teaching and assessment sessions.
- Always consider the safety of other clinical staff (e.g. safe sharp disposal, ensuring you leave clinical areas clean and tidy etc.)

6. Seek help when needed – it is your responsibility to be proactive about issues which may undermine your performance

EXAMPLES:

- Declare extenuating circumstances BEFORE formal assessments.
- Meet with your Personal Adviser regularly (the minimum number of meetings expected for MB/BS students is two per year), including consulting on progress.
- Register with a GP, and attend if required, rather than using staff who are medically qualified for your own health advice.
- Make appropriate use of UEA student support services.

7. Consider your own reputation and that of the School and University when you are outside the campus or NHS setting

EXAMPLES:

- Dress appropriately when working as a medical student.
- Breaking confidentiality, drinking to excess, voicing unjustifiable criticisms of others not present to defend themselves, having major rows in public settings with other students, criminal acts such as stealing or illegal drug use or illegal drug dealing are all examples which can bring both you and the School into disrepute.

All students will be expected to abide by the following declaration on arrival at UEA (**note this is a modified version of the Bute Medical School Agreement and we are grateful to their Professionalism Committee to allow us to use their agreement**):

UEA MB/BS Student Declaration and Agreement

On registering as a MB/BS student at the University of East Anglia (UEA) you agree to:

1. Comply with the spirit and principles set out by the accrediting body, the General Medical Council (GMC), in their documentation – in particular, ‘Duties of a Doctor’ and ‘Medical Students: professional values and fitness to practise’
2. Ensure patient safety and wellbeing in every way you can.
3. Be honest and truthful in all areas of your interaction with staff, other students and patients
4. Be responsible about all formal requirements of the MB/BS
5. Be respectful of the needs and efforts of others
6. Seek help when needed – it is your responsibility to be proactive about issues which may undermine your performance
7. Consider your own reputation and that of the School and University when you are outside the campus or NHS setting

GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. I confirm that I have been truthful in my application to the School, and that I did not omit important information relevant to my application.
If the School discovers that an applicant has been untruthful in his or her application, it may withdraw the offer or terminate the course of study.
2. I will attend classes as required by the regulations of the MB/BS degree programme and under the University’s General Regulations for Students (Regulation [6] – Attendance and Progress), and I will work diligently to complete my degree.

UEA activities and clinical attachments may be timetabled between 8.00. and 18.00 Monday to Friday and regular attendance is expected of all students. Wednesday afternoons after 14.00 are generally left free for recreation. Students can expect to be placed in any of our partner NHS Trusts for secondary care attachments (Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, James Paget University Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Norfolk Mental Health Care Trust, and Ipswich Hospital). Transport to the non-Norwich trusts is provided for Years 1-4, and due to distance students should not expect to be back on campus till 18.00-19.00. Students are also placed each year at a General Practice, for those outside the Norwich area transport is again provided.

Appropriate engagement and conduct in any teaching/clinical activity either within or outside the School is expected and will be monitored. Absences are treated seriously. To progress each year students must attend a minimum of 80% of all classes, both in total for the year and in each individual teaching element.

3. I will be honest in submitting course work for assessment, and will never plagiarise material from other sources and submit it as my own work.
The definition of - and penalties for – plagiarism and collusion are detailed in the University's Policy on Plagiarism and Collusion.
4. I will take responsibility for my own learning and reflect on feedback about my performance and achievements. I will respect the knowledge and skills of those involved in my education.
These are important aspects of professionalism and appropriate conduct laid down in GMC guidelines.
5. I will tell the School if I am charged with or convicted of a criminal offence during my time as a student at the University of East Anglia.
Although students are required to have an enhanced Criminal Record check on admission to the MB/BS degree programme any subsequent conviction(s) must be declared to the School
6. I will make sure that I can be contacted and always respond to messages.
This requires an up-to date address and telephone numbers. You must monitor your University email account regularly (at least every other day) and reply to School and Faculty Office messages promptly. Regulation [5] under the University's General Regulations for Students applies. You must attend meetings when summoned or arrange for an alternative appointment.
7. I will comply with the regulations of the School of Medicine, Health Policy and Practice and the University of East Anglia as detailed in the School and University Student Handbooks and the University Calendar.
8. Finally, I will inform the School if there is any significant change to my health that might affect my fitness to be a clinical student or to practise as a doctor.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PATIENTS, COLLEAGUES, UNIVERSITY AND NHS TRUST STAFF

1. I confirm that I will listen to patients and respect their views, treat patients politely and considerately, respect patients' privacy and dignity, and respect the right of patients to refuse to take part in teaching,
2. I confirm that I will not allow my views about a person's lifestyle, culture, beliefs, race, colour, gender, sexuality, age, social status, or disability to prejudice my interaction with fellow students, patients, staff, or colleagues.
3. I confirm that I will be honest and not abuse a patient's trust in me. For example, I will not establish improper personal relationships with patients or their close relatives.
4. I confirm that I will always make clear to patients that I am a student and not a qualified doctor, and I will not recommend treatment or suggest patients take any action that might be interpreted as medical advice.
5. I confirm that I will maintain appropriate standards of dress, appearance and personal hygiene so as not to cause offence or potential harm to patients, staff, or colleagues.

The appearance of a student doctor should be in line with the School's Dress-code guidance and should not be such as to potentially affect a patient's trust in that person's medical judgement or standing.

6. I confirm that I will expose my face fully to patients, staff and colleagues at all times.

All students must wear an identification badge and show their face for the purposes of recognition by patients, teachers, and other staff. Patients and teachers must be able to identify students to verify that they are genuine. Showing one's face also makes it easier for patients who are hard of hearing to hear you and/or lip-read, and an important part of communication is by using facial expression. Head dress routinely worn as part of religious observance must not cover the face.

7. I confirm that I understand, accept and agree to be bound by the principle of confidentiality of patient records and patient data, and also for information concerning staff and colleagues. I will therefore take all reasonable precautions to ensure that any personal data concerning patients and colleagues, which I have learned by virtue of my position as a medical student, will be kept confidential. I confirm that I will not discuss patients with other students or professionals outside the clinical setting, except anonymously in such a manner that they cannot be identified from any information given. When recording data or discussing cases outside the clinical setting I will endeavour to ensure that patients cannot be identified by others. I will respect all hospital and patient records.

8. Early in the course, students are expected to learn how to perform clinical examination. This may involve practising on other students, or allowing others to practise on them. I understand that I am expected to learn clinical examination skills with other students, and am willing, in principle, to participate in these sessions.

9. I confirm that I am willing to physically examine patients (which includes touching) in order to establish a clinical diagnosis irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, culture, beliefs, disability, or disease.

In order for a medical practitioner to be able to make a diagnosis it is essential that the practitioner is able to examine every patient fully. Measures should be undertaken to avoid transfer of infection from or to the patient where appropriate and by recognised measures, such as hand washing, wearing gloves or masks. A student or practitioner cannot refuse to examine a patient or certain anatomical parts because of the patient's gender, ethnicity, culture, beliefs, disability, or disease.

10. I accept the expectation that I have a responsibility to make my concerns known to appropriate staff about a fellow medical student in terms of meeting the expectations detailed in the GMC's 'Medical students: professional behaviour and fitness to practise'.

MB/BS Professionalism Committee
School of Medicine, Health Policy & Practice
University of East Anglia
July 2009

Frequently asked questions about fitness to practise

Do I have to declare issues that would come up in a CRB check?

Yes – the School expects you to do this as any new problems arise. If you are found in retrospect to have an undeclared criminal conviction or caution, this will automatically result in a formal warning and review by the Professionalism Committee. A criminal record is also a required declaration at registration with the GMC, as it is on our MB/BS admissions form.

What is the 'threshold' for a formal warning?

This is impossible to generalise: a student who is found to have committed significant plagiarism, broken patient confidentiality, abused privileged access to premises, or falsified information about reasons for absence or late submission would certainly be reviewed by the Professionalism Committee with a view to being issued with a Formal Warning. However, the GMC are also clear that students who repeatedly make more minor violations - such as unsatisfactory work in PBL, poor attendance, tutor concerns about attitudes, or failure to attend for occupational health screening – this could also lead to review by the Professionalism Committee and a Formal Warning may be issued. The reasons for this would be clearly set out, and the Professionalism Committee would submit its recommendation to the Head of School.

Can I tell my side of the story?

Yes – unless the initial review shows that there is no cause for concern. The record of decisions will be available, by letter or by recorded minutes of meetings and Boards.

How do I get advice and support to improve?

All students are expected to take any issues that have been raised with them during or at end of year to their Personal Advisers for help (see STUDENT HELD RECORD on MB/BS Blackboard site). Normally, they should think about such issues, decide how they can improve, and discuss their plan with their Personal Adviser. Other specific actions may be recommended by the School (e.g.; making up time if non-attendance has been the issue, resubmission of work if plagiarism has been found), and the student's agreement sought to confirm that they will undertake these requirements. Again, advice from Personal Advisers should be sought, and the members of the Professionalism Committee will also offer advice to staff and students as to how best to proceed if this is needed. Other specific support and advice can also be asked for as needed; e.g. from Dean of Students Office, GP Tutor, School's Plagiarism Officer, Senior/Deputy Senior Adviser.

What do I have to declare at provisional registration with the GMC?

The GMC's checklist is self explanatory. Any formal warnings and enquiries of professional misconduct or unsuitability MUST be declared. However, declaring these does NOT mean that the GMC will NOT register you – data for 2007 showed that Medical Schools' fitness to practise declarations to GMC at provisional registration totalled 225 out of 6,500 applications. All those with declarations were eventually registered.

Professionalism concerns and fitness to practise processes

In terms of problem behaviours, these may be drawn to the attention of the School in a number of ways: whatever the source, a delegated member of staff will look into the reported problem, and may seek other evidence.

We shall aim to:

1. be accurate about the basis for our concerns
2. give the student our reasons for any concerns, and assist the student to improve
3. support students and staff when concerns are being investigated
4. gather relevant information in a respectful and thorough way, in order to have a full picture of the context of the problem and its reporting
5. make considered judgements within a group of staff, rather than individually
6. only implement formal investigations or formal warnings if specific events or cumulative concerns show sufficient severity
7. keep information confidential wherever possible to those directly involved in identifying, reviewing or exploring a problem.

There will be an MB/BS Professionalism Committee which will meet twice a year in advance of Board of Examiners (February, June) to collate information and consider/ follow-up those students with significant problems. The business of the Professionalism Committee will include:

- Review of all students noted under FTP at Boards of Examiners at end of previous academic year, and checks that formal recommendations for remediation are now in place/have been taken
- Administrative concerns about student behaviours (late deadlines, debts, rudeness)
- Major attendance issues as described in the attendance regulations
- PBL/GP tutor concerns – two or more ‘unsatisfactory’ reports (during the five years of a student’s studies)
- Tutor or staff concern forms - where two or more concern forms are received (during the five years of a student’s studies).
- Student concerns about other student colleagues (health or behavioural)²
- Possible misconduct (under the guidance of the Head of School and relevant others)
- Other issues deemed to raise potential FTP issues, including major health problems where there is evidence that FTP issues could arise.

The following judgements can be made:

1. Considered (no action needed following review, situation resolved)
2. Noted (letter to student, may request or recommend an action)
3. Recorded (formal meeting required with e.g. Professional Development Lead, Plagiarism Officer, Occupational Health Service)
4. Recommendation to Head of School to issue a First Formal warning
5. Recommendation to Head of School to issue a Second Formal warning
6. Recommendation to Head of School to conduct a Professional Misconduct/Unsuitability (PMU) formal investigation under clause (14),

Professional Misconduct and Unsuitability, of the University's General Regulations for Students.

It is possible to omit stages depending on magnitude of problem – e.g., a criminal conviction might lead straight to a suspension pending a formal investigation under PMU. Similarly, a student with a previous problem is more likely to be dealt with at the 'next step' up if a further problem occurs, even if these are in different domains and are both relatively minor. However there is no intention that each ensuing incident WILL go to the next step. This depends on the judgement of the Professionalism Committee and the Head of School.

MB/BS Fitness to Practise process

Professionalism/Fitness to Practise issue identified via Tutor reports/Personal Adviser/Student Concern form/Plagiarism Officer/written allegation

MB/BS Professionalism Committee - considers recorded/action situations and reviews twice a year. Makes recommendations to Head of School (HoS). 4 possible outcomes

1
 Considered No action
 Student notified that considered but not recorded as FtP
 Support/pastoral care if required

2
 Considered Noted
 Student meet with member of staff - exploration of issue - meeting recorded (flagged)
 Support/pastoral care
 Repeat/insufficient improvement

3
 Considered Recorded/Action
 Student meet with member of staff - exploration of issue - meeting recorded (flagged)
 Support but also clear remedial plan
 Repeat/insufficient improvement

4
 Considered 1st HoS Warning
 Letter to student
 Sanction with conditions
 Undertakings agreement between student & School
 Occupational health /remedial tuition
 Conditions met nil new
 Conditions not met/ new events

5
 Considered 2nd HoS warning
 No case
 Explain to student
 Occupational health /remedial tuition

6
 UEA PMU procedure
 Suspension
 Expulsion
 Head of School
 Student interviewed
 Investigating Officer appointed
 Report
 Head of School
 Case
 UEA PMU procedure/ Committee

Declaration re provisional registration GMC (4 - 6)

NB: Clinician required by GMC on PMU