

Fitness to Practice Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) The University acknowledges the need to ensure students enrolled in University programs that include professional development maintain the standards of conduct, compliance, performance and capacity ensuring ongoing fitness to practice in the profession throughout their enrolment, at a level appropriate to their stage of enrolment. The University acknowledges that failure to do so may result in an unacceptable level of risk that the student may not be able to meet the expected standards in the corresponding profession.

(2) Failure to maintain fitness to practice are profession-specific, but may include situations where a student has:

- a. engaged in conduct that is inconsistent with the standards and ethical obligations of the relevant profession, relative to the student's level of enrolment; and/or
- b. demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to comply with rules, regulations or standards for practice in the profession necessary for undertaking placement with a provider/agency; and/or
- c. failed to demonstrate competent knowledge or performance in one or more professional standards critical to the student's current level of enrolment, where normal educational processes have failed to address these concerns; and/or
- d. a disability or health condition, the consequences of which may impact the student's capacity to practice at the standard required by the profession.

(3)) This policy must be read and understood in conjunction with University policies and procedures, including, but not limited to the:

- a. [Disability Policy](#);
- b. [Student Administration Policy](#);
- c. [Inherent Requirements Compliance Procedures](#);
- d. [Placement Policy](#);
- e. [Privacy Policy](#); and
- f. [Risk Management Policy](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

(4) For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- a. Fitness to Practice (FTP) means a student's demonstrated ability to meet the expected standards of conduct, compliance, knowledge, performance, and capacity required by the relevant profession and legislation governing the profession. Also known as Fitness for Practice or Safety to Practice.
- b. Inherent Requirements (IR) means the abilities, knowledge and standards of conduct and performance that are essential for a student to be able to achieve the learning outcomes of a program or subject and transition to the profession after graduating. These may include compulsory standards set by professional, registration, or accreditation bodies.

- c. Placement means a subject, subject component or other work integrated learning activity, required as part of a subject or program of study (including an elective subject), that gives students unpaid practical experience (as per the [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)) in the application of theoretical concepts and knowledge in an authentic university or work environment. This includes overseas placements and is also known as Work Integrated Learning (WIL), clinical immersion, clinical placement, clinical practice, externship, fieldwork, industry experience, industry study, internship, practicum, professional experience, teaching practice, or work placement.
- d. Placement Organisation/Partner means the organisation at which the student's placement is undertaken. For internal or on-campus placements, the placement organisation is the University.
- e. Procedural Fairness means the procedures used by a decision-maker in dealing with an allegation are fair and requires:
 - i. adherence to established principles of natural justice;
 - ii. a hearing appropriate to the level;
 - iii. impartiality of the decision-maker; and
 - iv. evidence to support the finding.
- f. Reasonable Adjustment means the provision of measures, actions or adjustments made to teaching, learning, assessment and placements (if relevant) to enable students with disabilities or chronic health conditions the opportunity to meet the relevant program learning outcomes on the same basis as students without a disability. Reasonable adjustments may also be made on religious or other grounds, such as culture (e.g. uniform adjustments that still comply with professional standards).
- g. Remediation means the opportunity for students to complete tasks or actions in order to address the causes of their failure to meet inherent requirements.
- h. Service Recipient means a person, including children and young people, or animal receiving professional or educational services (also known as patient, client, customer, or student).
- i. Student means any person who is a candidate for an award or who is or was enrolled in a program offered by the University.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(5) Schools or Research Institutes (Institutes) may have registration, accreditation or broader professional obligations to ensure students are fit to practice within their profession, at a level appropriate given the student's position in their degree.

(6) The University has an obligation within the limits as set out by the relevant legislation to provide a fair and appropriate procedure to ensure the following, in relation to student behaviour during enrolment in a program with a practicum or placement component:

- a. Schools/Institutes are able to meet their professional obligations for ensuring students are fit to practice;
- b. students are supported to attain and maintain the standards of conduct, compliance, knowledge, performance and capacity required to be 'fit to practice' as competent, safe, and ethical practitioners in their profession;
- c. the reputation and wellbeing of the following entities is safeguarded:
 - i. the student themselves;
 - ii. members of the public impacted by a student's behaviour while on placement, including to the student's service recipients, which may include children, young people;
 - iii. placement organisations/partners and their staff; and
 - iv. the University and its staff and students.

(7) Schools/Institutes may establish the professional standards students must meet throughout their enrolment in a program or registration in a subject, as inherent requirements. Schools/Institutes may action student failure to maintain these standards through the [Inherent Requirements Compliance Procedures](#).

(8) Schools/Institutes are responsible for ensuring the inherent requirements of their programs encompass the professional standards required in order to satisfy the professional, accreditation, and registration requirements of their programs. These may include legislation, codes of conduct, ethical guidelines, and other required standards guiding the profession

(9) Schools/Institutes must ensure that prospective and current students are aware of the inherent requirements that apply to a given program, and therefore aware of the program specific standards ensuring the student's continued fitness to practice as student practitioners during their enrolment. Refer to the [Student Administration Policy](#) for more information.

(10) Students are obliged to ensure they continue to meet the inherent requirements that apply to their program throughout their enrolment. Where a student with a disability or chronic health condition, or, on the basis of other grounds (such as culture) is concerned about their ability to do so, they are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their Academic Success and Program Support Officer and/or Disability Advisor (in the case of the student with a disability or chronic health condition) to determine whether reasonable adjustments (e.g. a Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan (PRAP) through the Disability Service) will be of benefit. Noting that there may be inherent requirements that cannot be addressed through the implementation of a reasonable adjustment. More information on students' obligations to meet inherent requirements and comply with legal agreements in place with placement facilities is included in the [Placement Policy](#).

(11) Where the University initiates action under this policy and associated policies and procedures, the following principles will apply:

- a. The safety of the public and those involved in a practicum or placement, including the student and all other impacted persons, including children and young people, will be of paramount importance.
- b. The procedures followed must be consistent with the requirements of procedural fairness, including student right of reply, right of appeal, and privacy.
- c. Students are supported to regain compliance with the inherent requirements defining fitness to practice through reasonable adjustment and remediation measures, where reasonably possible.
- d. Confidentiality must be respected and maintained by all parties within the constraints of the need to investigate and to hear a concern, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure and in accordance with other University policies, procedures and guidelines.
- e. The University may be obliged to disclose relevant personal information about the investigation or outcome of the investigation of a student's failure to maintain inherent requirements to parties within or outside of the University. Refer to the [Privacy Management Plan](#) for more information.

Section 4 - Procedures

(12) The investigation and actioning of concerns regarding a student's fitness to practice and/or ability to meet inherent requirements are carried out through the procedures in the [Inherent Requirements Compliance Procedures](#).

Section 5 - Guidelines

(13) Schools/Institutes may use the [Inherent Requirements Compliance - Risk Assessment Guideline](#) as a starting point to inform decisions around risk when evaluating 'fitness to practice' concerns.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st January 2026
Review Date	5th January 2026
Approval Authority	General Counsel and University Secretary
Approval Date	16th December 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Program" - A program of study consisting of at least four subjects or 40 credit points leading to an award of the University (Foundation Studies Program, Undergraduate Preparation Program, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Undergraduate Certificate, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Postgraduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters by Coursework Degree) which when successfully completed is conferred on the graduand by the Board of Trustees.

"Subject" - The subject of study in a program in which a student enrolls.