

## FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE

ACCPI is committed to supporting trainees and recognises the importance of their health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progress and training experience. The Fitness to Study (FTS) procedure is a supportive process used when a trainee's health or wellbeing is having a detrimental impact on their (or others') ability to progress academically and/or function in the training community effectively.

This procedure applies to any trainee of ACCPI, and forms part of the Training Regulations. This procedure will be used to deal with instances which have led to:

- concerns about a trainee's fitness to study at ACCPI and/or ability to meet the learning outcomes of a course, notwithstanding reasonable adjustments;
- a negative impact on the health, safety, wellbeing and/or learning of the trainee and/or others with whom they have contact.

### **The process**

This procedure has three stages, based on the level of support needed by the trainee and/or the seriousness of risk. Depending on the concern raised, it may be appropriate to move straight to a higher stage. A trainee's willingness to engage with the process will also inform actions and decisions taken by ACCPI. If a trainee chooses not to engage, then this procedure may continue without their involvement. At any stage in Fitness to Study process, the trainee may be suspended from ACCPI on an interim basis.

If it is not possible or practicable to convene the meetings required under this procedure, discussions may take place by correspondence or by video conference. A meeting may proceed in the trainee's absence if the Chair of the Training Committee is satisfied that the trainee was given proper notice of the date and time of the meeting but has not provided a reasonable explanation for their non-attendance. Trainees will normally be given copies of documents considered under this procedure and will have a reasonable opportunity to submit written representations and supporting documents for consideration. The Chair has the power to adjourn any meeting, for example to obtain additional evidence, including medical evidence. At all stages, the trainee is entitled to be accompanied and/or represented by a person of their choosing, who may be a friend, family member, etc, but who may not be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity.

#### *Stage 1 – Emerging Concerns*

When a concern about a trainee's health, safety or wellbeing is raised, the concerned member of staff should seek advice from the Training Committee. Once the Fitness to Study Procedure has been agreed as the appropriate way forward, an informal meeting should be arranged by the member of staff with the trainee, to discuss the concerns and agree a way forward. The outcome of the meeting should be confirmed in writing to the trainee, setting out agreed actions and arrangements for a follow-up meeting.

The follow up meeting can be used to either:

- a) agree that the concerns have been addressed and the Fitness to Study process can now be closed, or
- b) agree that the concerns have not been addressed and further meetings are required, or that escalation to stage 2 or 3 of the Fitness to Study Procedure is appropriate.

#### *Stage 2 – Continuing Concerns*

Where continuing or serious concerns about a trainee's health and wellbeing are raised, the member of staff should contact the Training Committee. Normally a stage 2 meeting would

take place, involving the Training Committee, the trainee and the staff member who raised the concerns. The trainee will be notified in advance of the purpose of the meeting. Alternatively, the Training Committee can also instigate this meeting. The meeting will include a discussion and assessment of the concerns raised and the impact this is having on the trainee and/or the wider ACCPI community. There will be consideration of any implications for professional practice and. An action plan will be drawn up, setting out support measures, follow-up deadlines/meeting dates and any conditions that the trainee is required to adhere to. The action plan will include a review date, and it will be made clear that failure to adhere to the action plan may result in Stage 3 being invoked.

#### *Stage 3 – Significant or Persistent Concerns*

This stage will be invoked when significant or persistent concerns are raised about a trainee that are putting them or others at risk. These may be continuing concerns or a new significant concern which ACCPI deems appropriate for immediate stage 3 action. A Case Conference will be convened with the trainee to establish the facts and discuss an appropriate course of action. The Case Conference will be chaired by a Training Committee representative not previously involved in the case, and appropriate members from other areas of ACCPI e.g. program director, trainer, supervisor, etc. The Case Conference will consider all reasonable options to enable the trainee to continue with their studies. The trainee will be invited to attend the Case Conference and will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date and time of the meeting. The trainee may submit any documents they wish to the Case Conference for consideration. The Chair of the Case Conference will decide how the meeting will be conducted, ensuring in particular that the trainee's views are heard. If the trainee is unable to attend, the Case Conference panel may choose to suspend the trainee until they are deemed well enough to engage. The trainee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the Case Conference within 10 working days and will be required to comply with any actions agreed by the Case Conference panel. If actions are not followed, a further case conference will be convened. The outcome of the Case Conference will be one of the following:

- that no further action is required; or
- to agree an enhanced action plan with an agreed review date; or
- to agree a voluntary interruption of the trainee's studies, or
- to invoke a suspension of the trainee's studies for a specified period; or
- to invoke a withdrawal of the trainee from the course and ACCPI; or
- any other action considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

#### **Appeal against the outcome of the Case Conference**

The trainee may appeal against the outcome of the Case Conference by writing within 10 working days to the Chair of the Training Committee, who will review the matter and respond to the trainee within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Chair of the Training Committee is final.

#### **Returning to study following suspension or interruption as an outcome of a Case Conference**

The trainee will be required to provide or co-operate with ACCPI in obtaining satisfactory evidence that they are fit to return to study and be part of the ACCPI community. The Case Conference panel will be reconvened, with the trainee present, to consider the information received and may decide: the trainee is

- fit to participate in ACCPI life and can resume their course. If the trainee is fit to return, a Return to Study meeting will be held and a support plan agreed.

- the trainee is not fit to return to study at this time and should be suspended for a further specified period.
- that the trainee be withdrawn from the course and ACCPI.

A copy of the decision and associated reasons will be provided to the trainee in writing within 10 working days of the meeting of the Case Conference panel. Trainees should note that it may not be possible for them to return to exactly the same course following a long period of suspension or interruption, as the course may have been discontinued or significantly modified.

### **Appeal against a decision on returning to study**

In the case of a decision by the Case Conference panel that the trainee should be suspended from ACCPI for a further specified period or that the trainee should be withdrawn from the course and ACCPI, the trainee may appeal against the decision.

### **Monitoring of this Procedure**

ACCPI will collect aggregated data about fitness to study cases and will submit an annual report to the Board for the purpose of quality assurance and enhancement. The effectiveness of the Fitness to Study Procedure also be reviewed at this point and, where appropriate, changes will be made.