



Student conduct & performance policy

Policy date: January 2021 Review & update: July 2021

This policy is designed to support student success.



1. Aims and Approach

Aims

- To support student success in a structured, consistent and fair way
- To ensure that CPPD meets the needs of student insofar as possible
- To ensure that students understand their responsibilities
- To ensure that actions taken (support, sanctions etc) are individualised, proportionate and designed to give rise to improvement
- To promote a safe learning environment where students can enjoy learning
- To support staff working through the different stages of the process through clear explanations of what is expected throughout

Approach

- These aims will be met through a variety of means. This includes student induction, standardised improvement plans and routes of appeal to ensure fairness and consistency. The policy also recognises that all issues relating to student performance and conduct are a 'cause for concern'. This is the starting point of the procedure.
- We also recognise that an outcome focussed, structured process will give rise to the best overall outcome for students. Improvement actions will be specific to individual students' circumstances and staff will act in the interests of everyone. This will require ongoing support and a systemic approach involving a range of professionals.
- Staff have clear guidance, and you should expect support at each stage.
- Clarity is also important, and staff will refer to the definitions and guidance given before applying the policy and procedure. Standard letters will be used to ensure that all issues are dealt with clearly and concisely.

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2. Process: Stages of procedure

Overview

- This process is designed to address a range of concerns, including levels that may be characterised as minor, major and severe.
- The policy may also be used to determine issues of course progression between different years of the training, where this cannot be dealt with through existing procedures.
- CPPD will judge the appropriate stage in initiating the procedure, although the assumption will always be to begin at the lowest possible stage, depending on the circumstances and nature of concerns.
- The Policy is included within the handbook for all students within the training. Students will be given advance notice of any meeting held under the Policy, and will also be sent a further copy of this Policy.
- If at any point it becomes apparent that there is a need to move to a higher stage within the process, students will be given advance notice of any new meeting. Furthermore, if such a move becomes apparent during the course of any meeting, that meeting will be adjourned, so the student has sufficient notice before any new meeting is convened at a higher stage.

Stage 1 - Informal meeting

- An informal meeting aims to either address minor issues, or to address more significant concerns where the school thinks it may be possible to reach a joint agreement about the way forwards.

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- The purpose of this stage is to have an informal discussion with the student about areas of concern, to gain a better understanding of any relevant circumstances, set out course expectations, and seek a shared agreement about the way forwards. This may also involve identifying further approaches to support the student where possible.
- The meeting is likely to take place with any of the tutors, supervisor and course director.
- Students will be given advance notice of the meeting, which will also include the purpose of the meeting.
- In the meeting the tutor and/ or supervisor will explain issues relating to performance and/ or conduct, and will make clear course expectations. The meeting will look to understand the nature of the student's difficulties and aim to draw up a shared agreement/ action plan about the best way forwards.
- If it is not possible to establish a shared agreement, the course may decide whether to adjourn and reconvene at a later date, or whether an alternative course of action is required (for example, a Stage 2 meeting).
- After the meeting a summary of the discussion and any shared agreement/ action plan will be circulated to the student, which may include areas for improvement, expectations and a review date. This will be sent to the student within 1 week, wherever possible, and the student will be asked to sign their agreement to the agreement/ action plan within a specified time; this would likely to be within 1 week, but may depend upon particular circumstances.
- If the issues remain unresolved at this stage, or further significant concerns emerge, or there is no satisfactory shared agreement/ action plan, the school will consider if any further procedures are required.

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Stage 2 - Formal meeting

- A formal meeting aims to address issues of significant concerns, or lesser concerns which have not been successfully addressed through any other approach (for example, an earlier stage 1 meeting).
- The purpose of this stage is to engage in a formal discussion with the student about areas of concern, to gain a better understanding of any relevant circumstances, set out course expectations, and establish the best way forwards. This may also involve identifying further approaches to support the student where possible.
- The meeting is likely to take place with any of the tutor and supervisor present, and the meeting will be chaired by a course director. A member of administrative staff will also attend to take minutes during the meeting.
- Students will be given advance notice of the meeting, which will include the purpose of the meeting and a general outline of the course concerns. The notice will inform the student of possible outcomes, which may include extending the deadline of a previously established action plan, progression issues such as repeating a training year, interruption to training and/or clinical practice, and / or increased personal therapy / supervision (see further information below).
- Students will be offered the opportunity to bring a support person to the meeting, if they would find it helpful. The support person is invited in order to offer emotional support and reassurance to the student; they are entitled to speak directly to the student, but not to answer questions or speak on their behalf, nor make personal representations. In the very unlikely event that the support person excessively interrupts a meeting, it may be necessary to adjourn the meeting; in extreme circumstances they may be asked to leave the meeting.

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- In the meeting the course will explain issues relating to performance and/ or conduct, and will make clear course expectations. The meeting will look to understand the nature of the student's difficulties and aim to draw up an action plan about the best way forwards.
- The action plan will include decisions in relation to course progression (as outlined above), as well as any further measures to subsequently identify whether necessary improvements have taken place. The plan will also address any decisions in relation to clinical practice, including contact with the placement and/ or placement supervisor in respect of this.
- There is a separate Policy for Course Readmission, which also sets out the process for assessing whether students are ready to resume studies after a period of interruption; if appropriate this will be explained during the course of the meeting (see Interruption from the Course / Clinical Practice below).
- If it is not possible to establish a satisfactory action plan, the school may decide whether to adjourn and reconvene at a later date, or whether an alternative course of action is required (for example, a Stage 3 meeting).
- After the meeting a summary of the discussion and any decision / action plan will be circulated to the student, which will include any areas for improvement, expectations and a review date. This will be sent to the student within 2 weeks, wherever possible, and the student will be asked to sign their agreement to the action plan within a specified time; this would likely to be within 1 week, but may depend upon particular circumstances.
- If the issues remain unresolved at this stage, further significant concerns emerge, or there is no satisfactory action plan or adherence to a previously established action plan, the course will consider whether further procedures are required.

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Stage 3 - Enhanced formal meeting

- An enhanced formal meeting aims to address issues relating to ethical misconduct, risk to client safety or bringing the profession into disrepute. An enhanced formal meeting may also be called to address previous significant concerns which have not been successfully addressed through any other approach (for example, an earlier stage 2 meeting),
- The purpose of this stage is to engage in a formal discussion with the student about areas of concern, to gain a better understanding of any relevant circumstances, set out course expectations, and establish the best way forwards. This may also involve identifying further approaches to support the student where possible.
- The meeting will be chaired by a course director, and will include further members of the staff team. A member of administrative staff will also attend to take minutes during the meeting.
- Students will be given advance notice of the meeting, which will include the purpose of the meeting and a general outline of the course concerns. The notice will inform the student of possible outcomes, which may include extending the deadline of a previously established action plan, progression issues such as repeating a training year, interruption to training and/or clinical practice, and / or increased personal therapy / supervision, together with other measures including termination of the training (see further information below).
- Students will be offered the opportunity to bring a support person to the meeting, if they would find it helpful. The support person is invited in order to offer emotional support and reassurance to the student; they are entitled to speak directly to the student, but not to answer questions or speak on their behalf, nor make personal representations. In the very unlikely event that the support person excessively interrupts a meeting, it may be necessary to adjourn the meeting; in extreme circumstances they may be asked to leave the meeting.

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- The meeting will aim to address issues of major concern, or concerns which have not been successfully addressed through any other approach (for example, an earlier stage 2 meeting).
- In the meeting the course will explain issues relating to performance, conduct or risk, and will make clear course expectations. The meeting will look to understand the nature of the student's difficulties and aim to draw up an action plan about the best way forwards.
- The action plan will include any decisions in relation to course progression (as outlined above), as well as any further measures to subsequently identify whether necessary improvements have taken place, together with any decisions in relation to clinical practice, including contact with the placement and/ or placement supervisor in respect of this, as well as any other measures that the course deems necessary, including in relation to termination and further contact with other bodies (see further information below).
- There is a separate Policy for Course Readmission, which also sets out the process for assessing whether students are ready to resume studies after a period of interruption; if appropriate this will be explained during the course of the meeting (see Interruption from the Course / Clinical Practice below).
- The final outcome of the meeting will be decided by the staff team. In some circumstances a further meeting may be arranged to allow time for to consider the outcome and gain further information.
- After the meeting a summary of the discussion and any decision/ action plan will be circulated to the student, which will include any areas for improvement, expectations and a review date, or a final decision regarding the student's position on the course, and further contact with other bodies. This will be sent to the student within 2 weeks, wherever possible, and, if appropriate, the student will be asked to sign their agreement to the action plan within a specified time; this would likely to be within 1 week, but may depend upon particular circumstances.

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3. Further information in relation to interruption and termination

Interruption from the Course / Clinical Practice

- Course interruption will include an action / improvement plan, which will need to be evidenced before readmission onto the course
- Students will be readmitted onto the course at the beginning of a future training year.
- Students will not be able to be readmitted part way through a training year.
- An improvement plan will be established if appropriate
- A date for improvement / review will be set if appropriate
- A letter including the action/ improvement plan will be sent to the student to be signed and held on the student's file stating: date, reason, confirmation (with a signature) that student understands what is required, including the evidence that needs to be submitted in order to be readmitted onto the course.
- Evidence may include elements such as an assignment to evidence development and learning, evidence of additional personal therapy / supervision, amongst other measures. In some circumstances CPPD may request signed agreement from the student's therapist of their readiness to recommence the training.
- When issues are resolved, the student can apply for readmission to the course following the readmission procedure.

Termination from the Course

- Termination from the course may be invoked if there is a breach of or risk of breach to the Ethical Framework; this may involve issues including ethical misconduct, risk to client safety or bringing the profession into disrepute.

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- Termination may be invoked immediately in the event of a significant breach, including in relation to gross misconduct. In such an exceptional case, the student retains the right to appeal to the External Examiner.
- A letter detailing any such decision and reason for the decision will be sent to the student.
- Termination from the course will result in the Placement being informed.
- Any breach of the BACP Ethical Framework will result in the BACP being informed.

4. Right of appeal

- Students who have their training or clinical practice interrupted or terminated may appeal in writing to the External Examiner, whose contact details are available from the CPPD office. The External Examiner will require CPPD to submit their reasons for interrupting or terminating the student in writing within 14 days. The External Examiner will examine submissions from both the student and CPPD, and may make further enquiries as appropriate. A decision will be made and relayed to both the student and CPPD within 28 days of receipt of CPPD's submission. If the External Examiner finds that the student should not have been interrupted or terminated from either the training or clinical practice, they should be reinstated.
- If the External Examiner supports CPPD's decision to interrupt or terminate the student's training and/or practice, no further internal procedures will remain open to the student. Students at all times retain the right to bring a complaint to BACP under its Professional Conduct Procedure.

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