

Centre for Teacher Education Suitability Panel

1) **Background:**

The CTE Suitability Panel acts as the partnership committee indicated in the statutory guidance, Initial Teacher Training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice. This guidance acknowledges the need for providers to establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all partners in the partnership. Additionally, this includes opportunities to develop a common understanding across the partnership of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining an ITT programme.

The aim is to provide support in helping to prevent health, fitness and suitability issues becoming more serious and a greater cause for concern. Its role is to consider in the first instance, and continue to review as required, all conditional offer holders' self-declared and enrolled trainees referred or self-referred health, welfare, or suitability concerns. The Panel will determine insight, consider additional support mechanisms and any subsequent reasonable adjustments, as required for each case. Where it is determined that the threshold of trainee suitability to practise may have been reached, the Group will refer the matter to the University Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee.

2) **Membership:**

Co-chairs (Primary & Secondary, CTE)	
Designated Safeguarding Lead, CTE	
Phase lead (Secondary)	
Phase lead (Primary)	
Headteacher(s) or their representatives from partner schools:	
20-21 - ongoing	Assistant Headteacher - Teacher Training and Development, Secondary school, Solihull
21-22 - ongoing	Lead Senior Mentor, Training School Alliance, Birmingham
22-23 - ongoing	Deputy Headteacher, Primary school, Coventry
22-23 - ongoing	Deputy Headteacher, Special school, Coventry
22-23 - ongoing	Assistant Headteacher and Head of School Direct Alliance, Coventry
23-24 - ongoing	Headteacher, Primary school, Leamington Spa
23-24 - ongoing	Director for ITT and Early Career Teacher Development, Secondary school, Coventry
23-24 - ongoing	Headteacher, Secondary school, Rugby
23-24 - ongoing	Headteacher, Primary school, Rugby

Note: Members will be recruited for a tenure lasting one year with an opportunity to extend membership for up to 3 years thereafter. On expiry of tenure, members may be asked to become Fitness to Practise committee members.

3) **Terms of Reference:**

- a) To act as the professionalism committee to reflect part 2 of the Teachers Standards and the DfE ITT Criteria and Supporting Advice.
- b) To provide support in helping to prevent issues of health, welfare and suitability becoming more serious and a greater cause for concern;
- c) To consider in the first instance, and continue to review as required, all conditional offer holders' self-declared and enrolled trainees referred or self-referred health, welfare or suitability concerns;
- d) To determine insight, consider additional support mechanisms and any subsequent reasonable adjustments, as required for each case;
- e) To refer cases to other University Officers or Committees, where appropriate;
- f) To appoint an Investigating Officer, where appropriate;
- g) To sign off cases as no further action and make recommendations as appropriate, where it is determined that the trainee is suitable to practice;
- h) To refer cases to the Fitness to Practise Committee where it is determined that the trainee is not suitable to practise.

4) **Quorum**

Quoracy of the Panel when making recommendations relating to individual cases or regarding policy will be the Chair and at least three members.

5) **Frequency**

The Suitability Panel shall normally meet at least once per term and be scheduled one year in advance (meetings will be cancelled if there is no business). There may be the need to have further meetings dependent upon the cases.

6) **Reporting Structure**

Actions and recommendations may be directed to other services, committees, or groups at the discretion of the Chair.

7) **Records**

Suitability Panel meetings will not have a published agenda or minutes due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the discussions and the minutes will be reserved.

8) **Secretariat**

Secretariat will be provided by Professional Support Services (PSS) within CTE who will receive agenda items and will be responsible for the administration of the Suitability Panel's process.

Proposed meetings for the Suitability Panel 2023/24:

Wednesday 27 th September 2023	11.00am
Wednesday 29 th November 2023	11.00am
Wednesday 6 th March 2024	11.00am
Wednesday 15 th May 2024	11.00am
Wednesday 3rd th July 2024	11.00am

Appendix A: Operational Procedures as approved by the University's Academic Quality and Standards Committee as paper AQSC.93.17-18 (minor revisions approved 2019-20)

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
SUITABILITY TO PRACTISE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR COURSES COVERED BY
REGULATION 34 IN THE CENTRE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Introduction

The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), an executive agency of the Department for Education, is responsible for regulating the teaching profession in England. All serious cases of misconduct, where all other local complaints procedures have been exhausted, are considered by the TRA on behalf of the Secretary for State. Serious cases may be referred to a professional conduct panel for consideration in relation to a prohibition order as cited in the Teachers' Disciplinary Regulations.

Trainee teachers who are currently enrolled on a PGCE programme are not regulated by the TRA. The Department for Education (DfE) stipulates the expected level of prior conduct to enable enrolment on any Postgraduate teacher education program in Initial teacher training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice. In addition, the DfE sets out the standards expected of trainee teachers in relation to their professional behaviour both inside and outside their PGCE course in part 2 of the Teachers' Standards.

This document outlines the operational procedures to be followed when a health, welfare or conduct issue has been identified that may lead to a concern about a conditional offer holder for, or an enrolled trainee on, the early years, primary or secondary PGCE course, fitness to study on an ITE course and practise as a teacher following successful completion of the course. These procedures may be additional to, and run in parallel with, other university regulations.

The University's Diversity and Inclusion Policy is followed in the application of these procedures to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination on the basis of lifestyle, culture, or social or economic status. This includes characteristics protected by legislation that apply to further and higher education establishments:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Medical Reports

Throughout these procedures various medical reports may be regarded as necessary and requested at various times, for example, occupational health, specialist reports and GP letters. The student will be requested to ask their GP, other health care professional and any

healthcare organisation where they have received treatment either currently or in the past, to provide reports detailing their current health, their health history, any treatment regime, potential reasonable adjustments, and any support requirements in line with the Equalities Act 2010. Should the student not consent, this will be noted, and the student shall be advised that this may influence the Suitability Panel or Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee's determination.

CTE Suitability Panel (Health, Welfare and Professional Conduct)

The CTE Suitability Panel (hereafter referred to as the 'Panel') acts as the partnership committee indicated in the statutory guidance, Initial Teacher Training (ITT): criteria and supporting advice. This guidance acknowledges the need for providers to establish clear safeguarding procedures and protocols that are agreed by all partners in the partnership. Additionally, this includes opportunities to develop a common understanding across the partnership of convictions, offences, cautions and warnings that would not pose a barrier to joining an ITT programme. The establishment of such a committee is aligned with University of Warwick regulations for all courses taught at the University, which carry, upon successful completion, accredited status in a profession regulated by a Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body.

The aim is to provide support in helping to prevent health, fitness and suitability issues becoming more serious and a greater cause for concern. Its role is to consider in the first instance, and continue to review as required, all conditional offer holders' self-declared and enrolled trainees referred or self-referred health, welfare or suitability concerns. The Panel will determine insight, consider additional support mechanisms and any subsequent reasonable adjustments, as required for each case. Where it is determined that the threshold of trainee suitability to practise may have been reached, the Group will refer the matter to the University Fitness to Practise (FtP) Committee (hereafter referred to as the 'Committee').

Conditional Offer Holders

Conditional offers are made to successful applicants that meet the academic requirements of the Course. Conditional offer holders are then required to self-declare any and all, current or historic, health and suitability issues, including criminal convictions. UCAS also require applicants to declare any criminal records (including cautions and spent convictions). The Panel may use or request such information as necessary to arrive at a determination, which will include but is not limited to:

1. Medical reports.
2. A reflective statement from a conditional offer holder.
3. An informed reference

The Panel will consider any such declarations in accordance with Regulation 6: Admission to the University:

1. Health (paragraph 6.3 (3) (f)) – A conditional offer holder may also be referred to the Panel by the Senior Tutor or their nominee.

2. Conduct (paragraphs 6.3 (3) (b), (c) and (d)) – For example, a criminal conviction. These will be considered in terms of the severity, nature, timings, and impact of the offences in relation to previous cases, criteria established, and TRA guidance.
3. General Dishonesty (paragraph 6.3 (3) (d)) – Where the Admissions Tutors or other University officers have reason to question the honesty of a conditional offer holder, for example, suspected fraudulent completion of application documents or misrepresentation of qualifications, the Admissions Tutors or other officers involved will compile a report and refer the matter to the Panel.

Panel Outcomes for Conditional Offer Holders

1. The determinations of the Panel will normally include:
 - a. Where it is determined that the trainee is suitable to practise:
 - i. The case will be signed off as no further action but may include recommendations, for example, meet and maintain a dialogue with tutors or to seek support from the University's Wellbeing Support Services. In the event of a 'no further action' decision this information will be passed to the chair of the Committee as a recommendation for action;
 - ii. Cases of conduct and general dishonesty will be referred to the Committee on the Admission of Students to Courses of Study (CASCS) for consideration of any remaining concerns about the conditional offer holder's suitability to register as a student of the University.
 2. Where it is determined that the trainee may not be suitable to practise, the Panel will refer the matter to the University FtP Committee and:
 - i. may recommend that the applicant is unsuitable for full enrolment on the PGCE programme and to rescind the offer of a place on the PGCE programme;
 - ii. may appoint an Investigating Officer;
 - iii. may request further information such as medical reports;
 - iv. If any element of a referral is due to a conditional offer holder having a criminal record or any other issue that could present a child-safeguarding issue, then the University Designated Person for Child Safeguarding will be notified in accordance with University of Warwick Child Protection Policy.
3. The outcome will be communicated in writing to the conditional offer holder within ten University working days and include a statement of the reasons for the Group's determination(s).
4. If a conditional offer holder becomes an enrolled trainee, the outcome and any related information will be retained and may be considered if the registered student is referred to the Panel in the future.

Enrolled trainees

The safety of children and young people shall be paramount at all times. There may be circumstances that do not present a risk to children and young people, but still bring into

question a trainee's suitability to continue on an ITT course and practise as a teacher following successful completion of the course. Enrolled trainees' health, welfare and suitability concerns may be identified and referred to the Panel from a number of sources, which may include but is not limited to:

1. Members of CTE or university staff.
2. Staff who work in placement provider organisations.
3. Occupational health physicians.
4. Fellow students – the circumstances by which this information comes to light should be carefully examined as malicious or vexatious allegations, including where false representations have knowingly been provided, will be treated under University Regulation 23 on student disciplinary offences.
5. The police.
6. Self-referral.
7. Members of the public.
8. Anonymous complaints, through a separate raising concerns policy or through the media.

The Panel may use or request such information as necessary to arrive at a determination, which may include but is not limited to:

1. The appointment of an Investigating Officer.
2. Medical reports.
3. Referral documents / emails.
4. A reflective statement from the student.
5. An informed reference.

Panel Outcomes for Enrolled Trainees

1. The determinations of the Panel will normally include:
 - a. Where it is determined that the trainee is suitable to practise, the case will be signed off as no further action but may include recommendations, for example, meet and maintain a dialogue with tutors or to seek support from the University's Wellbeing Support Services;
 - b. Where it is determined that the threshold of student fitness to practise may have been reached the Panel will refer their recommendation to the Committee and:
 - i. May appoint an Investigating Officer;
 - ii. May request further information such as medical reports;
 - iii. The student will be invited to meet with the Panel's Chair and Senior Tutor where the reasons for the Panel's determination and the Committee process will be explained. The meeting will not be to revisit the discussions that the Panel had or to justify the determination;
2. The outcome will be communicated in writing to the registered student within ten University working days and include a statement of the reasons for the Panel's determination(s).

3. The outcomes any related information will be retained and may be considered if the student is referred to the Panel in the future.

University FtP Committee

The Committee is subject to University Regulation 34 Determination of Fitness to Practise. Where issues relate to other University Regulations but have fitness to practise dimensions, they will also be considered under this Regulation. All regulatory procedures will operate independently from each other, but information or outcomes may be shared between relevant committees.

Committee Outcomes

1. The Committee can accept the recommendation by the Panel and approve this.
2. Further determinations available to the Committee are detailed in Regulation 34 Determination of Fitness to Practise, in particular:
 - a. Conditional offer holders, paragraphs 3 (a) and (b);
 - b. Registered students, paragraphs 3 (c) to (f) (iv).
2. The outcome will be communicated in writing to the conditional offer holder/registered student within ten University working days and include a statement of the reasons for the Committee's determination(s).
3. Where the academic progress of a registered student is also a concern, the case will be referred to the Programme Examination Board.

Appeals

There is no right to appeal against the determinations of the Panel. The right to appeal against the determinations of the Committee is set out in Regulation 34 Determination of Fitness to Practise, Paragraphs (5) to (15).

Complaints

Any enrolled trainee may feedback or complain about these procedures in line with the University's policies.