

PROGRAMME FITNESS TO PRACTISE STATEMENT MSc CLINICAL NUTRITION AND DIETETICS PROGRAMME

UCD Policy Definition: Fitness to practise means having the skills, knowledge, health and character necessary to undertake and complete a programme with professional practice, experiential learning or clinical work safely and effectively, fulfilling the responsibilities within the scope of practise in a chosen field.

Fitness to Practise in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics

A student on the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme must be fit to practise. University College Dublin's Fitness to Practise Policy applies to the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme.

The guide to Fitness to Practise on this programme has been developed with reference to the CORU Dietitians Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Dietitians (2014), the Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute Code of Professional Practice (2009), the UCD Student Code 2015/2016 (May 2015), the UCD Student Fitness to Practise Policy (2011) and the Fitness to Practise Statement for UCD Physiotherapy Programmes (2015/2016).

Aims of the Fitness to Practise Statement:

The fitness to practise statement aims to:

1. Ensure students on the UCD MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics graduate programme have a clear understanding of the standards of professional attitudes and behaviour required of them throughout all aspects of their education, and are supported in their continuous attainment of these standards.
2. Ensure the well-being of any members of the public, service users and placement providers that MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students have contact with during the course of their practice placements or other learning experiences, such as research.
3. Provide a suitable framework for the effective management of Fitness to Practise issues that may arise, either prior to or during a student's programme of study.

Fitness to Practise Standards:

The following positive attitudes and behaviours are expected of students registered to the UCD MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Programme.

Personal Behaviour

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students demonstrate their Fitness to Practise in all aspects of their personal behaviour throughout their period of registration by behaving in a manner appropriate to their position as a student of the University studying for a qualification, the successful completion of which leads to eligibility for entry to a statutory regulated profession. Students are required to keep high standards of personal conduct and to behave with integrity and honesty at all times. Students are required to follow and obey the laws of the land and to refrain from unlawful activity at all times. As a condition of acceptance onto the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme with a clinical practice placement component, students must undergo and receive Garda Vetting. Relevant documentation demonstrating Garda Vetting must be lodged by the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student with the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme director, prior to any practice placement. During his/her period of registration where a MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student is subject to a Garda caution, allegation of criminal activity, or criminal prosecution he/she is required to notify the programme director in writing as soon as possible and no later than seven days after he/she becomes aware of its occurrence. In the event of an alleged incident, the programme director, in correspondence with the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Committee may require the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student to discontinue a practice placement if applicable until such time as the issue is resolved. Failure to notify the programme director or to agree to temporarily discontinue a clinical placement while an outstanding legal issue is being resolved will result in the initiation of formal Fitness to Practise procedures.

Appearance

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students demonstrate their Fitness to Practise during their course of studies by maintaining a standard of appearance that will be perceived by others as professional. Students are required

to follow the guidelines for standard of dress as detailed in the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Placement Handbook. Students are required to adopt the dress code of their host organisation while on practice placement.

Behaviour Towards Others

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students demonstrate their Fitness to Practise continually during their course of studies in all aspects of their behaviour towards others: members of the public, patients/clients/service users and their families, classmates and other students, research participants, University staff, practice tutors, other staff on placement, colleagues and employers. Students are required to treat others with due respect, courtesy, honesty, accountability, humility, fairness and impartiality and to recognise, respect and tolerate individual differences in others including gender, religious values, sexual preferences, age, disability, and cultural beliefs and values. This requires the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student to be open and positive towards new learning experiences and to demonstrate the ability to receive and respond to feedback in a constructive and non-defensive manner at all times. In instances where there is a concern that a MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student is unreasonably defensive and unresponsive to constructive feedback offered to them in the University or on practice placement, then the specific feedback given and the response of the student should be clearly documented by the supervising University or practice placement staff member and returned to the module co-ordinator.

Learning

The content of the majority of the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme of study is designed to meet the requirements of a statutory regulatory body and may be amended if required by the CORU Dietitians Registration Board. MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students demonstrate their Fitness to Practise by pursuing their studies with due diligence ensuring they avail of the range of educational opportunities made available in order to acquire the skills and knowledge identified in the relevant professional and statutory body guidance. Students are required to take responsibility for their own learning by fulfilling the attendance, learning and assessment requirements of the academic and practice placement aspects of their education. Students are required to demonstrate good time management and regular attendance and to adhere to the guidelines for reporting non-attendance on practice placement as stated in the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Placement Handbook. Failure to follow the procedure for reporting non-attendance on practice placement may result in the initiation of formal Fitness to Practise procedures.

Health

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students must be able to perform their professional skills in a safe, competent and proficient manner in order to meet the needs of patients, clients or service users. UCD is committed to equal opportunities and the support of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities registered to the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme are required to register with the UCD Access Centre for a Needs Assessment to identify any appropriate supports required in the academic and/or practice placement settings. As a condition of acceptance onto the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme, students are required to undergo pre-entry blood testing to demonstrate immunity for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Varicella, and to provide evidence of immunisation for measles, mumps, rubella [documentary proof] and tuberculosis [documentary proof or BCG scars] as outlined on <http://www.ucd.ie/registry/admissions/biomed.pdf>

Students who cannot provide evidence of immunity to tuberculosis are required to undergo the Mantoux Test. Students entering the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics programme will also be required to declare themselves physically and psychologically well in order to competently execute the various academic coursework, practical classes, and practice placements by signing a declaration statement. Students are required to adhere to safety and infection control procedures in the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Practice Placement Handbook. On an annual basis during the registration process, students will be required to declare themselves fit to practise by signing a declaration statement. In the event that a student experiences a change in their physical or psychological health affecting their ability to execute their academic and/or practice placement responsibilities they are required to notify the programme director in writing within seven days. In such circumstances the programme director and programme team will work with the student to develop an appropriate plan to manage the student's changed circumstances in a supportive manner. Students who have had to withdraw from practice placement for health reasons will need to be certified as fit to return to practice placement by an impartial

physician with relevant expertise before they will be permitted to return. Failure to follow any aspect of this procedure, which affects an individual's capacity to carry out their various academic and practice placement requirements may result in the initiation of formal Fitness to Practise procedures.

Duty of Care

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics students will demonstrate their Fitness to Practise at all times by complying with the CORU Dietitians Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Dietitians (2014) by conducting themselves in a professional manner in all aspects related to patient/client/service user care while on supervised practice placement and when conducting supervised research as outlined in the MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Programme Curriculum. Students will at all times respect the rights and dignity of the patient, maintain accurate patient management records, research data, obtain appropriate informed consent and adhere to the relevant host guidelines for all aspects of patient care. Students may have access to confidential personal information and are required to ensure patient confidentiality and comply with Data Protection legislation. Students are also required to follow the health and safety requirements of the School, UCD and the practice placement partner. In instances where there is a concern that a MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student has breached his/her duty of care, the specific incident should be documented by the practice placement or research supervisor and the response of the student clearly documented. Both should be forwarded to the programme director within seven days.

Reporting to Practice Placement

The programme director has a duty to inform current practice placement supervisors of any Fitness to Practise hearings and their outcome on which a MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics student is being referred. In the event that the programme director is informing a supervisor of the outcome of a Fitness to Practise investigation which has resulted in the student's continuation on their programme of study, this information should be conveyed in a manner that supports the student in achieving and maintaining the appropriate standard of professional practice in a constructive manner.

References

CORU Dietitians Registration Board Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Dietitians (2014):
http://coru.ie/uploads/documents/DRB_Code_of_Professional_Conduct_and_Ethics_2014.pdf
Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute Code of Professional Practice (2009): <https://www.indi.ie/member-resources/documents/core-documents/34-indi-code-of-practice-april-2009.html>
UCD Student Code 2015/2016 (May 2015):
https://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/student_code.pdf
UCD Student Fitness to Practise Policy (2011)
http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/sfp_po.pdf
Fitness to Practice Statement for UCD Physiotherapy Programmes (2015/2016):
<http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/docs/sfp2.pdf>

UCD Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science

MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Fitness to Practise Sub-committee

Composition

Core

Programme Director [Chair]
Member of the Programme Board
Relevant Programme Module Co-ordinator

As required

Other member(s) of MSc Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics Committee as appropriate, including but not limited to Practice Education Co-ordinator, Practice Tutor, Programme Director, MSc Physiotherapy