

PROGRAMME FITNESS TO PRACTISE STATEMENT

Professional Master of Education (PME) MTHSC014, W327 (post primary education)

UCD Policy Definition

Fitness to Practise means students 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 their responsibilities within their scope of practice in their chosen field.

Purpose of the UCD Fitness to Practise Policy

- To protect the public, students, placement providers and the University;
- To instil in students the qualities and competencies required for professional practice and to support and guide students who experience issues that may affect their ability to practise;
- To 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 in Education

A student on the Professional Master of Education programme which includes a mandatory school placement component must be Fit to Practise. The School of Education has a responsibility to ensure that students following a programme of study leading to a professional qualification which confers registration with a statutory regulatory body are suitable to enter that profession. It is the position of the School of Education that its students conduct themselves professionally at all times in order to justify the trust the public places in them and in the teaching profession. A guide to Fitness to Practise for the PME has thus been developed using the principles of the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers as well as the central tenets of the Teaching Council's School Placement Guidelines and the supporting documentation of the School of Education. Fitness to practise is also subject to garda vetting.

Aim of the UCD School of Education Fitness to Practise Statement

The Fitness to Practise statement aims to:

1. Ensure students understand the level of professional attitudes and behaviour required of them throughout their programme of study.
2. Safeguard pupils and the wider school community with whom the School's students have contact during their programme
3. Meet the requirements of the UCD Fitness to Practise Policy and School Fitness to Practise procedures.

Equal Opportunities and Fitness to Practice

University College Dublin is committed to equal opportunities and the support of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are welcome and reasonable accommodation will be made where practicable. However, regrettably, it is possible that some persons otherwise qualified to undertake the Professional Master of Education may be unable or become unable, because of ill health or physical inability, to complete all elements of the programme required.

FITNESS TO PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Mapping to the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council, 2012), **four** core values underpin the School of Education's Fitness to Practise policy, namely **respect, care, integrity and trust**:

Respect

Student teachers must act in a manner which promotes equity and equality and is respectful of the diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds of all pupils.

Care

Student teachers' practice is motivated by the best interests of all pupils and reflects empathy, concern and thoughtfulness.

Integrity

Student teachers act in a manner which reflects integrity, honesty, dedication to their professional commitment and responsibilities.

Trust

Student teachers' relationships with pupils, colleagues, parents, school management and all stakeholders they may encounter is based on trust which requires student teachers to act in a fair, open and honest manner at all times. Such responsibilities are necessary also in the engagement between student teachers, academic and administrative staff of the University.

STANDARDS

Professional Values and Relationships

Student teachers should be caring, fair and committed to the pupils entrusted to their care; acknowledge and respect the uniqueness of each pupil and promote their holistic development; be committed to equity, equality and inclusion; seek to develop positive relationships with pupils, parents, school management and other stakeholders.

Professional Integrity

Student teachers should act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work; respect the privacy of others and the confidentiality of any information afforded them in the context of their placement unless a legal imperative requires disclosure or there is a legitimate concern for the well-being of an individual; represent themselves, their professional status, qualifications and experience honestly; avoid conflict between their professional work and private interests which could impact negatively on pupils, their placement school or on the profession.

Professional Conduct

Student teachers should uphold the reputation and standing of the profession; take all reasonable steps in relation to the care of pupils under their supervision; work within the framework of relevant legislation and regulations; comply with national and school policies, procedures and guidelines which aim to promote the education and welfare of pupils as well as child protection; communicate effectively with pupils, colleagues, parents, school management and any relevant stakeholder in a manner which is professional, collegial and supportive, including communication *via* electronic media and social networking sites; ensure that they do not practise while under the influence of any substance which impairs their fitness to teach.

Professional Practice

Student teachers should strive to attain the highest standards of practice in consultation with the advice of university personnel, in relation to pupil learning, planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and providing feedback; apply their knowledge and experience in facilitating students' holistic development; create an environment where all pupils can become active agents in the learning process and develop lifelong learning skills; develop teaching, learning and assessment strategies which support differentiated learning in a way which respects the dignity of all learners; inform their professional judgement and practice by engaging with learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum development, ethical practice, educational policy and legislation; be open and responsive to constructive feedback and act in the best interests of their pupils.

Professional Development

Student teachers should take responsibility for sustaining and improving the quality of their professional practice by reflecting and critically evaluating their practice, taking on board the advice of their supervisor, tutor and all relevant School of Education personnel. This also includes mandatory attendance at all lectures, seminars and tutorials.

Professional Collegiality and Collaboration

Student teachers should work collaboratively with all colleagues in the interests of sharing, developing and supporting good practice, of maintaining the highest quality of educational experience for all learners.

Fitness to practise issues can arise at any stage during a student's time on the PME. It is important to note that such issues may be temporary and/or satisfactorily dealt with during the programme of study. However, fitness to practise issues may affect the ability of students to complete the programme, gain the final qualification or register with the Teaching Council.

Student Declaration

All students entering the PME programme as well as relevant academic and administrative staff will be fully briefed on the Fitness to Practise Policy and related procedures through the Programme Handbook, this Policy and reference to the Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct. Students are required to read this Policy and acknowledge in writing that they have read, understood and accept the Programme's Fitness to Practise Policy and procedures prior to commencing Year One of the PME.