Regulation XXI:
General Regulations relating to Student Fitness to Practise

These Regulations relate to students following programmes specified in the published Fitness to Practise Procedures. In these cases, the University has a responsibility (and in some instances a statutory obligation) to ensure that students are fit to practise in the relevant profession and that they meet or are likely to meet the requirements of the relevant professional body.

1. Any concerns about a student (which might become the subject of proceedings under these Regulations) will be reported to the Head of School.
2. Matters which may give rise for concern may include any health condition, behaviour or attitude which may affect the student's fitness to practise in the relevant profession.

Initial Investigation

Reference in these Regulations to the **"Vice-President"** means the Vice-President of the relevant Faculty and includes any person authorised to act on their behalf.

3. On receipt of information regarding any areas of concern, the Head of School will instigate an initial investigation into the matter. The student will be informed in writing of the concerns and will be given the opportunity to make representations in person or in writing.
4. Following the initial investigation, the Head of School may decide to:
    (a) take no further action under these Regulations;
    (b) make a recommendation that the case is considered by the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee.

Suspension of Students

5. Pending the completion of proceedings under these Regulations, the Head of School may, with the agreement of the Vice-President, suspend the student from studies on the programme, any practice components or from both studies and practice components, and may include other requirements within the terms of the suspension. The Vice-President may take action under this Regulation only to protect the University community in general or a particular member of members of that community or members of the public and will limit the scope of any suspension to that which is, in their opinion, necessary to achieve that object. The Head of School will notify the student in writing of the terms of the suspension.
6. Before exercising powers under the preceding Regulation, the Vice-President will give the student concerned an opportunity to make representations in person or in writing. In cases of great urgency the Vice-President may suspend a student with immediate effect, and without giving any such opportunity, for a period of not more than five working days, and will in any such case review the suspension at or before the end of that period, having in the meantime given the student concerned an opportunity to make representations in person or in writing.
7. The Vice-President will review any suspension every 20 working days in the light of any developments and any representations made by or on behalf of the student.

Procedure when Matter Referred to a Fitness to Practise Committee

8. There will be a Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee which will consist of:

(a) the Vice-President or nominated representative;
(b) one member of the academic staff from the School in which the student is registered who will normally be registered with the relevant professional regulatory body;
(c) one member of academic staff from another Faculty or a member of academic staff from another University or other relevant institution or body.

9. The student will be given at least 15 working days' notice in writing of the date upon which the Committee will meet. If the student fails to attend the hearing, the Committee may proceed in the absence of the student if it is satisfied that due notice of the meeting has been given or may adjourn to a later date.

10. The hearing will be in private. The student may attend and be accompanied at the hearing by a friend or representative, whether legally qualified or not. The representative may speak and act on behalf of the student.

11. The Committee will have power:

(a) to decide that the grounds for concern are not made out, in which case the Committee may recommend the removal of any suspension imposed under Regulation 5;
(b) to permit the student to continue with the programme, either unconditionally or subject to such requirements pertaining to the programme as may be imposed;
(c) to suspend the studies of the student for a specified time;
(d) to require the student to repeat a specified part or parts of the programme;
(e) to require any other action considered appropriate by the Committee to enable the student's successful completion of the remainder of the programme;
(f) to exclude the student from further study on a programme leading to a professional qualification but permit registration for an alternative programme;
(g) to exclude the student from further study in the Faculty.

12. The despatch of a letter to a student's address last notified to the Student Registry will fulfil any requirements of giving notice or information to the student under these Regulations.

13. A student who has been excluded from attendance at lectures, classes and examinations in any Faculty may register in another Faculty only with the permission of the latter Faculty.

Right of Appeal

14. The Chief Operating Officer will notify the student of the decision and of the effect of this Regulation. A student may appeal against a decision of the Committee upon one or more of the following grounds:

(a) that there was a material procedural irregularity which rendered the process leading to the initial decision unfair;
(b) that material of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to have been aware of at the time of the initial decision casts substantial doubt upon the appropriateness of that decision;
(c) that the initial decision was manifestly unreasonable.

15. Notice of appeal, specifying which of the grounds listed in the preceding Regulation is relied upon, will be given to the Chief Operating Officer within 15 working days of the date of the letter of notification to the student of the decision. The Chief Operating Officer will refer the appeal to the Senate Appeals Panel.

16. The Senate Appeals Panel may confirm, vary or quash the original decision and may exercise any of the powers conferred on the Faculty Fitness to Practise Committee by the foregoing Regulations.
17. The Chief Operating Officer will notify the student of the decision of the Senate Appeals Panel.
18. Reference in these Regulations to the Chief Operating Officer includes any person authorised to act on their behalf.

Independent Review

19. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. The University of Sheffield is a member of this scheme. If the student is unhappy with the outcome they may be able to ask the OIA to review their case. Information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and cannot look at, and what it can do to put things right is at: https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students.

    The student normally needs to have completed the Appeal process before they can complain to the OIA. The student will receive a **"Completion of Procedures Letter"** when they have reached the end of the procedure, and there are no further steps they can take internally.