

3.11 Fitness to practise standards

The University of Sheffield has a policy of ensuring fitness to practise for those completing professional training courses including the DClin Psy. This policy is outlined in the General Regulations relating to Fitness to Practise in the University Calendar.

Trainees must also uphold appropriate standards of behaviour in **all** aspects of their training and in both the education setting and practice placement setting as indicated below. Monitoring of professional aspects of practice is integral to the assessment procedures for the Programme. Where trainees fail to meet these standards they will not be allowed to complete the Programme and enter the profession.

- (i) During the Programme trainees must liaise in a positive and constructive way with many different people including clients, supervisors, other staff on placement, Programme staff, teachers, administrative staff, peers and others. This is a fundamental requirement of clinical psychology practice and must be consistently shown by individuals in training. Where fitness to practise concerns are raised in relation to this aspect then interpersonal difficulties should be clearly demonstrated with a variety of different individuals and typically across several different settings.
- (ii) Training as a clinical psychologist requires individuals to acquire new skills and knowledge and take on new roles. It requires respect for others' opinions, an openness to learning and an ability and willingness to use feedback constructively. Concerns relating to fitness to practice may involve an inability or unwillingness to acknowledge and use feedback on practice issues or interpersonal difficulties in a constructive way. Any feedback given and the responses of the trainee should be clearly documented.
- (iii) Trainees are required to demonstrate throughout their training, attitudes and behaviour in keeping with the statements of values and standards of clinical psychologists as outlined in HCPC Standards of conduct performance and ethics and the Guidance on conduct and ethics for students. They must also adhere to the standards of the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct, March 2009. The main domains of responsibility are respect, competence, responsibility and integrity.
- (iv) The domain of integrity requires that honesty must underpin all aspects of training in relation to documentation, assessed work and liaison with staff and supervisors.
Trainees must also adhere to the standards of behaviour as outlined in the Entry Agreement (see Appendix 9)
- (v) Concerns may be raised about fitness to practise under any of the above areas where a trainee's behaviour on placement may not itself have contravened (i) The Health and Care Professions Council Standards of conduct performance and ethics and the Guidance on conduct and ethics for students, (ii) the specific BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct, (iii) the BPS Generic Professional Practice Guidelines or (iv) the DCP Professional Practice Guidelines at a level of serious professional misconduct. However a series of more minor events may have occurred usually across settings and with more than one person which call into question the suitability of a candidate through their attitudes or behaviour to continue their training to enter the profession of clinical psychology. Such difficulties may lead to significant problems in training which by themselves have not led to repeated placement failure or failure of a resubmitted piece of work but may indicate lack of fitness to enter the profession.

- (vi) As a condition of acceptance onto the Programme trainees must undergo and have received a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. It is a condition of continued registration that any police cautions or criminal convictions occurring after offer of a place but prior to termination of the Programme are notified to the Programme Director as soon as possible and within 7 days of occurrence. Failure to do so will be considered as a concern about fitness to practise. The content of any disclosure may lead to University Fitness to Practise or Disciplinary Procedures being invoked (<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/fitness>).
- (vii) The Programme, wherever possible, attempts to ensure that candidates successfully complete their training. The Programme Team is committed to helping trainees who encounter difficulties through (i) clear communication about the identification of problems and (ii) provision of support to a trainee in their attempts to meet the requirements of change.
- (viii) Should concerns be raised about a trainee's fitness to practise then procedures outlined in General Regulations relating to Student Fitness to Practise will be followed.
- (ix) Where the University upholds concerns over Fitness to Practise a trainee may be excluded from the Programme and their registration terminated. University registration by the DClin Psy Programme at the University of Sheffield is a contractual requirement with NHS trusts and any decision that upholds the recommendation for termination of registration will normally lead to the termination of the trainee's contract of employment and discontinuation of financial support. In the event of termination of the contract of employment, the usual NHS appeals procedures will be available to the trainee.
- (x) The University has a duty of care to inform current and subsequent supervisors of any referrals for Fitness to Practise and their outcomes, since the NHS Trust is liable for the clinical work conducted by trainees.