

## Student Performance and Development Policy

### Including Fitness to Study Policy and Guidance Notes

1. Purpose of this policy
  - 1.1. The RVC recognises the demands of study upon students and that an individual student at a particular time may experience difficulties. This policy sets out how we will respond when a student is experiencing difficulty which may be related to health, personal, academic, professional or other challenges with the aim of providing support and advice to assist them achieve their academic and professional goals.
  - 1.2. Study at the RVC frequently involves exposure and access to animals, infection and drugs, research activity, work based placements and for some courses professional body expectations. The College has a charter detailing the expectations of our students and staff, as well as policies on Fitness to Practise, Research Integrity and Misconduct (academic and other).
  - 1.3. This policy is intended to help us address issues, including behaviour, giving cause for

2. Application of this policy and associated procedure
  - 2.1. This policy will apply to students experiencing difficulty which is interfering with progress on their chosen course. This may be due to health, personal, academic, professional or other challenges.
  - 2.2. Intervention may be initiated by the student, academic staff or student support services. Other stakeholders (e.g. placement providers) or other students will not be permitted to initiate action themselves however their concerns may result in intervention being initiated by academic staff or student support services.
  - 2.3. The procedure has three stages which represent the degree of concern and /or perceived seriousness of the situation to both the student and others
    - x Stage 1 – Lowest level of concern, for straightforward matters
    - x Stage 2 – Intermediate concern, for the student and /or others
    - x Stage 3 – Serious concern, for student and others and complex cases
  - 2.4. The procedure may be initiated at any stage, however in most cases Stage 1 should be used before escalation to Stages 2 and 3.
  - 2.5. For courses leading to / requiring professional registration this procedure may be used in conjunction with the RVC's Professional Requirements and Fitness to Practise Procedure. This procedure may be considered as Stage 4 and is not detailed in this document.
  - 2.6. We may need to consult with external agencies. If we do, we will comply with our statutory Data Protection and Equality and Diversity responsibilities.
  - 2.7. If a student will not engage with necessary intervention, we may continue the process in their absence. In such circumstances we will always seek to protect the interests of the student and balance these with the needs of other students and staff.
  - 2.8. The College will identify particular staff as 'Advisors'. These will be staff who develop particular expertise in supporting students who are considered under this policy. This term is used in this particular way in the sections below.
  - 2.9. From the pool of Advisors the College will identify a limited number of Senior Advisors based on their experience and training.
3. Guidance on application of the policy
  - 3.1. Is broadly detailed below. Supporting documentation for the 3 stages is detailed in appendices at the end of this document
  - 3.2. The term 'Senior Tutor' will encompass the Senior Clinical Tutor and all Assistant Senior Tutors.



- 4.11. Should the student be unable or unwilling to respond positively at this stage, then the Senior Tutor / Advisor / nominee in liaison with the relevant personnel will decide whether to progress to Stage 2.
  
5. Stage 2 Continuing concerns or intermediate emerging concerns will initiate a Student Support and Progress Meeting
  
- 5.1. Continued or ongoing concerns following Stage 1 or intermediate concerns regarding a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety and / or ability to study and / or participate in placement will merit a direct referral to Stage 2 and initiate a Student Support and Progress meeting.
  
- 5.2. The Student Support and Progress meetings are scheduled. The panel is composed of at least two members chosen from a group of trained and experienced Advisors and a representative from the Advice Centre. The panel will be appropriate for the concerns presented and the student

others e.g. causing disruption and distress, and/or where concerns about the student and others' safety exist.

- 6.2. A Fitness to Study panel will be convened. The student will be given at least 7 days' notice of the Fitness to Study meeting and informed of its purpose.
- 6.3. The Fitness to Study meeting will be chaired by a Senior Advisor and consist of the:
  - x Student;
  - x Another Advisor from a Student Support and Progression meeting panel
  - x A representative from the Advice centre
- 6.4. It may be appropriate to invite other members from / on behalf of the Advice centre if specific professional expertise is required.
- 6.5. The student may bring a friend (this does not include a lawyer or legal adviser but may include a

mutually agreed period of time. For either option, appropriate advice will be provided to the student, by the Advice centre.

- 6.12. The student will be given formal guidance on any financial or Academic Regulatory implications of this option, as well as clear guidance about the known return to study and success outcomes of intermission. Guidance given in this regard should be recorded.
- 6.13. Where the student is registered for a research degree (including MRes), the panel will have the authority to terminate the students study where there is no evidence supporting a realistic prospect of the student being able to complete their research or thesis within an appropriate period of time.
- 6.14. Where the student is undertaking study which leads to professional registration (e.g.: RCVS) or they are a Clinical Training Scholar (CTS) already registered with RCVS, the Fitness to Study Panel may issue an Advisory Notice. The student is expected to share this notice with the relevant professional body upon registration (initial and annual). An Advisory Notice.





