

ProFESS Student information Guide

Professional Standards, Ethical Behaviours and Student support

All courses within MNHS seek to equip you with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to take your place in the medical, healthcare and medical research workforce. These courses all include the need for a strong understanding of practical professionalism and the requirements of Fitness for Practice. This information guide provides an overview of the *Professional Standards, Ethical Behaviour and Student Support (ProFESS)* framework, which is the method for managing Fitness for Practice concerns, outlined in this Guide. More details are available from the ProFESS business process document on the Faculty website, the Student Clinical Placement guide and the University website identifying courses which have Compulsory Course requirements for academic progress purposes <https://www.monash.edu/students/academic-progress/receiving-notice/course-requirements>.

The ProFESS framework applies to every aspect of your University student teaching and learning, whether this happens on campus, online, in a research laboratory or on clinical placement. The framework embeds the attitudinal domain into your learning pathways. It fosters the development of the essential skills you will need as you progress toward becoming a competent and efficient clinician and researcher. Any and all Fitness for Practice concerns are addressed through this framework, including concerns about professionalism and professional identity formation. Enmeshed within the framework are pathways to assist you to access a variety of appropriate support structures to help you navigate these occasionally difficult aspects of professional learning.

What is ProFESS?

The ProFESS framework consists of four components that bring together two related arms of professional learning and practice:

- ❖ Enhancement and Support
 - Prevention and Education quadrant
 - Support quadrant
- ❖ Standards Review
 - Review and Remediation quadrant
 - Adjudication quadrant.



Why do we need ProFESS?

Professional excellence is as essential to be an effective health care and research practitioner as academic excellence. Having a strong sense of a professional identity and understanding of professionalism will assist you to function safely and effectively within your chosen field of endeavour. For many 21st century health professional groups this is regarded as a core competency.

University studies however, occur within the broader contours of your life. Many students start their courses having already experienced significant life events, or these develop during their studies. In addition, all students start their tertiary training with inherent values and beliefs. These may at times conflict with specific attitudinal/ behavioural course expectations. The issues and challenges that can occur whilst studying as a tertiary student can have a significant impact (both positive and negative) on your professional and personal growth. Sometimes they may also impede your academic progression toward your chosen healthcare or research profession. In relation to these concepts this new framework provides equal focus on:

- Fostering the health and wellbeing of all students, providing appropriate support as needed and building increased understanding of the place of personal care in professional and research practice.
- Developing appropriate habits of thinking and being that are consistent with the roles and responsibilities of a 21st century healthcare practitioner.
- Building a strong understanding of the privileges and responsibilities of being a healthcare professional in the 21st century
- Promoting an understanding of the place of professional standards and codes of conduct for guiding professional behaviour choices and navigating the decision - making tensions that may arise when values and beliefs conflict.
- Addressing the needs of individual learners while simultaneously ensuring our assessment and progression pathways are consistent with our duty of care to the public.

Key Focus of ProFESS: Identify a problem early, intervene quickly and appropriately, prevent escalation if possible.

ProFESS in a Nutshell

ProFESS is the framework through which any Fitness for Practice (FfP) concern is managed, as well as providing a structure and process to assist you when you are struggling to meet course expectations. This guide explains the different components of the framework, how they interact and key staff involved. This process supersedes the Professional Behaviour Intervention process, which ceased in 2020. It also provides a guide to the differences between meetings and the range of personal or professional concerns that might impact on Fitness for Practice. The type of meeting you may be required to attend is determined by the nature of the FfP concern. The guide provides a summary of each type of meeting and examples of the type of outcome and/or impact that may result from a meeting. Whilst the ProFESS framework addresses Fitness for Practice concerns, serious FfP concerns are governed by the University Student Academic Progress Policy and Regulations in addition to the relevant University Policy Regulations for Student Discipline and Misconduct (including Academic Misconduct and General Misconduct).

What is the difference between the ProFESS meetings?

Type of ProFESS meeting	Nature of the meeting	Who identifies the concern/problem & What is the Level of the concern?	Who conducts the meeting?
Prevention & Education meeting.	Informal	Student Staff may initiate if concerns for personal problems or potential or minor FfP** concerns	Staff member selected by the student, OR School/Department nominated student welfare/advisor, OR

			Tutor, Clinical supervisor OR Student Support Lead (Faculty appointed)
Support meeting.	Informal	Staff Usually Minor FfP** concern	Staff member who noted a concern, OR Unit coordinator, OR Clinical Supervisor, Clinical Dean, Director of Clinical Training (DCT), Discipline Leads, OR Associate Dean Professionalism practice standards (ADPPS) OR Student Support Lead
Review & Remediation meeting	Formal	Staff Moderate to Serious FfP** concern	Course Convenor, OR Academic Director, OR Clinical Dean, DCT, Discipline Leads, OR ADPPS OR In consultation with the Fitness for Practice committee
Adjudication meeting (Formal) Academic Progress Committee (Fitness for Practice) hearing	Formal	Staff Serious FfP** concern triggered by failing to meet compulsory course requirements https://www.monash.edu/students/academic-progress/receiving-notice/course-requirements	Academic Progress Committee (Fitness for Practice) hearing***

** FfP – Fitness for Practice (definition on page 6) – this framework is governed by Monash University Academic Board Regulations, Part 3

*** Fitness for Practice committee – this committee is an Academic Progress Committee governed by Monash University Academic Board Regulations, Part 4

What constitutes a personal issue or concern?

This will usually be a personal problem/issue that is (or could be) impacting on your academic studies, the teaching or learning environment, course delivery or has the potential to be a FfP concern. Student concerns/problems can range across a wide range of areas and discussing these with the appropriate staff can provide you with guidance and support. Areas of concern you may experience might include:

Personal issues	e.g. recent personal trauma/challenge; death or illness of close friend/family member; personal relationship issues; existential problems
Family problems	e.g. difficulty with a family member; abuse/harassment by family member; relationship challenges within the family.
Adjustment difficulties	e.g. difficulty adapting to University; difficulty adjusting to clinical environment; international student or cultural challenges;
Social difficulties	e.g. interpersonal difficulties within student cohort; feeling of isolation or not fitting in
Financial concerns	e.g. couch surfing, sleeping in car etc.
Lifestyle problems	e.g. external demands on time (elite athlete); outside work commitments; transport difficulties; use/misuse of alcohol or drugs; over pre-occupation with hobbies such as online gaming or addictive activities.
Learning difficulties	e.g. struggling with academic workload; difficulty with language or study techniques; difficulty with academic teaching staff; difficulty with course requirements
Course challenges	e.g. confused about placements or course expectations; difficulty with mandatory requirements.
Health concern	e.g. acute illness; previously undisclosed chronic illness/disability; recent trauma; stress/distress related to bullying/harassment/intimidation

How is the Seriousness of a FfP concern defined?

This table provides you with a guide to how the Faculty may view whether a concern is considered Minor, Moderate or Serious.

MINOR	MODERATE	SERIOUS
A single FfP concern Explanation/apology provided	Repetitive/recurrent episodes of a single FfP	Illegal and/or Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Responsive to support &/or remediation.	concern in spite of support &/or remediation, and or multiple episodes of different concerns	(AHPRA) reportable behaviour
No harm to peers, teachers or patients	Behaviour that could potentially cause harm to peers, teachers or patients	Safety concerns for student, staff, peers or patients and/or FfP concern results in removal from placement
Student accepts and is responsive to feedback about FfP concern	Student lacks insight/awareness about the FfP concern and is resistant to feedback	FfP concern non - responsive to feedback and support/review and remediation
Student accepts responsibility Addresses FfP concern	Student does not accept responsibility for the FfP concern or is unwilling to be accountable.	Student does not demonstrate remorse or accept responsibility/accountability for the FfP concern
FfP concern(s) that resolves with support &/or remediation	Multiple educators reporting a single concern or persistent/recurrent FfP concern(s) following remediation.	Student has attended 1,2 or 3 review and remediation meetings without: - Complying with the recommendations Meeting behavioural change targets within acceptable time
Single/ sudden/ unexpected health issue affecting studies. Student is well enough to address the concern	Ongoing concerns re student's health &/or wellbeing that intermittently appears to affect studies	Significant health issues impacting on academic studies or course requirements

What type of behaviour may be regarded as a professional behaviour lapse?

Professional behaviour/attitudes that may trigger a Fitness for Practice (FfP) concern are grouped into six categories. While each situation is considered individually, some behaviours detailed here, while they are Professional behaviour lapses, are more appropriately managed under Discipline or Misconduct University policies and regulations. These are reviewed on a case by case basis.

Behaviour Category	Example of Behaviour
Failure to Engage	Absent or late for assigned activities; not meeting deadlines; poor initiative; general disorganisation; cutting corners; poor teamwork; language difficulties; poor participation;
Dishonest behaviours	Lying; cheating; data fabrication; data falsification; misrepresentation; acting without consent; not obeying rules & regulations; denying responsibility;
Disrespectful behaviour	Poor verbal/nonverbal communication; inappropriate use of social media; inappropriate clothing; disruptive behaviour in teaching sessions; privacy & confidentiality violations; bullying; harassment; discrimination; sexual harassment;
Poor self awareness	Avoiding feedback; not accepting feedback; not sensitive to another's needs; blaming external factors rather than own inadequacies; resisting change; not aware of own limitations; lacking insight into own behaviour; not demonstrating accountability;
Delayed professional identity	Not responsive or accepting of professional standards; poor formation understanding of patient/client need
Unethical behaviour	Not demonstrating integrity, role virtues etc

Process and Impact/Outcome of a ProFESS meeting

Type of ProFESS meeting	Process of meeting	Potential Impact/Outcome(s)
Prevention & Education meeting. (Informal)	<p>Student initiated.</p> <p>Specific meeting time organised. Length of meeting: 15 -20 mins. Student concern discussed. Student safety/welfare discussed. Follow up date agreed on (if needed). Summary of meeting provided. Meeting logged for audit purposes only.</p>	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Increase student wellbeing/performance. Increase student confidence in support systems. Empower students to manage problems. Enhance understanding of the importance and validity of managing personal needs.</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>Student concern addressed or triaged. Concern resolves AND/OR followed up. Potential to include process for professional development purposes.</p>
Support meeting. (Informal)	<p>Staff initiated.</p> <p>Student <i>invited</i> to attend. Specific meeting time organised. Length of meeting: 20-30 mins. Concern discussed & student perspective encouraged. Relationship of concern to Fitness for Practice explained. Student safety/welfare discussed. Summary of meeting provided. Meeting logged for audit purposes & to ensure appropriate follow up.</p>	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Increase understanding of the importance of support in professional development. Increase awareness of fitness for practice concerns and professional standards Assists behaviour change in line with Fitness for Practice requirements. Early identification to prevent escalation.</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>Concern followed up and resolves OR is escalated. Increased staff understanding of student need and/or behaviour. Concern triaged to appropriate support or services. Concern may require notification to Unit/Course coordinator, especially if safety/welfare concerns. Potential for student to include process for professional development (PD) purposes. Action plan may be provided to assist student with managing a concern</p>
Review & Remediation meeting (Formal)	<p>Staff initiated.</p> <p>Student <i>requested</i> to attend. One-week notification of meeting. Support person if required. Length of meeting: 45-60 mins. Concern investigated and discussed Relationship of concern to Fitness for Practice explained. Remediation strategies/program discussed. Action plan developed. Meeting is logged in Fitness for Practice database</p>	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Improve understanding of Fitness for Practice expectations. Improve management of student health and wellbeing Document that behavioural change occurs. Effective remediation to reduce need for escalation Effective remediation designed to improve graduate outcomes.</p> <p><u>Outcome</u></p> <p>Successful remediation completed. Concern followed up and resolves OR is escalated. Process included for student PD purposes. Meeting notes may be requested in course progression decisions.</p>

<p>Adjudication meeting (Formal) Academic Progress Committee (Fitness for Practice) hearing</p>	<p>Staff initiated Referrals where a compulsory course requirement is not met. https://www.monash.edu/students/academic-progress/receiving-notice/course-requirements Triggered at the end of semester 1 or 2 or at other times as needed, for serious cases. Student is required to attend. 10 working days notification of meeting. Support person if required. Concern investigated and discussed with Academic Progress Committee (Fitness for Practice) hearing Outcome decision provided at time of meeting. Meeting is logged in Fitness for Practice database and academic progress register</p>	<p><u>Impact</u> Improve student understanding of professional behaviour expectations. Potential course progression outcomes for student. Parallel focus on student wellbeing. Student, staff, society safety preserved. Effective adjudication improves graduate outcomes. <u>Outcome</u> Continue enrolment with enrolment conditions Continue enrolment without enrolment conditions Exclusion from the course. Committee may refer to University Discipline. (refer to the Fitness for Practice business process).</p>
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