



## FITNESS TO PRACTICE PROCEDURE

Where a trainee exhibits some cause for concern (late submission of work; unsatisfactory completion of work, poor attendance, unprofessional conduct; poor behaviour management skills; lack of progression; lack of subject knowledge, for example, but not exclusive), the appropriate tutors and mentors and the Director of SCITT will be notified. The following procedure will apply:

1. A Progress Alert will be issued and a meeting will be held between the trainee and the School Mentor(s). A Progress Support form will be discussed and issued at that meeting. It will have clear targets which must be achievable within a whole working week. The aim of this meeting is to support the trainee and enable him/her to make rapid and sustained improvement. The targets are reviewed after a week and if the trainee has met the targets, the Progress Alert is terminated.
2. If the targets are not met, a Preliminary Discussion will be held between the trainee and appropriate staff. This will include the Lead Subject Tutor, the School Mentor(s) and the Director of SCITT. The aim of this meeting is to support the trainee and enable progression through the programme. A Cause for Concern(CFC) form will be completed at the meeting. This will clearly detail targets that need to be met. A maximum 3 week time frame will be set, in which time targets should be able to be met. A date will be set for the review meeting.
3. A Review Meeting will be held 3 weeks after the Preliminary Discussion. If the trainee is seen to be progressing towards the Targets set, the cause for concern will cease. If trainee is deemed to have made little or no progression in relation to the Targets set, then a Reviewed Cause for Concern will be set. This cause for concern will have further clear Targets set and will list consequences of failure to meet these targets. These consequences may be:
  - a. Mediation
  - b. Application of the SCITT's Fitness to Study Policy and/or the Fitness to Practice Procedure
  - c. Enforced suspension from the programme, for a period of time negotiated between the trainee and the Director of SCITT. A date, no longer than 3 weeks later, will be set for a further meeting.
4. A Final Review Meeting will be held 3 weeks after the review meeting. If the trainee is seen to have made progress towards meeting the Targets set, the Cause for Concern will cease. If the trainee has made little or no progression in relation to the Targets set, then one of the possible consequences will come in to force. This option will be decided by the SCITT and the School using their professional judgement. The mediation and the Fitness to Study/Fitness to Practice options will follow SCITT Policy as shown above. The period of suspension will be negotiated between the trainee and the Director of SCITT. During the period of suspension the trainee must prove:
  - a. how they intend to rectify the issues raised in the Cause for Concern;
  - b. that they have the capacity to achieve their intention.



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Trainees must submit their account to the Director of SCITT one week prior to the next meeting. Trainees may spend some time in a school during this suspended period of time, for observation purposes. This time would need to be organised by the trainee.

After the negotiated time has elapsed:

5. A Partnership Meeting will be convened. At this meeting the trainee will meet with the Director of SCITT and the Professional Mentor from school. One week prior to this meeting the trainee will have submitted a reflective account on how Targets will be achieved and any other evidence to show that they have the ability to achieve on the programme. The account should be based on the Targets set in the cause for concerns, and on advice given from Mentors and Tutors. It may also contain any other evidence that the trainee wishes to include. The SCITT will have reviewed this account and will either accept the trainee back on to the programme or fail the trainee. The SCITT's decision will be final as it is an academic Judgement. If a trainee is failed at this point, they will be terminated from the Programme.
6. Where a trainee is accepted back on to the programme, the trainee will have a further review period of two weeks in school. A Cause for Concern form will be issued by the Partnership with clear Targets based on the previous concerns raised and the trainee's ideas for completion, as expressed in their reflective account. This Cause for Concern will be reviewed by the Director of SCITT after two weeks. If Targets are being successfully met, the Cause for Concern will cease. If Targets are not met, the trainee will be deemed to have failed and will be terminated from the programme. The academic judgement of the SCITT is final.

A Cause for Concern can be initiated by either the Lead Subject Tutor or by a mentor in school. At this stage the Director of SCITT must be informed and s/he must be present at the Preliminary Discussion meeting.

### **Interruption of Studies and Withdrawal from the programme**

A trainee wishing to interrupt his/her programme of study temporarily, for example because of personal, medical or financial difficulties, should first discuss the matter with their mentors in school and or the Director of SCITT.

Three reasons are usually cited for interruption of studies:

- Ill Health
- Personal difficulty not foreseen prior to enrolment (e.g. family bereavement, family illness or need to take care of a dependent)
- Difficulty in making progress as a teacher



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Requests for medical interruption of studies are treated sympathetically. Requests for interruption of studies are first agreed verbally between the Director of SCITT and the trainee. The process is only formalised when the request is received in writing. Requests for interruption of studies on medical grounds should be backed by evidence from a certified medical practitioner.

Trainees suffering from medical difficulties will be able to re-enter the programme when they have become well and providing the period of time left to complete the programme is sufficient. All interruptions of studies on medical grounds will be considered on evidence of having recovered from illness. Some trainees may be asked to go through a further fitness to teach process through the occupational health service. Interruption of studies is not considered an appropriate course of action for absence due to ordinary illness such as flu, colds or viruses.

Bursary payments will cease from the date of the interruption of studies and resume on re-entry to the programme.

Requests for an interruption of studies for reasons other than medical must be made on a Request for interruption of studies form – these are available from the Director of SCITT.

Requests for interruption of studies due to failure to make progress on the programme will usually be declined, unless the trainee is able to prove that time away from the programme would make a significant difference to their future performance.

Interruption of studies will normally be granted for a defined period not exceeding twelve months.

### **Withdrawal from the programme**

Trainees may withdraw from the programme at any point, preferably after discussion with the Director of SCITT. Reasons for withdrawal are sought and recorded by the SCITT office. There are no financial penalties for withdrawing. The bursary will cease on the date of the withdrawal and trainees will not be required to repay any part of the bursary. Fees will be charged on a termly basis so if trainees withdraw in Term One, they will be eligible for one third of the fees, two thirds of the fees in Term Two and the full fees in Term Three. If School Direct Salaried trainees withdraw, their salary payments will cease the month in which they withdraw.

Any trainees finding themselves in this position can seek further details from the SCITT Administrator.

Trainees may choose to withdraw if they are demonstrating difficulties in progressing (see Cause for Concern process). Reasons where withdrawal may form part of the discussions between programme tutors, mentors and trainees include:



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- Inadequate lesson observations
- Reports of inadequate progress, for example, Review Statement 1 or Review Statement 2
- Reports about unsatisfactory professional conduct

Evidence of inadequate progress will be reported on a CFC form. Trainees will be required to discuss the ways to remedy the issues raised. If no progress is shown after the CFC expires, trainees may choose to withdraw rather than fail the course. All trainees intending to withdraw from the programme are required to complete the Withdrawal Form. This is available from the SCITT office. Trainees must also complete a PGCE withdrawal form available from Registry at the University of Winchester.

Please ensure that you return all resources borrowed from your schools. Your SCITT record will then show you as 'withdrawn' from the course. Your bursary payments will automatically be stopped.

### **Termination Proceedings from the SCITT perspective**

This procedure will be instigated only when a trainee's behaviour and/or performance is considered to be unprofessional, damaging or dangerous to pupils, other trainees or school staff, or is considered to be unethical or creates unacceptable risk for themselves or others or as described above.