



## CTT

### FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY & PROCEDURE

2021/2022

<i>At the time of publishing the following roles were held:</i>	
SCITT LEAD	<b>MRS. W. KENDALL</b>
CHAIR OF THE CTT BOARD	<b>MRS. V. HEPBURN-FISH</b>

Approved by <sup>1</sup>	
Name:	Mrs. V. Hepburn-Fish
Position:	Chair of the Board of Directors of CTT
Signed:	<i>V. Hepburn-Fish</i>
Name:	Mrs. W. Kendall
Position:	SCITT Lead
Signed:	<i>Wendy Kendall</i>
Date:	July 2021
Review date <sup>2</sup> :	July 2022

## **1. What is fitness to study?**

Fitness to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a trainee, in relation to life generally at CTT. It does not just relate to academic studies; it also relates to the ability to live independently and safely whilst at CTT.

CTT is committed to supporting trainee wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to student learning and academic achievement.

## **2. The purpose and scope of this policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a suitable and co-ordinated response by academic and professional support staff in circumstances where:

- the situation is deemed to be urgent; and
- other internal procedures are not appropriate; and
- all other avenues have been exhausted.

This policy does not relate to fitness to practice – please see Fitness to Practice Policy

## **3. When to use this policy**

This policy should be used when a trainee's fitness to study is a cause for concern and all other procedures or options have been considered or exhausted. It is to be used as a last resort. A student's fitness to study may be a cause for concern as a result of a wide range of circumstances, including (but not restricted to) the following:

- Behaviour which would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty.
- A trainee's health difficulties are adversely affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others.
- A trainee's academic performance is unsatisfactory and may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.
- A trainee's behaviour where they live is adversely affecting the student and the people around them and calls into question the student's ability to live independently in residences or in the community.

#### **4. Informal action**

It is expected that schools, the SCITT Lead and support staff will approach the trainee once concerns regarding fitness to study have been raised and attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student. The trainee should be encouraged to use one or more of the support services offered by CTT.

Good communication between centre and school staff may be key to achieving informal resolution of concerns regarding fitness to study.

Specific academic arrangements should be considered by CTT and schools and action plans agreed with the student, which are regularly reviewed.

The majority of cases can be resolved this way.

#### **5. Procedure**

The Fitness to Study policy may be invoked when all informal avenues have been unsuccessful, any other procedures have been considered and deemed to be inappropriate, the trainee may not be engaging, and action plans have not been met.

##### **5.1. Stage 1 – Case Review**

The purpose of the stage 1 Case Review is to ensure early intervention and that positive, informal action is taken with the student's co-operation and involvement.

A meeting of a Case Review Panel can be convened by the SCITT Lead or Headteacher or their nominee, who will act as clerk to the Panel, and will usually be made up of the following:

- The SCITT Lead, Headteacher (or nominee), Leadership and Management Committee member or Chair of the Board of CTT who has not convened the Case Review. The Chair of the Board of CTT will usually Chair the Panel.
- An academic representative from the trainee's school, usually the Support Mentor.
- The Student Rep who is supporting the student.

Before the Case Review Panel meeting medical assessment may be sought, usually from the trainee's GP or medical practitioner. The trainee will be able to submit documents for the Panel to consider and will be given a copy of any documents seen by the Panel. The trainee may request to attend all or part of the Case Review Panel meeting. The Chair will decide whether the student should attend. If the trainee does attend, they will have the right to bring a friend or representative to the meeting.

A letter will be sent to the trainee after the meeting setting out any decision made and the reasons for the decision.

The Panel will order its proceedings as it sees fit and may call witnesses if necessary.

The outcome agreed by the Panel will normally be an outcome not already attempted as part of the informal action taken by CTT or the school. The outcomes available to the Panel are:

- No further action required
- To monitor the trainee formally for a specific period of time. An action plan will be agreed with the trainee detailing any steps the trainee will need to take and the support to be provided to the trainee. This action plan will normally detail different actions to any plan previously agreed as part of the informal action taken by CTT or the school. Regular review meetings will be arranged with the trainee and a nominated member of staff. The trainee should be made aware of what will happen if the action plan is breached, which will normally involve their case moving to stage 2.
- To recommend a specific academic arrangement be put in place which may include a suspension of studies. Such recommendations should be agreed by the trainee and by the trainee's school where appropriate (normally the representatives on the Panel). If the trainee does not agree, the case will move on to stage 2.
- To refer the case to a Fitness to Study Panel, under stage 2 of this procedure. This will be appropriate in serious cases, for example where all previous attempts to support the trainee have been unsuccessful, where the trainee has little insight regarding their fitness to study or where there is evidence of a serious risk to the health and safety of the trainee or others at CTT. This course of action would be used when it is considered that suspension, or requirement to withdraw may be the appropriate course of action or if the trainee has not agreed to a recommendation or action plan made under stage 1.

## **5.2. Stage 2 – Fitness to Study Panel**

This stage will only be invoked in the following circumstances:

- Following an emergency suspension under section 6 of this policy; or
- following a referral from a Case Review Panel; or
- if the trainee does not agree or is not engaging with a recommendation of a Case Review Panel; or
- if in the opinion of the SCITT Lead, External Mentor and Chair of the Board of CTT that the case is sufficiently serious and urgent to warrant an immediate referral without consideration of stage 1.

The SCITT Lead (or their nominee) will convene a Fitness to Study Panel to consider the case

The Members of the Panel will usually be:

- The SCITT Lead of CTT.
- The Chair of the Board of CTT who will act as Chair
- An academic representative of the student's school (usually the Headteacher or Support/Lead Mentor)

- The trainee Rep who has not been involved in supporting the Trainee
- A member of the Leadership and Management Committee.

The trainee Rep who has been supporting the student may be invited to attend the meeting to give information but will not be part of the decision-making process.

As with the Case Review Panel the trainee will have the opportunity to submit documents for the Panel to consider and will be sent a copy of any documents seen by the Panel.

The trainee may request to attend all or part of the Panel meeting. The Chair will decide whether a trainee should attend, which may not be appropriate in all cases.

The Panel may order the proceedings at its discretion and may call witnesses if required. The Panel may request further medical evidence. If a Panel is convened following an emergency suspension under section 6, medical evidence will be required regarding the trainee's fitness to study before the Panel meets.

Possible outcomes of the meeting include, but are not limited to: -

- A short-term suspension to allow the trainee to be assessed by a medical professional, access support services. The suspension will be reviewed within four weeks as set out below in relation to emergency suspension.
- Suspension with conditions. A trainee who is suspended from CTT may be prohibited from participating in CTT's activities and may also be prohibited from entering CTT premises or have restricted rights to enter the premises. The terms of the suspension will be notified to the trainee in writing, depending on the circumstances of the case. The decision to suspend a trainee shall be reviewed as necessary by the Panel.
- Requirement to withdraw - if the Panel concludes, taking into account the individual circumstances of the case and any supporting medical evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of the trainee re-engaging with their programme, the trainee may be required to withdraw. This outcome should only be considered in the most serious cases.
- Any other action considered to be appropriate and proportionate.

The Chair has the power to make the final decision if the Panel is unable to make a unanimous decision. The decision will be detailed in a letter and conveyed, in person wherever possible, to the trainee.

## **6. Emergency Suspension**

If it is considered that the risk to the trainee, School or CTT is very high and an immediate emergency suspension is the most appropriate course of action. Any trainee who has been detained under the Mental Health Act will also be referred for an immediate emergency suspension.

The SCITT Lead may impose an emergency suspension with immediate effect pending the invoking of this policy. A trainee who is subject to an emergency suspension order is prohibited from entering CTT premises and from participating in CTT activities. The emergency suspension may, exceptionally, be subject to qualification, such as the permission to take an examination or to enter CTT premises to attend a meeting with a support service. The terms of the suspension will be individual to each case and will be notified to the trainee in writing. The decision will be conveyed to the trainee, in person wherever possible, by the SCITT Lead. A trainee will be marked as 'suspended' on their student record during the period of suspension so that accommodation and tuition fees do not continue to accrue.

The decision to suspend may be reviewed after four weeks at the request of the trainee. The review may include a recommendation that a Fitness to Study Panel be convened to consider the case.

A stage 2 Fitness to Study Panel will be convened to consider the return to study of any trainee suspended under this section.

## **7. Return to study**

The Case Review Panel or Fitness to Study Panel that made the recommendation regarding a suspension, or as many members of the original Panel as possible, will be reconvened to consider whether the trainee is fit to return to study.

Further medical evidence will be requested from the trainee regarding their ability to fully engage with their studies, meet the requirements of the programme and live independently in residences or in the community. A trainee will only be permitted to return if, after receiving the medical evidence, the Panel is satisfied that the individual is fit to study.

If a trainee agreed to suspend studies under stage 1, the Case Review Panel that originally considered the matter can make the decision regarding a return to studies without referral to a Fitness to Study Panel if it is satisfied that the trainee is fit to return.

If the decision to suspend was made under stage 2 by a Fitness to Study Panel, the Panel should reconvene to consider and determine whether the trainee is fit to return to study.

Where a trainee returns to study after an emergency suspension under this policy a Fitness to Study Panel will be convened under stage 2 to consider whether the trainee is fit to return and if so to consider any support that the trainee may require to support a return to studies, such as regular review meetings or a return to study action plan. The general expectation is that the trainee will take personal responsibility for fully engaging with this support.

## **8. Right of appeal**

The trainee may appeal against a suspension or requirement to withdraw. A letter setting out the grounds of appeal should be addressed to the Chair of the Board of CTT to be received within 21 days of the date on which the order for suspension or the requirement to withdraw was made.

The appeal will be heard by a committee of the Board of SCITT Leads of CTT. The membership and procedure of an appeal committee will be the same as that set out under the trainee Complaints Procedure.

