

Outreach Rescue Medic Skills FITNESS FOR PRACTICE POLICY

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- Applicants will be open and honest in relation to health, disability and/or any criminal convictions, cautions, pending charges or other relevant information, at the time of applying to the course;
- When undertaking the course students will be open and honest in relation to any health, disability and/or any criminal convictions, cautions, pending charges or other relevant information that arise during their course;
- Students will abide by all requirements for professional conduct and behaviour as defined by ORMS and the associated professional, statutory and/or regulatory body;
- Students studying RGU programmes will adhere to the Robert Gordon University Regulations with respect to student conduct: A3 Section 1 4.2 and 4.3 (<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/file/a3-section-1-academic-appeals-appeals-and-progression-procedure-2015/16-pdf-67kb>)

1.5 Remit of the Fitness for Practice Committee

ORMS will establish a Fitness to Practice Committee to establish the facts surrounding any Fitness to Practice issue. At least one member of the Committee will be a Paramedic currently registered with HCPC

1.5.1 BSc Paramedic Programme

In the first instance of any Fitness for Practice issues arising on an RGU programme, ORMS will undertake information gathering without prejudice to assist RGU in arriving at an appropriate decision. This information will be forwarded to the head of the appropriate faculty for further action.

In the event of proceedings being necessary, the RGU School of Nursing and Midwifery Fitness for Practice Committee (refer to RGU FFP Policy) has been approved by School Academic Board as having the lead responsibility for assuring Fitness for Practice of applicants and students. The remit of the committee is to:

- 1) Ensure the Policy and associated procedures are explicit, reviewed annually and developed as required.
- 2) Ensure that staff within the School of Nursing and Midwifery adheres to the Equality Act, Rehabilitation of Offender's Act, Data Protection, and Nursing and Midwifery Directives in relation to good health and good character.
- 3) Consider and make decisions in individual cases where there are concerns about the health of an applicant and/or the implementation of reasonable adjustments for a disabled applicant.
- 4) Consider and make decisions in individual cases where there are concerns about the character suitability of an applicant to enter a course or programme.
- 5) Consider and make recommendations to the Course/Programme Leader in individual cases where there are concerns about the health of a student and/or the implementation of reasonable adjustments for a disabled student.
- 6) Consider and make recommendations to the Course/Programme Leader in individual cases where a student has been withdrawn from a practice area following concern in relation to patient safety/care.
- 7) Consider and make recommendations to the Course/Programme Leader or Lead Midwife for Education in individual cases where there is a concern about signing the declaration of good health and good character at the point of applying for entry to the NMC register.
- 8) Consult with the Faculty of Health and Social Care Professional Suitability Advisory Group in individual cases where there is a concern about health or character suitability of an applicant or student who is registered with the Health Professions Council.

- 9) Consult with the University Legal Adviser in complex individual situations, for example when a student is also an employee within a health care role.
- 10) In alignment with Robert Gordon University Regulations, consider and make recommendations to the Head of School or nominated person where there is an allegation of student misconduct (Appendix 2).
- 11) Ensure annual monitoring of good health and good character of students occurs within a pre-registration programme.
- 12) Ensure a robust and consistent approach to the provision of employment references is in place.
- 13) Advise Course/Programme Management Teams and the School Academic Board of trends that could have an impact on the planning and delivery of the curriculum.
- 14) Liaise with the Faculty of Health and Social Care Professional Suitability Advisory Group and share best practice across the Schools.

1.5.2 Other ORMS programmes

ORMS' Fitness for Practice Committee is responsible for all other issues of students' fitness for practice on other programmes. At least one member of the Committee will be a Paramedic currently registered with HCPC. The committee consists of;

- ORMS Director
- Administration Manager
- ORMS tutor
- Investigating officer

The remit of the committee is to;

- 1) Ensure the Policy and associated procedures are understood and made available to students and staff.
- 2) Ensure that ORMS staff adhere to the Equality Act, Rehabilitation of Offender's Act, Data Protection, and HCPC standards in relation to good health and good character.
- 3) Consider and make decisions in individual cases where there are concerns about the health of an applicant and/or the implementation of reasonable adjustments for a disabled applicant.
- 4) Consider and make decisions in individual cases where there are concerns about the character suitability of an applicant to enter a course or programme.
- 5) Consider and make recommendations to the Course/Programme Leader in individual cases where there are concerns about the health of a student and/or the implementation of reasonable adjustments for a disabled student.
- 6) Consider and make recommendations to the Course/Programme Leader in individual cases where a student has been withdrawn from a practice area following concern in relation to patient safety/care.
- 7) Consult with the Course/Programme Leader in individual cases where there is a concern about health or character suitability of an applicant or student who is registered with the HCPC.
- 9) Consult with the ORMS Legal Advisor in complex individual situations, for example when a student is also an employee within a health care role.
- 10) Consider and make recommendations to the Education Director where there is an allegation of student misconduct.

Section 2: Health and Disability

2.1 Assessment of health conditions and/or disabilities

Opportunities for declaring a health condition and /or disability are available within the ORMS, UCAS and RGU course application forms. Applicants who are offered a conditional place on any programme that has a direct healthcare component are also required to provide evidence of compliance with ORMS occupational health requirements (appendix 2) Additionally personal tutors, academic advisers and Practice Placement Educators associated with ORMS provide a supportive environment to enable students to share health or disability concerns, and all students are provided with information on the Disability and Dyslexia Service during Induction and within the Student Handbook.

Many people with a health condition and/or disability do not require any adjustments to support their learning however where it applies the assessment will focus upon what reasonable adjustments can be made to support the applicant or student to achieve entry to or, for students who are already HCPC registrants, maintenance on the HCPC register.

For ORMS' other programmes, ORMS will liaise with the student and their employer/sponsoring organisation regarding declarations of health conditions or disabilities to ensure student safety, confidentiality and fitness to practice appropriate to the needs of the programme concerned.

2.2 Reasonable adjustments

All staff within ORMS have a responsibility to ensure that they fulfill their duty to make anticipatory adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices and promote positive attitudes towards applicants and students with a disability. In addition to anticipatory adjustments applicants may require individual reasonable adjustments to the interview and selection process, and students may also require individual reasonable adjustments to the academic and/or practice based learning environment.

The HCPC state that their concern when considering reasonable adjustments is “whether, with these adjustments in place, the applicant would meet our standards of proficiency at the end of the programme.”

The HCPC also list these factors to take into when determining if an adjustment is reasonable:

- how effective the adjustment would be in avoiding the disadvantage the disabled student would otherwise experience;
- how possible the adjustment is;
- the cost of the adjustment;
- the institution's size and resources; and
- the availability of any sources of financial support.

ORMS would also consider;

- Health and safety of the individual, patients and clients, fellow students, placement team members.

2.3 Process following assessment of health and /or disability that requires individual reasonable adjustments

Information about health and/or a disability is regarded as confidential and as such ORMS respects the sensitive nature of the information. Agreement with, and consent from the student will be sought on how his/her requirements will be communicated to academic staff, mentors and practice staff.

2.4 Referral to the Fitness for Practice Committee

The following situations will be referred to the Fitness for Practice Committee:

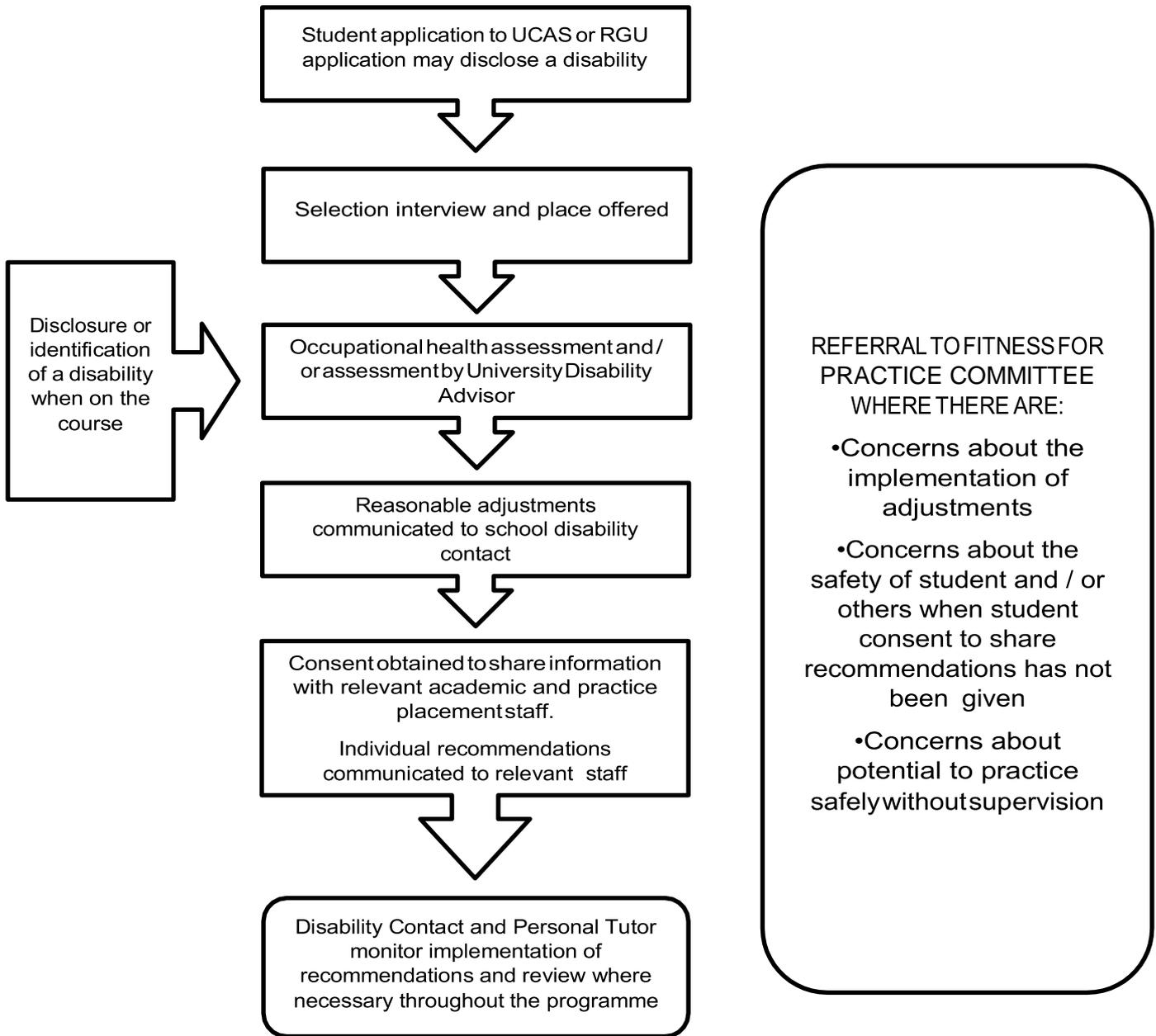
- Where there are professional concerns about the implementation of adjustments;
- Where there are professional concerns that a lack of consent to communicate reasonable adjustments to practice staff could compromise the safety of the student, patients/clients and/or practice staff;
- Where there are professional concerns that an applicant or student's health or disability is likely to compromise, or has compromised his/her ability to meet the required competence standards including practicing safely without direct supervision at the point of entry to the nursing or midwifery register.

The following flowcharts provide an outline of the process to be followed and the personnel involved:

2.5 Student discloses a disability on application

When an applicant discloses that they have a disability the following flowchart is used.

Supporting a Student with a Disability



Section 3: Evidence of Good character

3.1 Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)

The PVG Scheme is established by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and ensures that those who have regular contact with vulnerable groups (Children or Protected Adults) do not have a history of inappropriate behaviour.

Applicants are made aware through marketing literature and the School website that a PVG Scheme Record is required, and that in line with the Rehabilitation of Offender's Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exemptions) (Scotland) Order 2003, applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent'.

All applicants who accept a place on an ORMS course that involves placement in a clinical practice area will undergo a criminal record check through the PVG scheme. Once applicants join the PVG scheme their membership records will be automatically updated if any new vetting information arises. This criminal record check must be completed prior to commencing placement in a clinical practice area.

Vetting information is conviction information retrieved from the criminal justice systems and non-conviction information held by the police that are considered relevant.

European and overseas clearance is required from applicants who have stayed out with the UK for 13 weeks duration or longer. It is the applicants' responsibility to provide evidence of good character from another country.

All students who undertake a 6 month or longer break from a course that involves placement within a clinical area will undergo a criminal record check through the PVG scheme record update prior to re-entering the programme.

3.2 Declaration of good health and good character

Students undertaking a pre-registration Paramedic course are required to declare their good health and good character on an annual basis. Students are also informed, within the Student Handbook and verbally by Course Leaders and Personal Tutors, that it is their responsibility to inform the personal tutor immediately if they have a charge, conviction or caution during the course.

Individual situations which lead to the involvement of police or criminal proceedings, or call into question good character may effect progression on the programme and these situations will be considered in accordance with ORMS regulations.

3.3 Referral to the Fitness for Practice Committee:

The following list is not exhaustive however indicates situations that will be referred to the Fitness for Practice Committee:

- Traffic offences that have involved substance abuse or loss of human life,
- Offences that are punished by fines, community service, or a term in prison,
- Vetting information recorded by the Police,
- Information that the individual is under consideration for listing,
- Failure to disclose information or lack of openness and/or non-truth telling¹.
- When advice from the Fitness for Practice Committee is required.

The Fitness for Practice committee will review the information and undertake a risk assessment. Offences which involve physical, mental and/or sexual harm to another person are not considered by ORMS as ever being eligible for Paramedic education.

¹ for an applicant, failure to reveal information could lead to withdrawal of an offer of a place on the course.

3.4 Process following disclosure of information in relation to a conviction, caution, pending charges or other relevant information

In line with Part V of the Police Act (1997) ORMS complies fully with the Code of Practice for the correct handling, holding and destruction of Disclosure Scotland information.

On the disclosure of information, the Admissions Adviser will ask applicant to provide in writing:

- Details of the offence or other relevant information
- The name of a responsible independent person for a personal reference

The information will be sent to a member of the Admissions Team.

- Applicant invited to interview (face to face or telephone) with two members of FFP committee
- Applicant may be accompanied by one other person

FFP committee reviews information and undertake risk assessment based on HCPC guidance

HCPC Guidance

- Whether the information was disclosed
- Explanation for non-disclosure (where relevant)
- Degree of risk posed to patients and service users
- Length of time since the offence
- Whether the applicant has a habit of re-offending
- How the applicants situation has changed since the offence
- Circumstances surrounding the offence
- Evidence submitted by applicant or referees of good character

If the outcome is accepted, the application to the course continues to be processed

If the outcome is not acceptable, application to the course is rejected

The Applicant will be informed that if they wish to appeal, to write to the Principal of the University within 20 working days.

3.5 Process for reviewing information of a conviction, caution, pending charges or other relevant information obtained during the admissions process

- **Student invited to meet with the FFP committee**
- **Student may be accompanied by one other person**
- **If the student is on practice placement, the student will be placed on authorised absence**

FFP Committee reviews information and undertake risk assessment based on NMC guidance

- Whether the information was disclosed
- Explanation for non-disclosure (where relevant)
- Degree of risk posed to patients and service users
- Nature of the concern and any documentary evidence
- Any mitigating circumstances in relation to the conduct
- Students attitude towards the conduct
- Evidence submitted by student or referees of good character
- Personal tutor progress report

Outcome acceptable student continues on the course

Outcome not acceptable advise Head of School or nominated person in alignment with Robert Gordon University Regulations, Section A3 with respect to student non-academic misconduct

Appendix 1 A3 Section 2: RGU Student Misconduct Procedure

6.2 Non-Academic Misconduct

6.2.1 An allegation of *non-academic misconduct* concerning a student's conduct as an enrolled student of the University, may refer to any actions or activities engaged in, or services and facilities enjoyed, as a student of the University, or in the vicinity of any premises owned, leased or managed by the University. *Non-academic misconduct* may involve conduct relating to (though not limited to) the following:

- (i) Conduct involving breaches of stated instructions or regulations issued by the University, associated professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies, or by authorised members of the University, that prejudice the orderly working of the University and/or contravene the requirements of associated professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies.
- (ii) Conduct involving harmful or inappropriate acts that may require referral as defined by the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/pvg_index.html). These are acts that have:
 - (a) harmed a child or protected adult;
 - (b) placed a child or protected adult at risk of harm;
 - (c) engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography;
 - (d) engaged in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child or protected adult;
 - (e) given inappropriate medical treatment to a child or protected adult.
- (iii) Conduct that brings or could bring, the reputation of the University, or associated professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies, into disrepute.
- (iv) Conduct including (though not limited to):
 - (a) assault of or threatening behaviour towards any student(s) or member(s) of staff of the University;
 - (b) unauthorised damage to the property of the University, student(s) or member(s) of staff of the University;
 - (c) harassment, bullying and/or discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexuality, disability, age, race or religion;
 - (d) misappropriation or misuse of University funds or assets;
 - (e) unauthorised occupation of University land or premises;
 - (f) behaviour which interferes with the legitimate freedom of speech, ideas, actions or enquiry of a student(s) or member(s) of staff or which disrupts or interferes with University processes or procedures;
 - (g) attempts to subvert University processes or procedures by means of false claims or fraudulent documents;
 - (h) actions in contravention of applicable legislation;
 - (i) unauthorised appropriation and/or dissemination of offensive materials and publications, whether in printed or electronic format.
- (v) Conduct that endangers the safety or well-being of others.

6.2.2 Any student who assists a fellow student, or student(s), to commit misconduct shall be deemed to have committed misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the *Student Misconduct Procedure*.

Appendix 2 – Occupational Health Approval of Fitness to Practice

On receiving a conditional offer to study on any ORMS programme that requires placement within a healthcare setting or would result in qualification that places the individual into a healthcare setting, applicants must provide evidence of their compliance with the ORMS health requirements ensuring they are fit for practice.

All individuals must comply with the ORMS Occupational Health (OH) Compliance and Monitoring process.

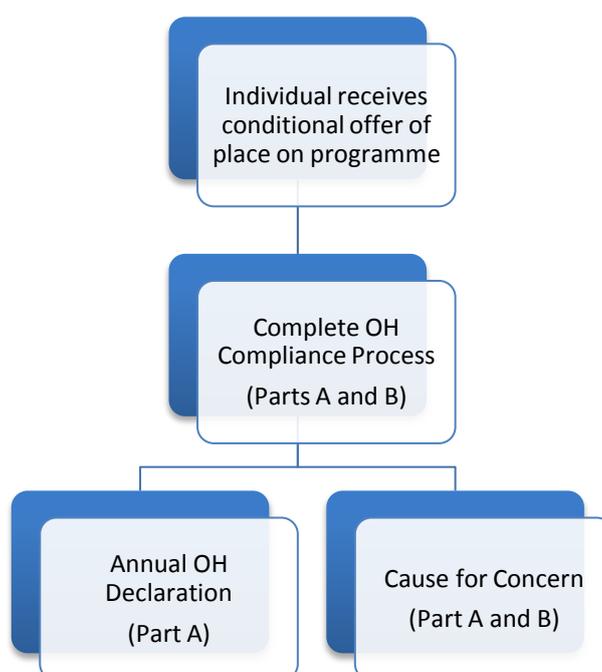
On receiving a Conditional offer of a space on the programme the individual must complete Parts A and B of the Process:

- Part A = Self Declaration of Fitness for Practice (Health)
- Part B = GP / OH Verification

After completion and acceptance onto the programme the individual must then confirm that they continue to meet the OH requirements of the programme by completing Part A on an annual basis.

In the event of any Cause for Concern (e.g. needlestick) then the individual is required to complete parts A and B again.

Link to ORMS Occupation Health Compliance and Monitoring Form
<https://medicskills.wufoo.com/forms/s11t0g791voh34v/>



Appendix 3 RGU Annual Declaration of Good Health and Good Character

STUDENT NAME	
MATRICULATION NUMBER	
<p>As a developing health care professional you must be ready to engage with the concept of professional regulation. The issue of fitness for practise is one which you are required to understand and embrace. Your health status and your standard of conduct within and out with your programme are of key concern in ensuring you meet the requirements for entry to the professional register. The Health Care Professions Council requires that an annual declaration must be made by students that confirms their good health and good character or identifies areas that need to be addressed</p>	
<p>Please note that it is expected that you will complete this declaration honestly. Please sign the requirements that you meet and for those you believe you do not, please explain your situation overleaf. (NB. having areas to address does not necessarily mean your studies will be affected).</p>	
<p>I can confirm that my health status;</p> <p>Is good and there is no new current health issues that are likely to impact on my performance, health and safety or the health and safety of others</p> <p>Continues as before and has not altered since my last health or disability assessment/screening</p>	
Signature	
<p>I can confirm that my conduct in relation to self and others, within and out with the nursing programme;</p> <p>Has reflected the values set out within the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE);</p> <p>Has not required the implementation of ORMS or University disciplinary procedures, and/or there have been no cautions or criminal proceedings involving the police since the last time Disclosure clearance was confirmed</p>	
Signature	
<p>I can confirm that I have engaged with the nursing programme in the following areas;</p>	
I have attended and participated in all timetabled classes, including tutorials, only missing classes for genuine reasons which have been reported and recorded using the correct procedures for the programme.	Signature
I have actively engaged in learning opportunities by participating in group work, completing directed learning activities and accessing academic support particularly when preparing for summative assessments.	Signature
I have attended practice placements as required, only missing shifts for genuine reasons which have been reported and recorded using the correct procedures for the programme.	Signature