

## Management of Fitness to Practise for Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVMS) Students

### Introduction

*"The concept of being fit to practise is not just about achieving academic qualifications; it is about being of good character, being responsible and being worthy of the trust and confidence of the public and peers. In order to maintain that trust and confidence, veterinary students must behave in a manner that upholds the reputation of the profession and promotes animal welfare. In short, veterinary students must conduct themselves professionally at all times."<sup>1</sup>*

- [RCVS Fitness to Practise Guide](#)

The [UCLan Fitness to Practise Procedure \(Professional Courses\)](#) applies to all students enrolled on courses in The School of Veterinary Medicine which lead to registration with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

All students are expected, and required, to abide by a code of professional conduct and behave in a manner that does not jeopardise the welfare, wellbeing, or safety of themselves and/or others, including animals, in their care.

The School (of Veterinary Medicine) is responsible for ensuring students meet the expectations and standards of professional conduct as required by the UK veterinary licensing and accrediting body, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

Fitness to Practise processes are in place to identify, monitor, and respond if/when concerns arise about a student's Fitness to Practise at any time throughout the BVMS course.

Fitness to Practise procedures are only implemented when there are significant or grave concerns about conduct or safety of self or others. While not commonly pursued, it is important for all students to understand Fitness to Practise expectations as they are pursuing a licensed and regulated profession.

The Fitness to Practise Policy of The School is also aligned with the [RCVS Fitness to Practise Guide](#).

UCLan, and The School, are committed to fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment. Veterinary Medicine encompasses a wide range of career paths and opportunities, and we believe in breaking down barriers to widen access, diversity, and inclusion within the veterinary profession. Aligned with the RCVS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the UCLan Inclusive Support team; The School is committed to removing barriers and providing reasonable adjustments where possible to meet the RCVS Day One Competencies. We therefore encourage prospective students to inform us of any support needs, utilising our confidential occupational health screening process.

The BVMS course is rigorous and challenging, and students may encounter difficulties during their studies that they have not experienced previously. Similarly, life happens, and physical or mental health

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the [RCVS Fitness to Practise Guide](#)

status can change. Therefore, at any time throughout their studies, students are encouraged to speak with their student coach/mentor if/when concerns arise and, where appropriate, a referral to occupational health screening may be made to help us ensure a student's physical and psychological safety and well-being, identify how best to accommodate and support individual needs; and ensure students can continue to meet RCVS Day One Competencies.

Any concerns about behavioural conduct or significant changes to a student's health status that could impact a student's ability to complete the course can be self-reported, or reported by peers or The School staff, and investigated and appropriate action taken, which usually only results in a formal Fitness to Practise procedure in particularly serious circumstances (please see flowchart of procedures below).\*

We encourage any student with questions or concerns about Fitness to Practise at any time prior to, and throughout their course of study to speak with their student coach/mentor or another member of staff who can signpost to appropriate support and resources.

#### **Further Reference:**

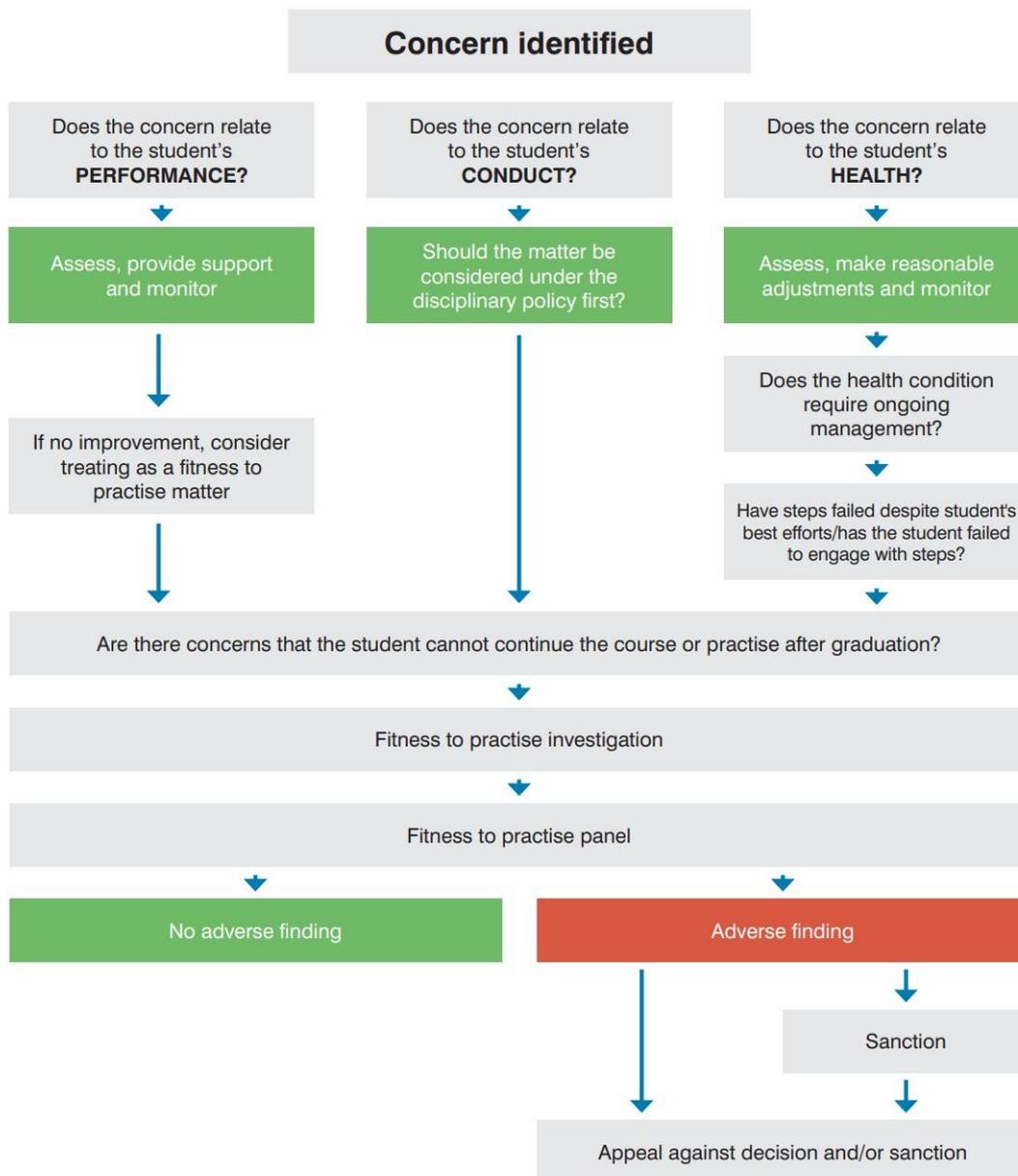
The School is in dialogue with the RCVS and the [British Veterinary Chronic Illness Support Group \(BVCIS\)](#) to help inform how to improve accessibility and inclusion to our veterinary course.

The RCVS Guidance on the Admission of Students with Disabilities to the Professional Veterinary Degree Course is under review.

The School is committed to providing reasonable adjustments where possible to enable students with disabilities and/or additional support needs to complete the BVMS course and to meet the RCVS Day One Competencies. We therefore encourage any student interested in pursuing a veterinary degree to contact us so we can discuss each situation on a case-by-case basis.

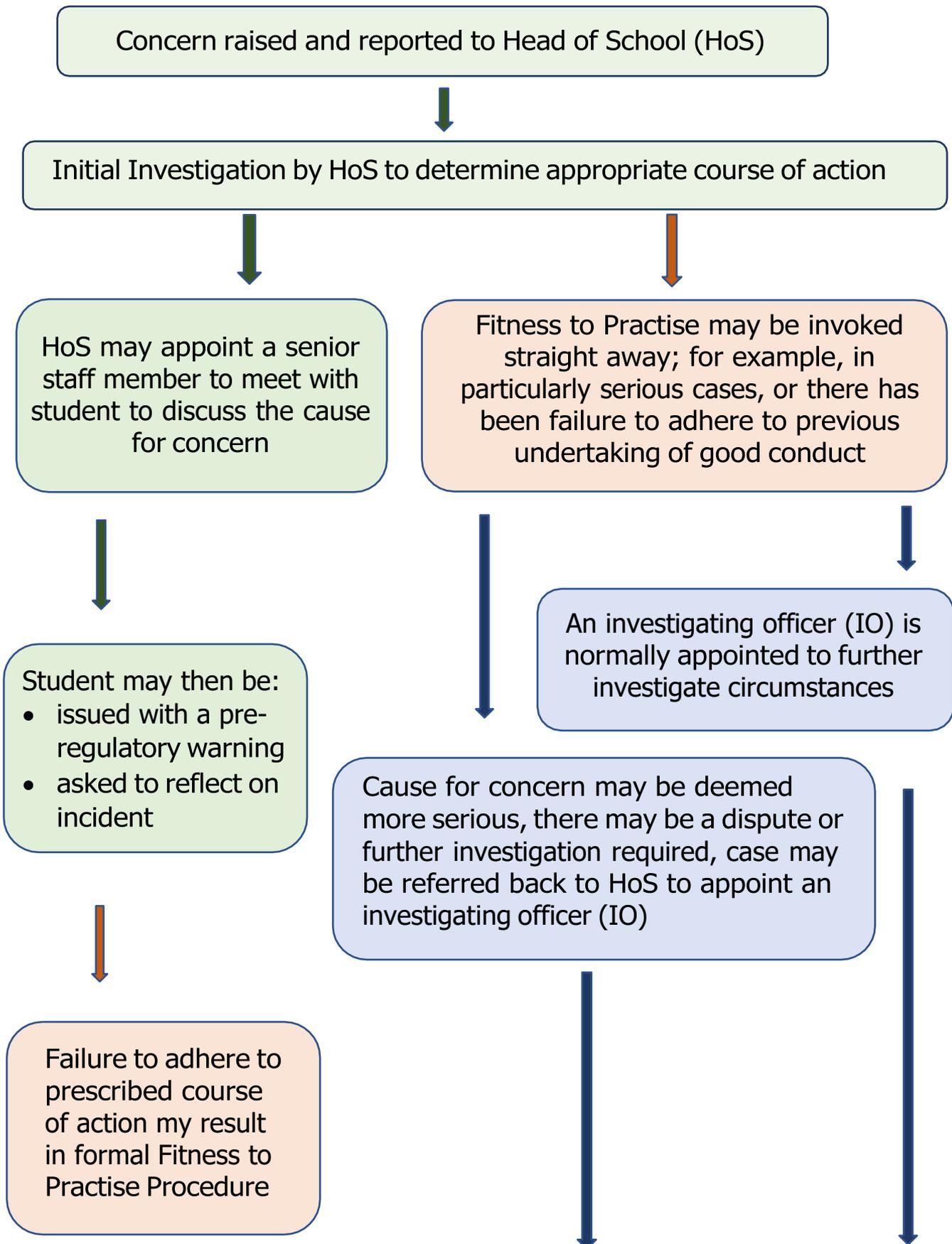
**Broad Overview of Managing Different Types of Concern - from the RCVS Fitness to Practise Guide for UK Veterinary Schools and Veterinary Students - available [here](#):**

## Managing different types of concern



### UCLan Fitness to Practise Procedural Process:

The procedural process when a cause for concern arises is outlined in detail within the full UCLan [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#). Below is a summary overview of the process starting with a concern arising and the steps pre-empting a Fitness to Practise Procedure, and, in the event of a Fitness to Practise Procedure being initiated, the steps involved in that process:



The IO submits a report to the HoS who considers report and notifies student in writing of outcome and what further action, if any, will be undertaken. Further action may include:

- No grounds for concern, case dismissed
- Matter to be referred for further investigation
- Student referred for specialist or medical assessment
- Student suspended or partially excluded from University of temporarily withdrawn in accordance with Section 5 of UCLan Fitness to Practise Policy
- Matter referred to be dealt with under another University Procedure
- Student invited to formal meeting in accordance with Section 6 of UCLan Fitness to Practise Policy
- Grounds for concern sufficiently serious that a Fitness to Practise hearing is convened

Fitness to Practise Hearing:  
Executive Dean will appoint a Fitness to Practise Committee and student will be notified at least 5 working days prior to the hearing

Summary of Fitness to Practise Hearing:

- HoS or IO presents case and witnesses may be called on to provide evidence
- Fitness to Practise committee and the student (or representative) have the opportunity to question the IO or HoS, and the IO or HoS have the opportunity to question the student and witnesses
- The student (or representative) has the opportunity to provide responses
- The IO or HoS and the student (or representative) provide summaries, with the IO or HoS referencing implications for student's Fitness to Practise and student referencing any mitigating factors



Outcomes may include one or more of the following:

- Hearing adjourned because further investigation is required.
- No cause for concern has been proven, case is dismissed.
- Insufficient evidence to reach a finding that a student is unfit to practise but cause for concern is sufficiently serious to warrant remedial action.
- Student re-assessed in specified part(s) of the course.
- Require student to complete a reflective piece of work exploring the impact of their behaviour and lessons learned.
- Student permitted to continue on the course subject to conditions and/or undertaking rehabilitation or treatment, or observation/supervision.
- Student required to withdraw from their studies for a specified period.
- Student's professional education and training be terminated and recommendation to Assessment Board that student be required to transfer to an alternative non-professional course.
- Having been unfit to practise, the student's professional education and training be terminated, and student expelled from the university.



Student may appeal



If still unsatisfied following the appeals process, student may request a review of the case under the rules of the scheme of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)