

## **Royal Academy of Dance Faculty of Education**

### **Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Faculty of Education of the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) seeks to ensure that all students/trainee teachers benefit from their experience of higher education. The Faculty of Education recognises the importance of good health and a positive sense of well-being that enables students and trainee teachers to perform to the best of their ability.
- 1.2. The Faculty of Education is particularly aware of the physical demands and level of fitness required in dance teacher training and education. It takes seriously its responsibilities to those students and trainee teachers whose studies may be compromised by long-standing medical conditions falling within the protected characteristic of disability and who may need to interrupt their studies to accommodate periods of absence, to ensure that they have every opportunity to complete their programme of study.
- 1.3. The Faculty of Education also recognises its duty of care to all students and trainee teachers, and its legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of those children, young people and vulnerable adults who participate in training provision through collaboration with a range of dance education placement providers.
- 1.4. Fitness to study may become a question of fitness to practise where the award made leads to recognition and/or registration with a professional body. Where a health condition may impact on the student/trainee teacher's suitability to teach, the Faculty of Education reserves the right to address the matter under the Fitness to Practise Policy.

#### **2. Scope and Purpose**

- 2.1. **Extenuating Circumstances**  
Where it can be reasonably anticipated that the duration of any absence is likely to fall within the limits permitted under extenuating circumstances, the Extenuating Circumstances Policy may be applied.
- 2.2. **Injury/Recurring Injury**  
Where an injury or recurring injury prevents the student/trainee teacher from participating fully in the practical elements of taught provision and/or practical assessment, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the staff member who is delivering the session, to establish if the student/trainee teacher is able to continue safely without affecting the injury, and in the case of an assessment, the Programme Manager will decide if the same Learning Outcomes can be demonstrated by other means. Where the injury leads to absence, the Attendance Policy provides for such an absence through referral to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

- 2.3. **Chronic Illness/Health Condition/Behavioural Condition**  
Where absence from study due to chronic illness, a health condition or a behavioural condition that has noticeably deteriorated, the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures provide the mechanism to agree with the student/trainee teacher a period of suspension from studies until the student/trainee teacher is well enough to return to study, where it is advisable for them to do so. Suspension from studies will be used in the most serious of cases, and only after other Student Support services have been engaged and reasonable adjustments have been applied.
- 2.4 The Programme Manager, in consultation with Level Coordinators, the Student Support Officer and external health care provision will establish the evidence base for recommending an interruption to studies under the Fitness to Study Policy. Where there is no evidence to support an interruption to studies on health or behavioural grounds, failure on the part of the student/trainee teacher to engage positively with the support available to them may be handled under the Fitness to Practise Policy, the Attendance Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedures.

### **3. Emerging Concerns**

- 3.1. Where early indications of health or behavioural problems have been identified, and taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may already be in place, the Programme Manager will arrange an informal meeting with the student/trainee teacher.
- 3.2. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the nature of the concern, to make sure that the student/trainee teacher is aware of the support that is available to them and/or to review the impact and effectiveness of any support that might already be in place. Actions will be agreed with the student/trainee teacher, and the Programme Manager will provide a written summary of the agreed actions. The date for a follow-up meeting will be arranged to review the impact of the agreed actions and to determine what further action and support may be considered. The student/trainee teacher will also be advised at this stage of the Fitness to Study Policy and other related policies and procedures which may be used to inform any further action that might become necessary.

### **4. Ongoing Concerns**

- 4.1. Ongoing concerns may arise from a previous concern about fitness to study or from previous absence managed under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and the Attendance Policy. Where the student/trainee teacher is on a programme of study regulated by a Professional Standards Regulatory Body (PSRB), consideration will be given to invoking the Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures to establish suitability to teach against those standards.

- 4.2. The Programme Manager will arrange a meeting with staff involved in the delivery of the Programme of Study to review the evidence giving rise to the ongoing concerns. A report from the Student Support Officer will indicate any adjustments and/or support already in place. Where the student/trainee teacher is studying onsite, and a medical assessment is required, this will be arranged through the Occupational Health Provider at the request of the Student Support Officer. Where the student/trainee teacher is studying by distance learning, the student/trainee teacher will be asked to provide a medical report to be sent to the Occupational Health Provider who can advise on suitability to remain on the programme.
- 4.3. Where the student/trainee teacher refuses to undertake a medical examination and/or refuses to disclose the results of any medical examination, the Programme Manager will consider whether the matter continues to be addressed under the Fitness to Study Policy which provides for suspension from study, or if the matter be dealt with under the Fitness to Practise Policy and related Disciplinary Procedures.
- 4.4. The Programme Manager will arrange to meet with the student/trainee teacher and the student/trainee teacher will be given advanced notice in writing of the purpose of the meeting, which is to establish whether the ongoing concerns are related to earlier concerns or whether any underlying cause for ongoing concerns was not previously addressed. The Programme Manager, on consideration of the student/trainee teacher's account, will agree with the student/trainee teacher any further action that needs to be taken or an alternative means to proceed. This will include a discussion about possible interruption of studies where this is seen to be acting in the best interests of the student/trainee teacher.
- 4.5. The student/trainee teacher will be informed of the outcome of the meeting in writing within 5 working days of the meeting. Where a further action plan has been agreed, this will be stated and regular review meetings scheduled to monitor progress. The student/trainee teacher will also be made aware of the consequences of continued failure to make progress against agreed actions, which may result in failure or termination of studies.

## **5. Serious Concerns**

- 5.1. Serious concerns are just as likely to arise suddenly from a critical event related to a long-term and previously well-managed health and/or behavioural issue. The immediate impact and ensuing recovery period may warrant an suspension of studies on any of the following grounds:
  - a) Where it has not been possible to put in place further adjustments;
  - b) Where the student/trainee teacher's health and/or behaviour deteriorates, and/or

- c) Where the perceived risk poses a potential threat to the student/trainee teacher's own health and safety or to that of others.
- 5.2. The Programme Manager will provide a written report to the Director of Education and Training, or alternative designate, stating the reasons for the recommendation for suspension of studies.
- 5.3. The Director of Education and Training, or alternative designate, will determine whether an interim suspension of the student/trainee teacher pending further consideration of the evidence to support a suspension is appropriate.
- 5.4. The Director of Education and Training, or alternative designate, will convene a meeting with the Programme Manager, one other member of staff and the Student Support Officer to establish the facts and to consider all reasonable options which would enable the student/trainee teacher to continue with their studies. The student/trainee teacher will be invited to attend the meeting, giving five working days' notice of the date, time and venue for the meeting and of their right to be accompanied to the meeting.
- 5.5. Where the student/trainee teacher is not able to attend the meeting, the student/trainee teacher may make a written representation. In exceptional circumstances, where a student/trainee teacher is not able to represent themselves in person or in writing, they may be represented by a third party at the discretion of the Director of Education and Training or alternative designate.
- 5.6. The meeting will order its proceedings at its own discretion and may call witnesses, including any staff working with the student/trainee teacher. It may also request further medical evidence of the student/trainee teacher's fitness to study, and will reach its decision having received the advice of staff working with the student/trainee teacher and any additional evidence, medical or otherwise.
- 5.7. The student/trainee teacher will be notified of the decision within five working days of the meeting. The decision may include the following recommendations:
- That the student/trainee teacher continues his/her studies;
  - That, following consultation with academic staff, the student/trainee teacher may convert from full-time to part-time study with support;
  - That special academic arrangements be put in place, to include reasonable adjustments where possible;
  - That a suspension of studies takes place;
  - That a recommendation be made to the Director of Education and Training to terminate the student/trainee teacher's registration, including a recommendation to the Board of Examiners that credits achieved are awarded.

- 5.8. The student/trainee teacher may be advised to seek guidance from the Student Support Officer/Registrar with regard to funding implications of such a measure. The student/trainee teacher will be informed of the consequences should these arrangements fail to remedy the identified concerns to the satisfaction of the Faculty of Education.

## **6. Review the Decision of a Fitness to Study Case Conference**

- 1.1. The student/trainee teacher may submit a complaint against the recommendations of the Fitness to Study meeting, and must notify the Registrar within 14 days of the decision of the panel, unless a good reason for the delay can be demonstrated and/or evidenced. The Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures provide guidance on how to make a complaint. Where the nature of the complaint relates to examination and/or progression, the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures may also apply.

## **7. Confidentiality and Disclosure**

- 7.1. Issues considered under the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures are likely to require the consideration of confidential medical information, and as such will require to be handled with sensitivity under the Data Protection Act. However, there may be occasions when it is in the best interests of the student/trainee teacher to disclose sensitive information, namely when it is believed that the student/trainee teacher could be a danger to themselves or to others.
- 7.2. Every effort will be made to obtain the student/trainee teacher's consent for disclosure. Where the student/trainee teacher chooses to withhold consent, or it is impracticable to obtain consent, confidentiality may be broken. In such cases, the Student Support Officer and the Registrar will be consulted. The Student Support Officer may seek advice from the Occupational Health Provider, who in turn may seek confidential medical advice which could be helpful in reaching a decision.

## **8. Emergency Situations**

- 8.1. Where the level of risk posed by the health or behaviour of the student/trainee teacher is deemed to require an urgent response to prevent harm, the Emergency Services must be contacted immediately.

## **9. Policy Review**

- 9.1. This policy will be reviewed annually and any updates communicated to the validating partner.

Created	11 April 2016
Reviewed and approved by the Policy & Strategy Committee	15 May 2018
Ratified by the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Dance	4 June 2018
Signed on behalf of the Education Sub-Committee of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Dance by the Chair	
Review Date	May 2019