

FIT TO TEACH POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the Fit to Teach policy is to ensure an appropriate response by the university when assessing whether individuals undertaking Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes (trainees) are physically and mentally capable of engaging with training in accordance with the Education act (2002).
- 1.2. Teaching is a regulated activity in relation to children and a fundamental principal of the profession of teaching is the care and protection of children. It is a requirement under the Education (Health Standards) (England) regulations 2003 that all offer holders be assessed as fit to teach.
- 1.3. The ITT criteria and supporting advice (DfE 2021) align and require that future teachers have both physical and mental fitness to perform their duties without putting children and young people at risk. This relates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education regulations for activity in relation to children, it also relates to criminal disclosure requirements – enhanced DBS checks.
- 1.4. The professional expectations on teachers and trainees on ITT programmes are outlined in the Teacher Standards (2011) and elaborated in the School of Education Code of Professional Conduct (2020). Trainees on ITT programmes are required to fulfil all requirements of the Teacher Standards to be recommended for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- 1.5. The University has a duty to ensure that the above requirements are not used to discriminate against offer holders with a disability (Equality Act 2010). Durham University School of Education works with the University Occupational Health service in the Fit to Teach process to balance these considerations.
- 1.6. Trainees must be fit to practise their profession. The safety of pupils will always be the prime consideration. It is recognised that most trainees who have a physical, mental or learning disability will register successfully. In exceptional cases a health or disability related issue may make it impossible to meet the requirement of Fitness to teach, in which case the student will be withdrawn from the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) element of their programme.
- 1.7. The purpose of the health assessment within the Fit to Teach process is to ensure that entrants to ITT programmes are physically and mentally capable of undertaking that training in accordance with the Education Act 2002. This assessment is conducted by medical professionals within Durham University Occupational Health Service with regard to this policy.

2. Scope

- 1.1. This Fitness to Teach Policy applies to:
All applicants to and current trainees on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes at Durham University School of Education.
- 1.2. Fitness to Teach is defined as fitness to practice the profession of teaching and engage effectively in the programme of study (ITT programme). Trainees must:

- (1) Be capable of fulfilling the requirements of the Teachers Standards (2011) and Core Content Framework (2019).
 - (2) Be capable of offering sustained alertness and consistent reliable and sound judgment, such that a secure environment for pupils can be maintained.
 - (3) Behave in a manner which presents no risk to the safety, development or wellbeing of pupils in a professional context.
 - (4) Be effectively engaged in academic studies, assessment or placement without compromising the academic progress or ordinary activities of themselves, those of their peers or their employer (or equivalent), where placement forms a part of their studies.
 - (5) Maintain an appropriate level of conduct, health and wellbeing, such that they are not a risk to themselves, their peers, University staff or others.
- 1.3. A single event does not constitute an indication of a lack of fitness to teach unless that event is symptomatic of an underlying inability to meet the criteria normally and consistently.
 - 1.4. The procedure below sets out how the University will assess fitness to teach and the actions it will take to support trainees to whom this policy applies. Where there are consequences for the trainee's programme of study, there may be concessions available which will be discussed in a support meeting with a member of School of Education ITT programme staff.
 - 1.5. The University recognises that trainees may require support during assessment or reassessment of fitness to teach or study. The trainee may seek support from the department Student Support Officer (SSO), College Student Support Office and/or the Durham Students' Union. If concerns about a trainee are being raised by their College Student Support Office, the trainee may request access to alternative College support.
 - 1.6. The University encourages all parties to engage in early intervention and support-planning and to take an active, collaborative and supportive stance where possible. Trainees should be involved in the active management of their own wellbeing, drawing appropriately upon the support services offered by the University: information about this can be found in the student support hub: [Student Support Hub \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

Student Support Offices in Colleges are the centre of University pastoral support. The College Student Support Office will make reasonable efforts to work collaboratively with the trainee to engage with the appropriate University or external service to support their ongoing academic engagement.

Academic Departments provide subject-specific academic support and welcome any necessary information they need in order to meet a trainee's academic support needs. The student support officer for education can be contacted by email education.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk

Disability Support co-ordinates the support needed to engage effectively with academic studies and University life when a condition has been declared as a disability, defined as any health condition that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

The Counselling Service offers support and signposting to specialist external services for issues around mental health and wellbeing; Mental Health Advisors offer support-planning sessions for trainees as part of their preparation to participate in off-site activities.

The Durham Students' Union is an external body, offering advice and advocacy services.

- 1.7. Decisions about Fitness to Teach are informed by contemporaneous medical evidence prepared by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner and the assessment of Fitness to Teach is conducted by a member of the University Occupational Health service.

- 1.8. It is ultimately the University's responsibility to interpret and assess the evidence of fitness to teach, taking into consideration the context of Initial Teacher Training programmes as both academic and professional activities. There may be occasions where medical evidence is not available or applicable, or the trainee may not provide it. A lack of medical evidence would not in itself prevent the University from making a decision about a trainee's fitness to teach. The University will consider evidence in line with local and national guidelines and protocols from the Department for Education, National Health Service, the National Institute for Clinical Evidence or Occupational Physicians/ Practitioners guidance.
- 1.9. The Fit to Teach policy aligns with the Professional Code of Conduct for ITT programmes. These take precedence over the University Fit to Study and other university policies as the Fit to Teach policy and Professional Code of Conduct contain profession-specific requirements for fitness and profession specific codes of conduct which are legal requirements. A policy matrix to identify policy overlaps is provided in [appendix 2](#).

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. The Policy is owned by the Director of ITE Programmes (QTS), School of Education who is supported in its administration by the Student Support and Wellbeing lead (ITT) in the School of Education.
- 3.2. Medical Assessment of fitness to teach for all trainees and applicants to ITT programmes will be conducted by members of the University Occupational Health Service. Occupational Health practitioners may require further medical evidence to inform their assessment and can request further information from specialist or general practitioners.
- 3.3. Reassessment for trainees returning to ITT programmes (or trainees who have had a change in health circumstances) will be referred by a referring manager for ITT programmes. Medical assessment will be conducted by the university Occupational Health service. Trainees will be included in the referral process and will have an opportunity to present their own information in the assessment.
- 3.4. Trainees are required as a condition of admission to an ITT programme to demonstrate that they meet the health requirements of the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (DfE). Applicants are required to fully complete a health questionnaire and declare all current and previous history of any health issues which will be shared with the University Occupational Health service for specialist advice and guidance.
- 3.5. Trainees are required to inform the Occupational Health service about any disability for which reasonable adjustments within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 may be needed, and to apply to Durham University Disability Support for assessment of support requirements for the academic programme upon admission to an ITT programme.
- 3.6. Recommendations for reasonable adjustments (related to disability) made in an assessment by Durham University Disability Support are related solely to the academic elements of the programme of study on an ITT programme. Any recommendations around professional practice or placement are the responsibility of Durham University Occupational Health service and may be supplemented by this advice. Occupational Health recommendations are part of the professional requirements and regulations for ITT programmes under the Fit to Teach policy.
- 3.7. The referring manager will include disability related information in any referrals for reassessment to the Occupational Health service as by its definition (8.4) disability relates to overall wellbeing.
- 3.8. Where the recommendations in the 'fit note' (outcome of assessment by Occupational Health practitioner) requires consideration, for example if the recommendation includes conditions or if the assessment is 'not fit to teach'- the 'note' will initially be shared by the referring manager with the partnership lead for the ITT programme to consider if adjustments are reasonable. In rare cases this may be referred to a fit to teach panel comprised of members of the CTE strategic management group for consideration under the mediation policy.

4. Procedure

- 4.1. The Fit to Teach policy includes information on procedures for assessment, general guidance on assessment of fitness to teach, outcomes of the assessment, mediation and appeal.

4.2.1.1. Application to an ITT programme

- a) Applicants to ITT programmes are required to complete a health questionnaire and return it to the Occupational Health service. Questionnaires are confidential and are kept in accordance with Data Protection Act requirements for the safe storage of medical information.
- b) Questionnaires and any supplementary information submitted are assessed by Occupational Health practitioners on a case-by-case basis.
- c) Some applicants may be offered an appointment with an Occupational Health practitioner. The appointment offered may be by telephone, online or face to face. The Occupational Health practitioner may require further medical information and could therefore seek permission from the applicant to approach a GP or specialist for a written report regarding their health.

Applicants are required to engage with this assessment of fitness to teach in order to be enrolled on an ITT programme. Failure to attend appointments, engage with Occupational Health assessment processes or consent for medical information to be shared with the Occupational Health practitioner will be treated as a withdrawal from the ITT programme.

- d) The applicant will give informed consent for the outcome ('Fit note') to be shared with the referring manager and other relevant staff members, for example the partnership lead for the ITT programme, ITE administrators and if necessary, the note may be shared with a mediation panel. If the applicant refuses consent for the 'fit note' to be shared this will be treated as a withdrawal from the ITT programme.
- e) The Occupational Health practitioner will inform the ITE team in the School of Education about the outcome of assessment.

There are three possible outcomes of this stage of assessment:

- i) Fit to teach
- ii) Fit to teach with conditions
- iii) Not fit to teach
- f) Where the outcome of assessment is:
 - i) Fit to teach – application will be processed and applicant will be enrolled on the ITT programme by the ITE team and become a Trainee.
 - ii) Fit to teach with conditions- assessment will be reviewed by the student support and wellbeing lead (ITT) and the partnership lead for the programme. If they are satisfied that conditions can be met, application will be processed and applicant will become a trainee on the ITT programme. If further consideration is needed, case will be referred to mediation panel for consideration.
 - iii) Not fit to teach – offer of place on ITT programme will be withdrawn. If applicant appeals decision, case will be referred to mediation panel for consideration.

4.2.1.2 Current Trainee- Reassessment

Reassessment of fitness to teach is required if there is a change in health circumstances during the course of the ITT programme that impacts on the trainee's ability to study or practise. This reassessment process can occur concurrently with additional ongoing support for the trainee.

- a) Referral for reassessment can be requested by the trainee by emailing fittoteach.ite@durham.ac.uk if they have had a change in health which is impacting their ability to study or practise, and the department will re-refer the trainee to the Occupational Health service.

- b) A request for referral for reassessment can be sent by any member of staff to the referring manager; if they are concerned that a trainee's health circumstances or wellbeing have changed and they need further reassessment.
Trainees referred for reassessment of Fitness to Teach may not attend professional placement until informed that they may do so by the referring manager or nominated lead.
- c) The referring manager will complete a referral form and submit it to the Occupational Health service sharing information about the request for reassessment. The trainee will receive a copy of the referral form as it is submitted.
- d) The Occupational Health Service (OHS) will contact the trainee for an appointment. The appointment offered may be by telephone, online or face to face. The Occupational Health Practitioner may require further medical information and could therefore seek permission from the applicant to approach a GP or specialist for a written report regarding their health.

Trainees are required to engage with reassessment of fitness to teach in order to continue on their ITT programme of study. Failure to attend appointments, engage with occupational health assessment processes or consent for medical information to be shared with the occupational health practitioner will be treated as a withdrawal from the ITT programme.

- e) The trainee will give informed consent for the outcome ('Fit note') to be shared with the referring manager and other relevant members of staff (for example the partnership lead for the ITT programme, ITE administrators and if necessary, the note may be shared with a mediation panel.) If the trainee refuses consent for the 'fit note' to be shared for these purposes, then this will be treated as a withdrawal from the ITT programme
- f) Occupational Health practitioner will inform ITE team in the School of Education about the outcome of assessment in a 'Fit note'.

There are three possible outcomes of re-assessment of fitness to teach:

- i) Fit to teach
 - ii) Fit to teach with conditions
 - iii) Not fit to teach
- g) Where the outcome of assessment is:
 - i) Fit to teach – *trainee may return to placement and academic elements of the programme when informed by the referring manager or nominated lead for their programme that they may do so- as soon as reasonably possible.*
 - ii) Fit to teach with conditions- recommendations will be reviewed by the referring manager and the nominated lead for the programme. If they are satisfied those conditions can be met, a support meeting will be held with the trainee to discuss support arrangements and strategies. If further consideration of conditions is needed, a support meeting will be held with the trainee to discuss concerns. If unresolved, the case will be referred to mediation panel for consideration.
Trainee may return to placement when informed by the referring manager or nominated lead that they may do so.
 - iii) Not fit to teach – *trainee may not return to placement.* A support meeting will be held with the trainee to discuss options.

If the trainee wishes to appeal the decision, they may do so using the mediation process outlined in the Fitness to teach mediation policy.

4.2.1.3 Returning to a Teacher Training programme after a break

University students (Trainees) who receive a concession for their studies will only be allowed to resume their ITT programme once the University is satisfied that they are fit to do so. The student will be informed of the evidence required to return to study at the start of the concession. All conditions set out in the concession letter must be met in order to return.

A concession will require:

- evidence that a trainee has met the conditions of the concession
- a reassessment of Fit to Teach
- further conditions for Return to Study where the concession was granted on grounds of ill health (see Fit to Study policy).

To allow time for the Occupational Health service to arrange the assessment appointment, any documentation should be submitted by the deadline stated in the concession letter (this is usually 8 weeks before the start date of the programme). If evidence of fitness to teach is not available prior to the start date of the programme, the trainee may not return to the programme of study. If all conditions set out in the concession letter are not met the trainee may not return to the programme of study.

University Core Regulation 23 states that students are limited to a maximum of two consecutive concessions to withdraw from the academic year and return to University to begin the year again at the start of the next academic year. At this point a student would be eligible to re-apply to the University and apply for Accreditation of Prior Learning if they wish to re-enter their studies (<https://www.dur.ac.uk/university.calendar/volumeii/>).

If all concession requirements are met, a return to study meeting will be scheduled to review the support arrangements for the trainee returning to the programme. This return to study meeting will include members of the ITT programme team and the student and any additional relevant staff, for example mental health advisor or college student support team. The return to study meeting will review appropriate professional, academic, pastoral and medical support provisions are in place prior to return, including support for disabilities where applicable.

4.2. Fitness to Teach Mediation Policy

In the event that there is a lack of consensus over Fitness to Teach after the initial assessment process, and informal resolution has not reached a satisfactory conclusion the following mediation policy applies.

Stage 1

In the event that an applicant or trainee disagrees with the decision of the Occupational Health service that they are 'not fit to teach' or if the outcome of assessment is unclear, an informal meeting will be held in the first instance to explore case specific issues regarding Fitness to Teach.

In attendance will be representatives from key support areas:

- Occupational Health Service (OHS)
- Disability Support
- Divisional Director for the relevant programme
- Student support and wellbeing lead (ITT)

Trainees will be invited to attend the meeting, and may bring a representative from College, Durham Students Union (DSU) or department for additional support. Applicants may bring a friend if they are not yet registered with a college or DSU (they must be over 18 years of age at the time of the meeting).

Additional supporting information will be requested in advance of the meeting and circulated to all members. The meeting should make clear all options available to the applicant or trainee in an informal and supportive way to enable all parties to share concerns.

Once the meeting has taken place, all parties will receive a copy of the notes and agreed outcomes which may include (but are not limited to):

- Request for further information from the relevant consultant/medic with specific queries
- Request for a second opinion from an independent Medical Practitioner
- Request for an additional meeting between the Occupational Health practitioner and applicant or trainee to discuss changes in health circumstances or any additional relevant information

Confirmation that no further information is available which may change the outcome and the decision stands.

Stage 2

Upon receipt of the further medical evidence and/or any follow up meetings (as required) with the Occupational Health Practitioner a reviewed decision will be made on Fitness to teach.

The outcome may be:

- Fit to teach
- Fit to teach with conditions
- Not Fit to teach

Stage 3

In the event that a trainee does not accept the Fitness to teach decision, a Professional Panel will be convened which will include representatives from the Strategic Management Group.

The trainee is invited to attend the professional panel meeting along with a representative from College, DSU or their department for additional support. Applicants may bring a friend if not yet registered with a college or DSU (they must be over the age of 18 at the date of the meeting). The applicant or trainee will be required to give informed consent for panel members to have access to any information which is provided to the meeting.

Full disclosure of the relevant facts will be discussed at this meeting; a final decision will be made with the applicant or trainee informed in writing of the outcome and reasons for the decision.

The decision of the Professional Panel is final.

4.3. Right of Appeal

All students enrolled in the university including trainees have the opportunity to make an appeal.

- 4.4. Where they are dissatisfied, the trainee may appeal the decision made by the Professional Panel meeting. The purpose of the appeal is to ascertain whether the decision was reached:
 - In accordance with the University's procedures; and
 - In the light of all relevant information.
- 4.5. Any appeal must be made in writing to student.cases@durham.ac.uk within fourteen days of the date of the student being advised in writing of the outcome of the Professional Panel meeting.
- 4.6. The decision will be reviewed by a Deputy Executive Dean from a Faculty different to the student and who was not involved in the assessment.
- 4.7. Trainees may seek support in using the Appeals Procedure from their College Student Support Office or the Students' Union.

5. Equality and Diversity

(Consider whether the policies may impact disproportionately against any group. Guidance is available on the Equality and Diversity web pages at: www.durham.ac.uk/equality.diversity/eia)

5.1 The Fit to Teach policy involves cases where the health and wellbeing of trainees has brought their capacity to fitness to practice the profession of teaching and engage effectively in the programme of study into doubt. Some trainees engaging with the Policy will, therefore, have a mental health or physical disability and the application of the Policy needs to be kept under regular review to ensure that it does not disproportionately impact or discriminate against trainees who fall within those categories without clear justification.

5.2 The University does this by annual report to the School of Education EDI committee, and continuous oversight by the strategic management group.

6. Related information: regulations

- 6.2. *Statutory guidance on regulated activity in relation to children*
 - 6.2.1. Keeping Children Safe in Education
[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)
 - 6.2.2. Working together to safeguard children
[Working together to safeguard children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children)
 - 6.2.3. Enhanced DBS checks
[Eligibility guidance for enhanced DBS checks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enhanced-dbs-checks)
- 6.3. *Statutory Teacher professional regulation*
 - 6.3.1. Education Act 2002
[Education Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/26/contents)
 - 6.3.2. Teacher Standards England
[Teachers' standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-standards)
 - 6.3.3. ITT Criteria
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria/initial-teacher-training-itt-criteria-and-supporting-advice#c13-suitability>
 - 6.3.4. Education (Qualifications) (England) Regulations
[The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications\) \(England\) Regulations 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1662\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1662/contents/made)
 - 6.3.5. Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England)
[The Education \(Specified Work and Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1662/contents/made)
 - 6.3.6. Addressing Workload in ITE
[Addressing workload in initial teacher education \(ITE\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/addressing-workload-in-initial-teacher-education-ite)
- 6.4. *Statutory Health and Safety regulation*
 - 6.4.1. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
[Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/contents)
 - 6.4.2. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
[The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/1662/contents/made)
 - 6.4.3. Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003
[The Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/1662/contents/made)
- 6.5. *Statutory Data and personal Information regulation*
 - 6.5.1. Data Protection Act 2018
[Data Protection Act 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents)
 - 6.5.2. Access to Health Records Act 1990
[Access to Health Records Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/16/contents)
 - 6.5.3. Freedom of Information Act 2000
[Freedom of Information Act 2000](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents)

- 6.6. *Statutory Equality regulation*
 - 6.6.1. Equality Act 2010
[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
 - 6.6.2. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2000
[Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#)
- 6.7. *Additional Statutory regulation*
 - 6.7.1. Counter- Terrorism and Security Act
[Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
 - 6.7.2. Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations
[The Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009](#)
 - 6.7.3. Higher Education and Research Act 2017
[Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#)
 - 6.7.4. Higher Education (Fee Limit Condition) (England) 2018
[Higher Education \(Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)
- 6.8. *University Policy*
 - 6.8.1. Fit to Study Policy
[Counselling Service : Fitness to Study Policy - Durham University](#)
 - 6.8.2. Mental Health Policy
[Counselling Service : Mental Health Policy - Durham University](#)
 - 6.8.3. Policy Matrix indicates the connections between the Fit to Study, Mental Health and Fit to Teach policies [Appendix 2](#)
 - 6.8.4. Academic Progress
[Learning and Teaching Handbook : 2.6.3: Academic progress procedure - undergraduate and postgraduate - Durham University](#)
 - 6.8.5. Professional Code of Practice (*link to internal SharePoint site*)
[ITE Code of Professional Conduct \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

7. Definitions

- 7.2. *This policy refers to applicants and students on ITT programmes as 'Trainee' in line with Department for Education ITT criteria and guidance. This 'fitness to teach' policy specifically relates to the professional regulations of the ITT programmes of study so adopts this terminology.*
- 7.3. *Initial Teacher Training (ITT) and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) are used in this document to refer to programmes of teacher preparation which award Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In this document it should be understood that ALL professional programmes related to teacher preparation at the University, may fall under the Fit to Teach regulation where designated a 'professional' programme by the director of professional programmes.*
- 7.4. *Disability is defined in the Equality Act (2010) as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long term' negative effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities.*

8. Version Control:

Author: ITE student support and wellbeing lead- Dr R Ridgway

Approval date: August 2022

Approved by: Head of School of Education, Divisional Director for Professional Programmes

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Responsibility for policy: Director for Professional Programmes

Responsibility for document review: Student Support and Wellbeing Lead RR.

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Date of review: August 2023 (ref to CCF (2019 added, new role of student support officer added, with link to contact email and student hub). Review by R Ridgway, A Gill.

Next Review Date: April 2023

9. Appendices

Appendix 1: Student Support and Wellbeing in the School of Education

Appendix 2: Policy Matrix

Appendix 3 General Guidance on Fitness to Teach in the School of Education

Appendix 4 Fitness to teach process and outcomes by stage

Student support and Wellbeing in the School of Education

Position Statement

We are committed to supporting our trainees as they develop to become 'Thinking Teachers'.

We acknowledge that teaching as a profession can be stressful and training to teach can be a challenging process.

Trainee wellbeing is an important part of our provision and we use a range of strategies to promote and support wellbeing. We support our trainees in their learning journey from the start to the successful completion of their professional training.

Principles

Wellbeing relates to both physical and mental health. It is a dynamic state that describes our current capacity to enjoy life and to work productively and creatively, to build and sustain positive relationships with ourselves and with others.

We seek to support trainees in maintaining their wellbeing, and while it is beyond the scope of the University to provide treatment for those experiencing illness (mental or physical) we will provide sign-posting towards external services and offer appropriate reasonable adjustments where illness falls within the definition of a disability.

Stress is difficult to define as each individual experiences it differently. Stress is a response to the environmental demands and pressures of life which everyone experiences, but the psychological demands which are experienced as distressing or problematic can be identified as stressors. While it is beyond the scope of our provision to remove all stressors from the training experience, we can make adjustments to workload, and provide support which may help reduce experiences of stress for our trainees.

Practices

We promote health and wellbeing at the start of our programmes, by identifying the **importance of good habits** and identifying support resources and processes available to our trainees. For example, in our induction activities (WOW week) we welcome trainees with an introduction to our principles, support services and an introduction to healthy balance.

We **communicate** clearly and regularly **share information** about wellbeing and support available to trainees on each programme. There is a university wide wellbeing hub of resources [Student Support Hub \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com). Students are sent reminders of support and services available in the regular newsletters (for example 'PEN' and 'In a Nutshell' newsletters) and also at SSCC meetings.

We provide a named member of **staff with responsibility for wellbeing** on each of our programmes. The team are led by the student support and wellbeing lead who coordinates support across all ITE programmes with a student support and wellbeing administrator.

We work **collaboratively** with services across the university to provide tiered support for our trainees, according to their needs. This includes collaborating with each of the colleges in the university, with the Disability support service and the Counselling and Mental Health services in the university. We work together with the University Occupational Health service to ensure that our students have the health and physical capacity to train to teach (Fit to Teach), and if a trainee has a change in health

circumstances we review this with updated assessments and take into consideration adjustments (in line with the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 and Equality act 2010).

Reference points

Wellbeing Hub [Student Support Hub \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

For wellbeing support education.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk

Appendix 2 Policy Matrix

Policy Matrix: Mental Health, Fitness to Study, Fitness to Teach

Nature of Concerns	Mental Health Policy (MHP)	Fitness to Study Policy (FTS)	Fitness to Teach Policy (F2T)
Wellbeing concern (low to moderate)	Informal approaches by college/and or department See Department student support/concessions process		If change in health circumstances
Non-engagement with study identified by dept-triggering APN or PPN	If unresolved MHP may apply		If unresolved or if change in health circumstances
Moderate to serious concerns where mental health is clearly implicated or suspected, and student is open to a meeting under MHP	Student support meeting (Informal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal meeting with outcomes for engagement for support or behavioural agreements MHA involved If it is believed that with formally agreed outcomes a student has the capacity to remain If unresolved...		Yes F2T applies
Serious concerns may need to be raised through a formal meeting in the first instance	Student Support meeting (formal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal documented outcomes for support or concessions If unresolved following support meeting measures, further referral to FtS	OR it is believed that there is sufficient risk to the student or others, and that even with further support they would be unable to effectively and safely remain in the university	Yes- F2T applies
		Fitness to Study Meeting -for formal consideration of fitness once support measures have not resolved concerns	Yes- F2T applies
Emergency situation-urgent and clear risk	Emergency suspension under the MH policy Should be accompanied by request to produce evidence		Yes- F2T applies

	of fitness to return to Study, including Fit to Teach		
Where health issues are suspected to be contributory factor but the student does not want the issues to be considered under the MH policy		Fitness to study meeting- for formal consideration of fitness	Yes- F2T applies

Appendix 3 General Guidance on Fitness to Teach in the School of Education

General Guidance on Fitness to Teach

If a trainee is generally well with no health problems, they will likely be 'fit to teach'. For those applicants who do have a health problem, most of the time they will also be 'fit to teach'. Indeed, many people with disabilities and chronic illnesses may be 'fit to teach'. In deciding whether a trainee is 'fit to teach', the Occupational Health Service will consider whether the trainee is able to demonstrate that they can meet the following requirements:

- Able to meet the requirements of the teacher standards
- Able to communicate effectively with pupils, colleagues and pupils' relatives.
- Possess of sound judgement and insight.
- The ability to remain alert at all times.
- The ability to understand and respond to pupils' needs rapidly and effectively.
- The ability to manage classes.
- The trainee must not constitute a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of pupils.
- Planning and preparing lessons and courses for children and young people.
- Delivering lessons.
- Assessing development, progress and attainment.
- Reporting on development, progress and attainment.
- Not constitute any risk to the health, safety or well-being of children in their care
- Can, if necessary, be enabled by reasonable adjustment to meet these criteria.

There is no requirement for a teacher to be able to lift heavy objects, drive, swim, deal with a child's everyday physical needs or participate in physically demanding activities.

Conditions which may affect 'Fitness to Teach'

A blanket list of conditions that are incompatible with teaching is not issued and the physical and mental health of each applicant is considered individually by the Occupational Health Service. Specific advice regarding possible adjustments to enable a trainee to study and undertake practice placements safely may be necessary. However, some conditions may make a career in teaching unlikely because of the effects these conditions can have on an individuals' ability to meet the above listed requirements.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of common areas for concern that relate to trainees' health when it comes to fit to teach:

- Health concerns and insight. All management of these concerns.
 - Failure to seek medical treatment or other support where there is a risk of harm to themselves or other people.
 - Failure to recognise abilities or lack of insights into health concerns that may place themselves or others at risk.
 - Refusal to follow and adhere to medical advice and guidance
- Chronic alcohol or substance misuse
- Failure to maintain and follow a treatment or management plan
- Failure to maintain or disclose and health conditions
- Failure to practise safely, including preventing transmitting infection to others
- Severe or relapsing mental health conditions
- Recurring physical illness

Trainees must be fit to practise their profession and engage in their programme of training. The safety of pupils is always the prime consideration. The health, safety and wellbeing of the trainee is also a major consideration when assessing fitness to teach.

Outcomes of Assessment

Once the Occupational Health practitioner has made their assessment, they will share the outcome of assessment with the trainee. There are three categories of outcome:

- a) **Fit to teach:** those who are in good health and free from any condition which might be likely to interfere with efficiency in teaching.
- b) **Fit to teach with conditions:** those who are generally in good health but who have conditions which are likely to impact upon (to some extent) their efficiency in teaching. The conditions are not serious enough to make the applicant totally unfit and this category includes those whose disability could require teacher training providers to make reasonable adjustment to enable them to provide effective and efficient teaching.
- c) **Not fit to teach:** those whose condition is such as to make them unfit for the teaching profession. Applicants will not normally be included in this category unless they have a psychiatric or physical disorder likely to interfere seriously with regular and efficient teaching in line with the teacher standards or if they have a condition that may carry a risk to the safety or welfare of the pupils.

If the trainee is assessed as 'fit to teach with conditions', the Occupational Health Service will notify the University of the adjustments, modifications or restrictions which will need to be considered and a trainees' permission will be sought to provide this advice to relevant staff in the University (such as the referring manager and nominated lead). These staff will consider the conditions and may schedule a meeting with the student to discuss support. This is an informal discussion about support options and requirements.

In the event that the Occupational Health Service find that a trainee is 'not fit to teach', the Trainee will not be able to continue on their programme of study.

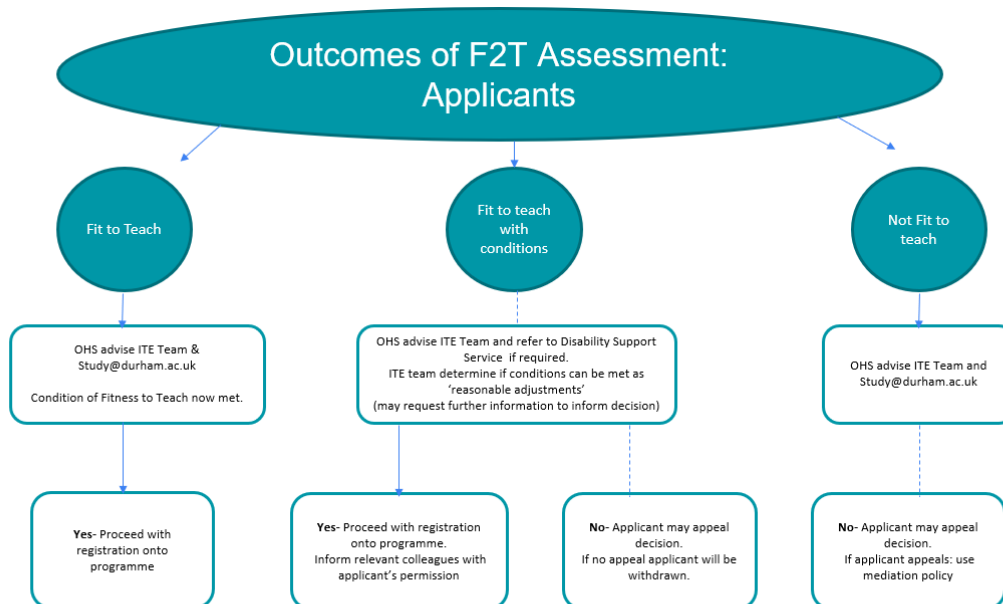
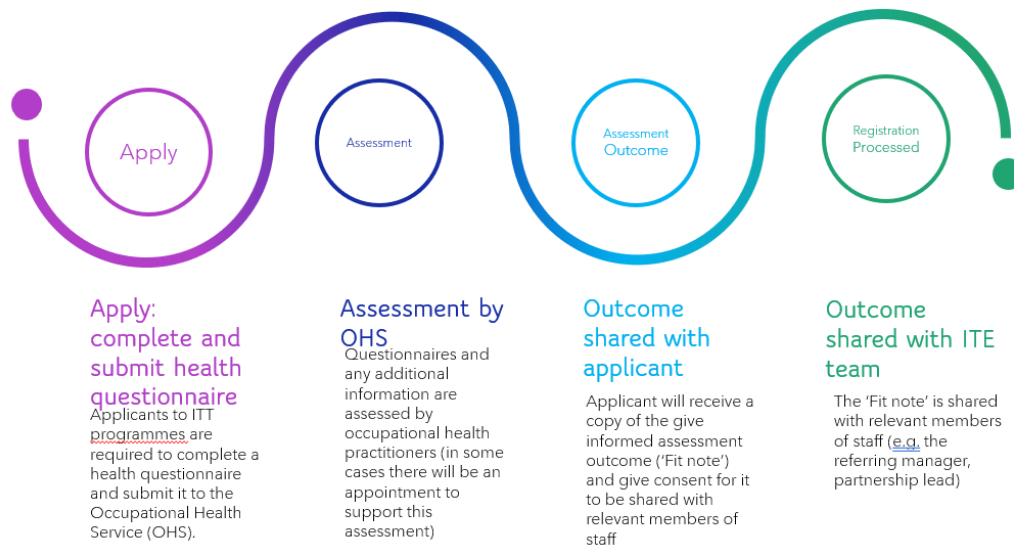
Recommendations in the fit note are made by an Occupational Health professional based on a trainees' personal circumstances and will apply to both the academic and professional placement elements of the programme. Trainees with disabilities are encouraged to access Durham University Disability Support service for advice on the academic elements of their programme of study. These recommendations can be shared with the occupational health service to inform their assessment of Fitness to teach.

Failure to disclose a condition which affects the 'fitness to teach' assessment or giving false information will lead to a trainee being removed from the programme.

Appendix 4 Fitness to teach process and outcome by stage

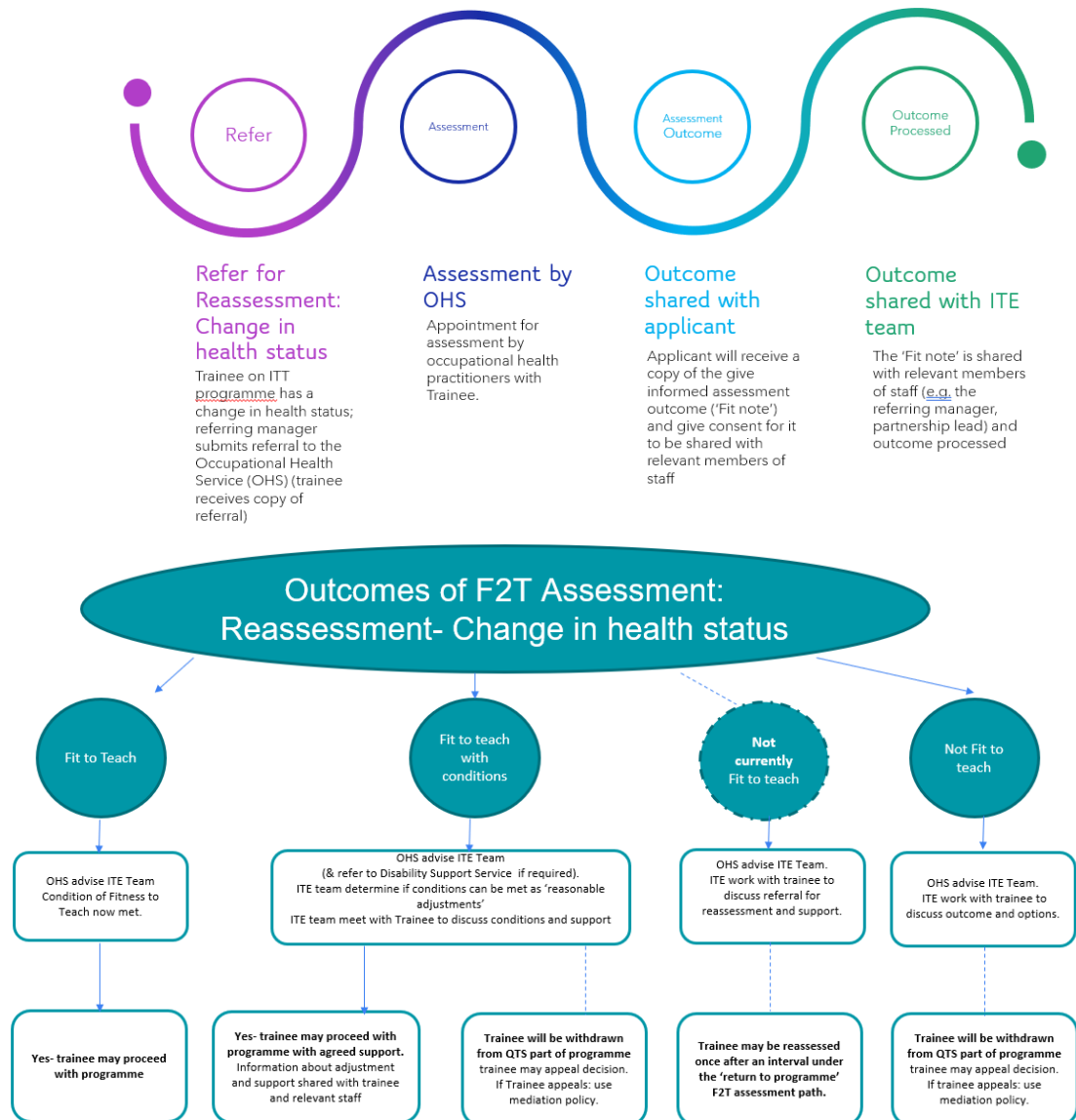
1. F2T Application process and outcome

ITT FITNESS TO TEACH- APPLICANTS



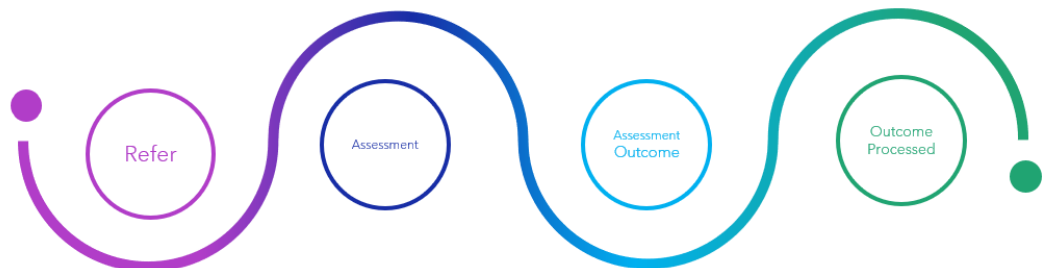
2. F2T Reassessment- Change in health status- process and outcomes

ITT FITNESS TO TEACH- REASSESSMENT



3. F2T Reassessment- Return to ITT programme process and outcome

ITT FITNESS TO TEACH- RETURN TO ITT PROGRAMME



Refer for Reassessment: Return to Programme

Trainee on ITT programme has had time out of university, referring manager submits referral to the Occupational Health Service (OHS) (trainee receives copy of referral) to reassess fitness prior to return to programme

Assessment by OHS

Appointment for assessment by occupational health practitioners with Trainee. Trainee may be required to submit medical evidence prior to this appointment.

Outcome shared with applicant

Applicant will receive a copy of the give informed assessment outcome ('Fit note') and give consent for it to be shared with relevant members of staff

Outcome shared with ITE team

The 'Fit note' is shared with relevant members of staff (e.g. the referring manager, partnership lead) and outcome processed

