

# Fitness to study policy

## Fitness to study

Your commitment to the course provides part of the ongoing assessment procedure in order to gain your qualification. We will support students where we can and understand that sometimes circumstances arise that make completing work, and/or attending class, difficult.

We are always open to additional tutorial requests if you feel you are unable to maintain your commitment to the course in anyway and to discuss the necessary support that needs to be put in place. Problems often occur where students fail to draw issues to their tutor's attention and/or fail to take action where agreed when a support plan has been put in place. We take commitment to the course seriously and in exceptional circumstances a student will be withdrawn from the course if any concerns aren't resolved.

The fitness to study policy will be called into question, if:-

- A pattern of absence or lateness emerges and continues after being raised in a tutorial.
- **PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOUR ATTENDANCE FALLS BELOW 85% THIS WILL RESULT IN YOU EITHER NOT QUALIFYING, BEING WITHDRAWN FROM THE COURSE**
- You request three or more extensions on assignments over the course without sufficient reason.
- You submit assignments late without prior agreement (more than once).
- Journals aren't being submitted by the requested ongoing deadlines and no prior extensions from you have been requested or agreed.
- There is a decline in your mental health which is making it unsafe for you to be on the course or affecting your capacity to be present within the training group or is adversely affecting the group.
- You aren't contributing to the group or group process over a prolonged period of time and your process seems stuck, or unresolved issues have surfaced preventing you from fully engaging in the course.
- You aren't working at the required standard for your qualification. This will be mainly assessed through assignments but also group discussions, group supervision and process group will be contributing factors.

The steps we'll take are:-

1. Alert you to our concern in your tutorial or an additional tutorial or by email in exceptional circumstances. Your tutorial is also an opportunity for you to notify us to any problems you are having with the course. We will look together at what support needs to be put in place. Depending on the issue (e.g. if this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time we've had to draw your attention to a

concern or our support is required), we'll arrange a follow up tutorial to further discuss the concern.

2. If the concern hasn't been resolved then a formal tutorial will be arranged. Depending on the issue but it may be necessary to inform your supervisor of your concerns (L4 students). A verbal warning may be given at this point.
3. If the concern is still not resolved or no change seen, a decision made as to the future of your training with a written warning issued. You will be given a date of a follow up meeting.
4. If change hasn't been seen and agreed action not acted upon, we will need to withdraw you from the course unless there are exceptional circumstances present.

### **Fitness to practice**

Emotional robustness is a requirement of this course in order to sustain the emotional rigours of the training and to practice ethically as a counsellor. In order to maintain a safe environment for group exploration and appropriate challenge all members of the group are required to be in good health both physically, mentally and emotionally.

At time of great change, loss and illness, mental and emotional robustness is often compromised. If you are unable to practice in placement, for any reason: sudden bereavement, illness, or any other circumstance, you are required to inform both your personal supervisor, your course tutor and course supervisor.

If there is a noticeable change in your behaviour that has been picked up by your supervisor or tutor in relation to client work or that is compromising the growth of the group and putting you and others at risk e.g. acting out an emotion rather than expressing, this will be brought to your attention and your fitness to practice and continuation on the program will be assessed.

The Fitness to practice aspect of this policy applies to your client work in placement and to your capacity to work as part of the training group.

### **Assessing your fitness to practice**

If at any time your fitness to practice in placement and or be on the course comes into question you will be invited for a meeting where your fitness to practice will be assessed in a collaborative manner with you, your group supervisor and the lead tutor. Issues that will bring your Fitness to Practice into question include:-

- Points raised under the Fitness to Study Policy
- Not meeting your supervision requirements
- Not adhering to the BACP ethical framework
- Your emotional robustness diminishing
- Identifying historic issues/trauma that requires attending to and that seem to be overwhelming you
- A current bereavement or life crisis
- Behaving unprofessionally and not accepting feedback when provided.

Your overall engagement with the course will be taken into consideration along with any personal circumstances that are compromising your ability to fully engage with the course and practice professionally and ethically.

As a qualified counsellor you are responsible for your client work and abiding by the ethical framework. We will support you in making a decision that is best for you and your clients.

- Together we will reach an agreement about the direction that needs to be taken. This may be:
  - To take on additional supervision and/or extend personal therapy
  - To temporarily stop client work
  - To terminate client work altogether if your practice is seen as unethical. This may be resumed at a later date once you've provided evidence that you have reflected on the issue at hand – this may be required both orally and in writing.
  - To discontinue with counselling training at this point.

The lead tutor will put the outcome of this meeting in writing to you. In exceptional circumstances where a student's practice is deemed unethical and no action is being taken by the student then the centre holds the right to raise a complaint with BACP or the student's ethical body.