

## Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

### Professional Behaviour Intervention Procedure

#### Purpose

The primary purpose of this document is to support the Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (FMNHS) goal to develop students' professional behaviours in line with the vocation they will pursue on graduation.

This procedure also applies to Faculty students who are engaged in research projects which require interactions with patients or clients.

This document provides the guidelines for Faculty staff who monitor course progression and assist those students who have been identified with issues associated in demonstrating appropriate 'professional behaviour'.

The overall concept of Fitness to Practise encompasses three main categories (Parker, 2006): "Freedom From Impairment", "Professional Conduct & Behaviour" and "Clinical Competence". Taken together, these concepts define a "fit for practice" individual as one who has no physical or other impediments to practising safely, is able to consistently demonstrate appropriate professional conduct and behaviour and has the requisite skills and knowledge base to practise at an appropriate standard. These factors intersect and combine to define an individual fit for practice.

The University aspires to promote in its students, and as part of their education, the professional attitudes and behaviour expected of health care providers. Faculty staff need to model these behaviours to students (Monash University Ethics statement: <http://adm.monash.edu/human-resources/ethics/ethics.html>). Professional behaviour, and its importance in health service delivery, should be nurtured in concert with the development of other skills. Curricula should be designed to develop awareness of the role, and importance of high level skills (e.g. communication), as well as qualities such as respect for others, confidentiality, trustworthiness and dependability. For these aspirations to be clear to student's professional behaviours need to be defined and assessed. Successful development of these behaviours should be assigned the status given to other educational hurdles.

The National Registration of Health professions, or accreditation guidelines (in the absence of National Registration), provide the definition and competencies required for each faculty discipline (<http://www.ahpra.gov.au/index.php>). The faculty has developed this guideline and associated procedures to facilitate a consistent and equitable approach to teaching and assessing Professional Behaviour across all health professional disciplines in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences.

A supportive sequence of events for addressing compromised Professional Behaviour at a department or school level, and the subsequent steps that should be taken in the event that these issues remain unresolved, are described. This approach to Professional Behaviour must be aligned with other assessments of competence. The total of these assessments are considered when deciding a student's progress through their course.

## **Rationale**

The rationale for Faculty-wide Professional Behaviour procedures is that they will:

- provide students in the Faculty with a description of professional behaviours that are considered appropriate both at the University, and when in health or other related agencies or facilities;
- identify students who exhibit behaviours that indicate concern regarding professional behaviour;
- describe appropriate support for students who are experiencing difficulties;
- ensure the effective use of academic resources by early identification of, and response to, unresolved professional behaviour;
- standardise across the Faculty the approach taken to managing professional behaviour issues;
- create corporate knowledge of good practice in the management of professional behaviour issues, and
- create a platform for action that shares expertise across schools and departments.

## **Dissemination of Information to Students**

It is a requirement that the FMNHS publishes and promotes its definition of professional behaviour in all course study guides and websites. Each course will have a statement to define and explain the nature of professional behaviour as it applies to its field and discipline. Other relevant information about how these behaviours are taught and assessed and procedures for remediation will also be described.

Each course will provide information to students on professional behaviour in course materials taught within education units delivered in a study program.

## **Procedures Scope**

These procedures apply to all students in the faculty.

## Preamble

The Professional Behaviour Intervention procedures set out the process for identifying and assisting students who are demonstrating behaviours that raise concerns regarding Professional Behaviour. The procedures make provision for contacting and counselling these students and describe pathways to assist students to achieve satisfactory professional behaviours required for their course. The intervention commences with a request to attend a Professional Behaviour Support meeting. Depending on the nature and degree of unsatisfactory professional behaviour, alternative means for addressing serious problems may be implemented under Monash University Statutes, Regulations, policies and procedures.

## Process

The following steps apply when dealing with students who:

1. are identified as having issues related to professional behaviour, and
2. those issues are assessed as suitable<sup>@</sup> to be dealt with, and to continue to be dealt with, under the Professional Behaviour Intervention Procedures:

Reporting Concerns	Concerns regarding a student's Professional Behaviour should be reported to the Unit Coordinator
Investigating concerns	On receipt of a report an independent academic investigates the concerns. This may involve interviewing the student, the person making the report and other persons with relevant information related to the concerns. Normally the concerns would be investigated by the Unit Coordinator, but in the event of the Unit Coordinator making the report, they should discuss with the Course Convenor to identify the most appropriate person to investigate the concerns.
Notice of Meeting	On completion of an investigation, a student who is found to have demonstrated unsatisfactory professional behaviour will be invited, by the responsible academic, to attend a Professional Behaviour Support Meeting. Notice of the meeting should be sent no less than one week prior to the meeting. The student should be provided with the opportunity to be accompanied to the meeting by a support person. This person may assist the student but may not act as an advocate. Notice of the presence of a support person must be provided to the academic staff member calling the meeting at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
Prior to the meeting	Prior to a Professional Behaviour Support meeting, the responsible academic is expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● identify and document specific issues related to Professional Behaviour that need to be addressed by the student</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● check the Professional Behaviour Register kept by the Director Academic Programs to ascertain if previous incidents have been recorded.</li> </ul>
Professional Behaviour Support Meeting*	<p>At the Professional Behaviour Support Meeting, the responsible academic, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● make explicit the concerns that staff have regarding the professional behaviour(s) that are considered unsatisfactory</li> <li>● seek from the student their explanation as to why this occurrence has happened, which the student may elect to provide at that meeting or a subsequent meeting after they have further time to consider the concerns put to them at the meeting</li> <li>● help the student identify causes (academic or other) affecting their ability to demonstrate unsatisfactory professional behaviour</li> <li>● assist the student to identify strategies and actions, where appropriate, to change their professional behaviour</li> <li>● explain to the student the consequences of their failure to change professional behaviour</li> <li>● assess the student's willingness to change behaviour</li> <li>● provide the student with written information regarding support services that are available on Monash campuses relevant to the causes of behaviour</li> <li>● explain the next step if there is a failure to improve</li> <li>● refer the student to a specific service or person for further support or advice</li> <li>● where agreement is reached, the student will be invited to sign and date a statement of issues agreed upon, targets, goals and an action plan, otherwise the student will be provided with a written record of the discussion and details of what is required of them to address the concerns about their professional behaviour.</li> <li>● schedule an appropriate time to review student progress against the action plan/requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Given the extensive aims of the Professional Behaviour Support Meeting, it may be that it consists of 2 meetings to allow the student additional time to consider their response and then address the matters arising from that response. Where possible the meetings should be held not more than 1 week apart.</p> <p>Academic units will keep attendance and records of conversations of the Professional Behaviour Support Meeting.</p> <p>The Unit Coordinator should notify the course coordinator and</p>

	register the student on the Professional Behaviour Register kept by the Director Academic Programs.
	If a student refused to attend an initial Professional Behaviour Support meeting, the matter is immediately referred to the Course Convenor who will discuss next actions with the Unit Coordinator then move to Step 3.
At the follow up meeting*	Student performance has improved: no further action Student performance has not improved: move to STEP 2
Step 2* Counselling Meeting	<p>The matter is referred by the Unit Coordinator to the Course Convenor</p> <p>The Course Convenor and Unit Coordinator are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and document the specific issues related to Professional Behaviour that need to be addressed by the student</li> <li>● Invite the student to a Counselling Meeting. The Counselling Meeting will follow the same steps and be conducted in the same manner as a Professional Behaviour Supporting Meeting, including with respect to notice of meeting and presence of a support person.</li> <li>● At the Counselling Meeting the Chair will:</li> <li>● ask the student for an explanation regarding why the action plan/required behaviours have not been observed</li> <li>● in consultation with the student set further target behaviours, achievable goals and an action plan to improve the student's performance</li> <li>● where agreement is reached, the student will be invited to sign and date a statement of issues agreed upon, targets, goals and an action plan, otherwise the student will be provided with a written record of the discussion and what is required of them to address the ongoing concerns about their professional behaviour</li> <li>● schedule an appropriate time to review student progress against the action plan/requirements</li> <li>● explain the next step if there is a failure to improve.</li> </ul>
	If a student refused to attend the Counselling meeting them move to Step 3.
At the follow up meeting*	Student performance has improved to a satisfactory level: no further action

	<p>Student performance has not improved to a satisfactory level: move to STEP 3 Student and course administrators to be notified.</p> <p>If the matter is moved to Step 3 the student must be informed, in writing, of the specific Professional Behaviour/s of ongoing concern and provided an opportunity to respond in writing in 5 working days.</p>
Step 3*	<p>Where a Course Coordinator believes the student's performance has not improved according to the remedial action plan or otherwise, or there has been an initial improvement and then a relapse into professional behaviour of concern, they are to report the matter directly to the Deputy Dean (Education) or nominee.</p> <p>The Deputy Dean will refer the case to a Professional Behaviour Review Panel.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">This is an independent panel consisting of an academic from another discipline with knowledge of professional behaviour, a nominated professional from the student's discipline with no knowledge of the student and a student from a health professions course but not of the student's discipline</p> <p>In reviewing the case, the Panel will review all available evidence, including any notes related to Professional Behaviour. These may include the Professional Behaviour Support and/or Counselling Meetings, any response or correspondence from a person making a report about the student or the student concerned, and may choose to interview any of those persons and Unit Coordinators and Course Convenors. It is expected that the Panel will seek to interview the student.</p> <p>After review of the case, the Professional Behaviour Review Panel may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dismiss the case</li> <li>• Recommend that the Professional Behaviour support actions/requirements continue</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Recommend to the Board of Examiners that the student not pass the Unit.</p>
Note	<p>Should a student commit another professional behavior offence after the Step 3 intervention process has concluded the process will commence again at Step 3</p>

- @ Matters of student discipline and any disciplinary consequences are dealt with under Part 7 of the Monash University (Council) Regulations and not these procedures. However, a failure to comply with the disciplinary expectations of the University will also usually also be relevant to be considered when assessing a student's professional behaviour.
- # Where a placement has been terminated on the basis of a student's poor professional behaviour and investigation by the faculty finds the termination was justified the student will enter this process at Step 3.

Students dissatisfied with a decision made under these procedures may lodge a Grievance under the Academic and Administrative Complaints and Grievances Policy.)

### Professional Conduct Domains

The conduct domains in Table 2 describe the domains of professional behaviour. These are informed by the document *Investigating Student Fitness to Practice Policies and Procedures within Australian Universities*, prepared by the Centre for Medical and Health Sciences Education on behalf of the Fitness to Practice Working Party July 2008.

### Record keeping

All documentation associated with the case must be kept and securely stored. Copies of documentation must be forwarded to the Director Academic Programs for entering on the Professional Behaviour register, which may be accessed as provided here. The faculty register includes the following information for each student whose name is included in the register:

1. the student's name,
2. the date on which the student was first registered,
3. if a condition has been imposed on the student's enrolment,
4. details of the condition.

Send copies of all student correspondence to the student's file. This file may be accessed by any person performing functions under these Procedures, Part 4 of the Monash University (Academic Board) Regulations – Exclusion for Unsatisfactory Progress or Inability to Progress, Part 7 of the Monash University (Council) Regulations – Discipline Part 6 of the Monash University (Vice-Chancellor) Regulations – Exclusion for Health Reasons.

### Referenced documents (locations)

#### Template letters (found on the staff intranet):

- [Letter template - Professional Behaviour Support Meeting Schools/Departments](#)
- [Letter template - Counselling Meeting Schools/Departments](#)
- [Letter template - Professional Behaviour Review Panel](#)
- [Letter template - Notice of Decision](#)

**Part 7 of Monash University (Council) Regulations –Exclusion for Unsatisfactory Progress or Inability to Progress.**

**Records Management Procedure:** <http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/records-archives/>

Clinical / Fieldwork Placement Procedures and Guidelines 2013  
<http://www.med.monash.edu.au/policies/student.html>

Academic and Administrative Complaints and Grievances Policy :  
<http://policy.monash.edu.au/policy>

[bank/academic/education/management/complaints-grievance-policy.html](http://policy.monash.edu.au/policy/bank/academic/education/management/complaints-grievance-policy.html)

Professional Behaviour Register

### **Responsibility for implementation**

Dean  
Deputy Dean, Education  
Heads of School/Department  
Faculty Director  
Director, Academic Programs  
Course convenors  
Unit Convenors

### **Key Stakeholders**

Dean  
Deputy Dean (Education)  
Faculty Manager  
Director, Academic Programs  
Faculty Secretariat  
Course convenors  
Chief Examiners  
Course administrators

### **Approval Body**

Faculty Board

### **Endorsement Body**

Faculty Undergraduate Education Committee  
Meeting number: 04/10  
Meeting date: 10 August 2010  
Agenda item: 4

### **Policy status**

Updated 10 February 2016

Table 2. Professional behaviour domains

Conduct Domain	
1.1.	Attendance
1.2.	Punctuality
1.3.	Timely assignment submission
1.4.	Professional appearance
1.5.	Professional boundaries
1.6.	Respect for others
2.1	Interaction with colleagues:
2.1.1	Verbal / Non verbal
2.1.2	Written
2.2	Interaction with patients/clients
2.2.1	Verbal / non verbal
2.2.3	Written
2.3	Interaction with peers
2.3.1	Verbal / non verbal
2.3.2	Written
2.4	Academic communication (assignments, emails, Black Board discussion, social networks e.g. Facebook, Skype) <a href="http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/workplace-policy/conduct-compliance/staff-student-relationships.html">http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/workplace-policy/conduct-compliance/staff-student-relationships.html</a>
2.5	Multi-disciplinary teamwork
2.6	Collegial and collaborative
2.7	Appropriate relationships with patients
3.1	Adherence to policy/ethical/legal guidelines
3.2	Understands impact of failure to comply with protocol
3.3	Adherence to health and safety regulations
3.4	Acknowledges positive patient identification protocols
3.5	Adherence to infection control guidelines
3.6	Reports incidents
3.7	Identifies potential risks/sentinel events

3.8 Criminal behaviour
3.9 Accountable/responsible
3.10 Trustworthiness/Honesty/Integrity
3.11 Exercises duty of care
3.12 Confidentiality
3.13 Aware of own health and risks of ill health to safe practice
3.15 Plagiarism
3.17 Insight into behaviour

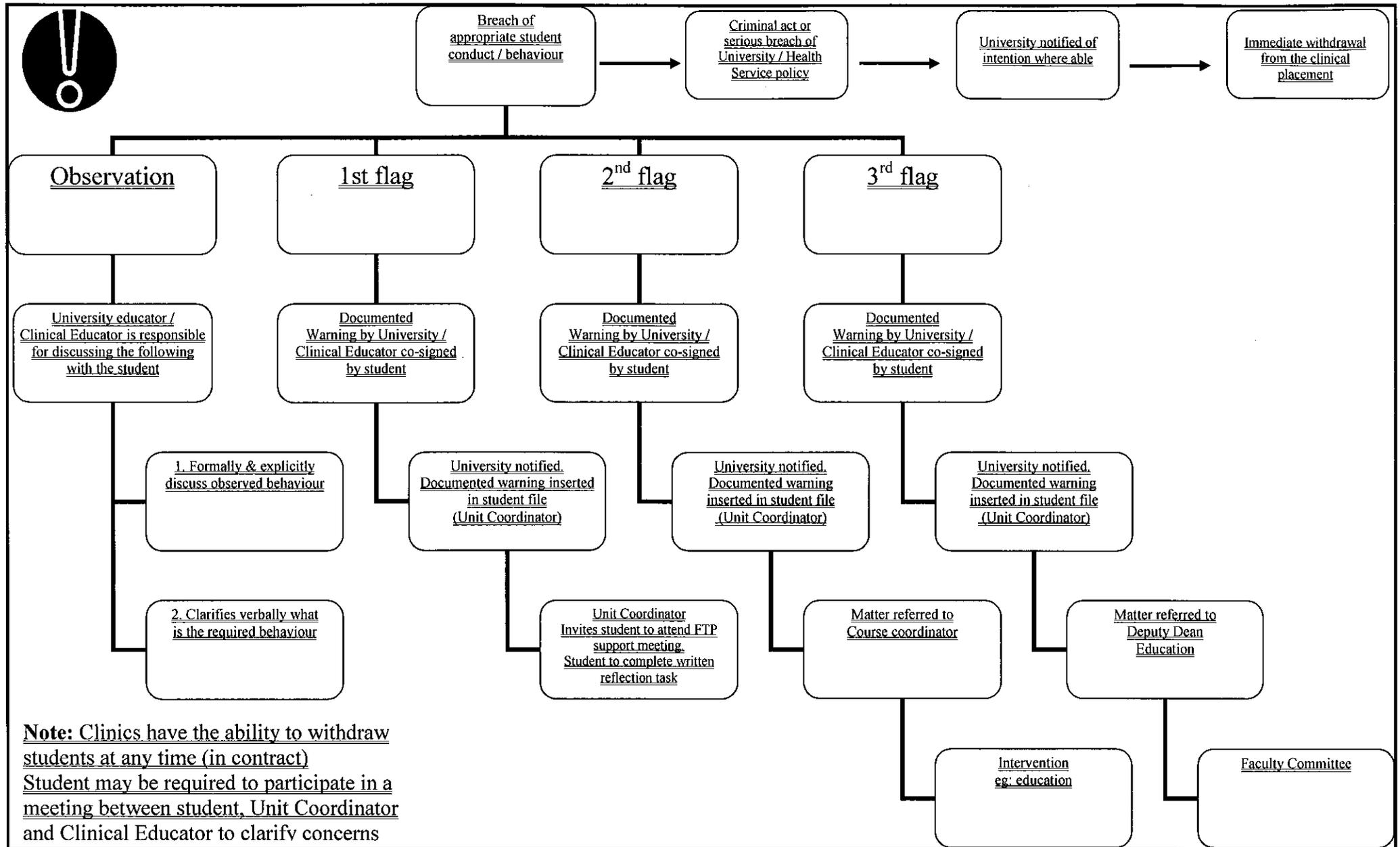
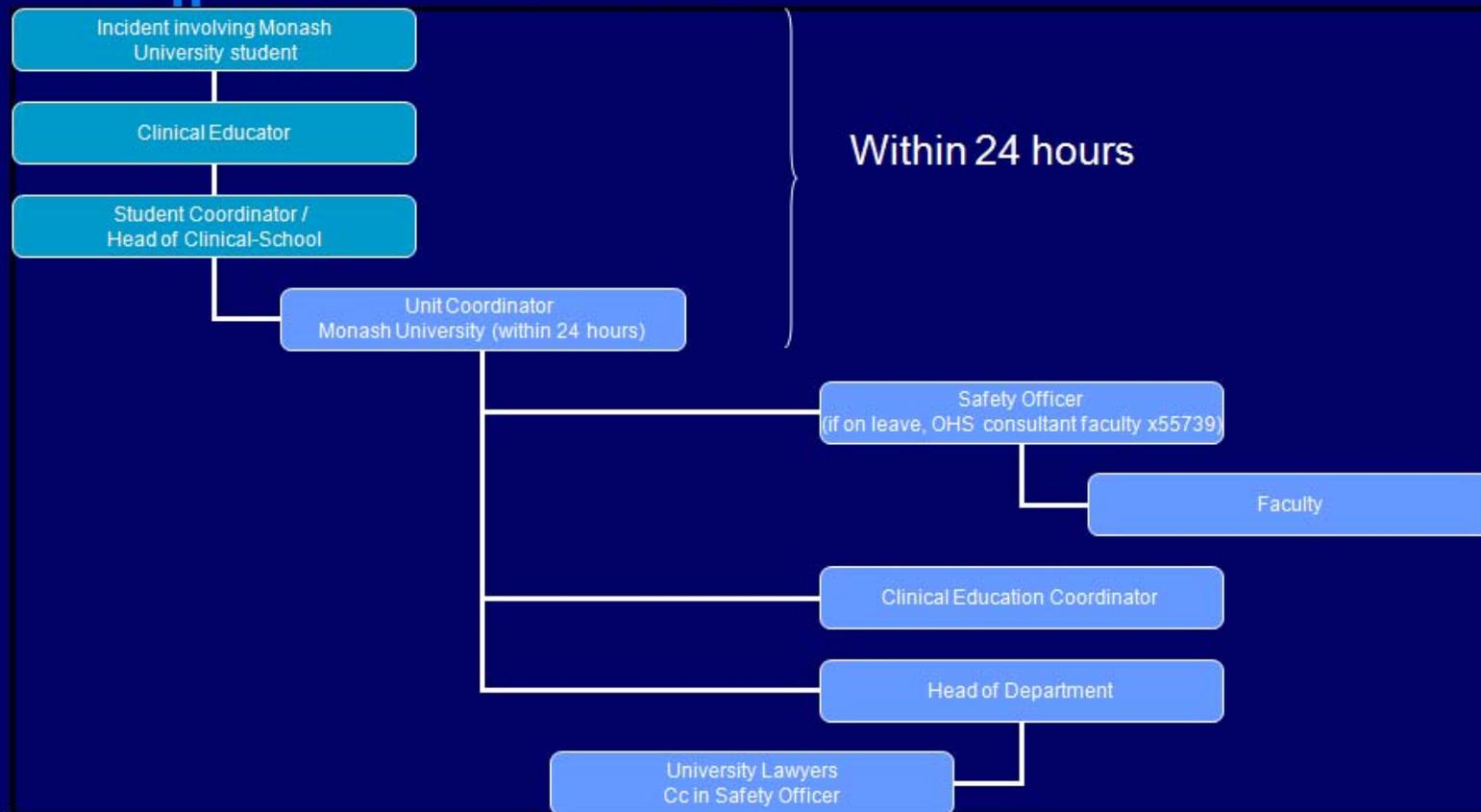


Figure 4: Pathway for Fitness to Practice Flag

# Verbal notification of incident within 24 hours



# Original written report of Incident posted within 72 hours

