

# STUDENT INFORMATION GUIDE

Professional standards, Ethical Behaviour &  
Student Support framework ([ProFESS](#))

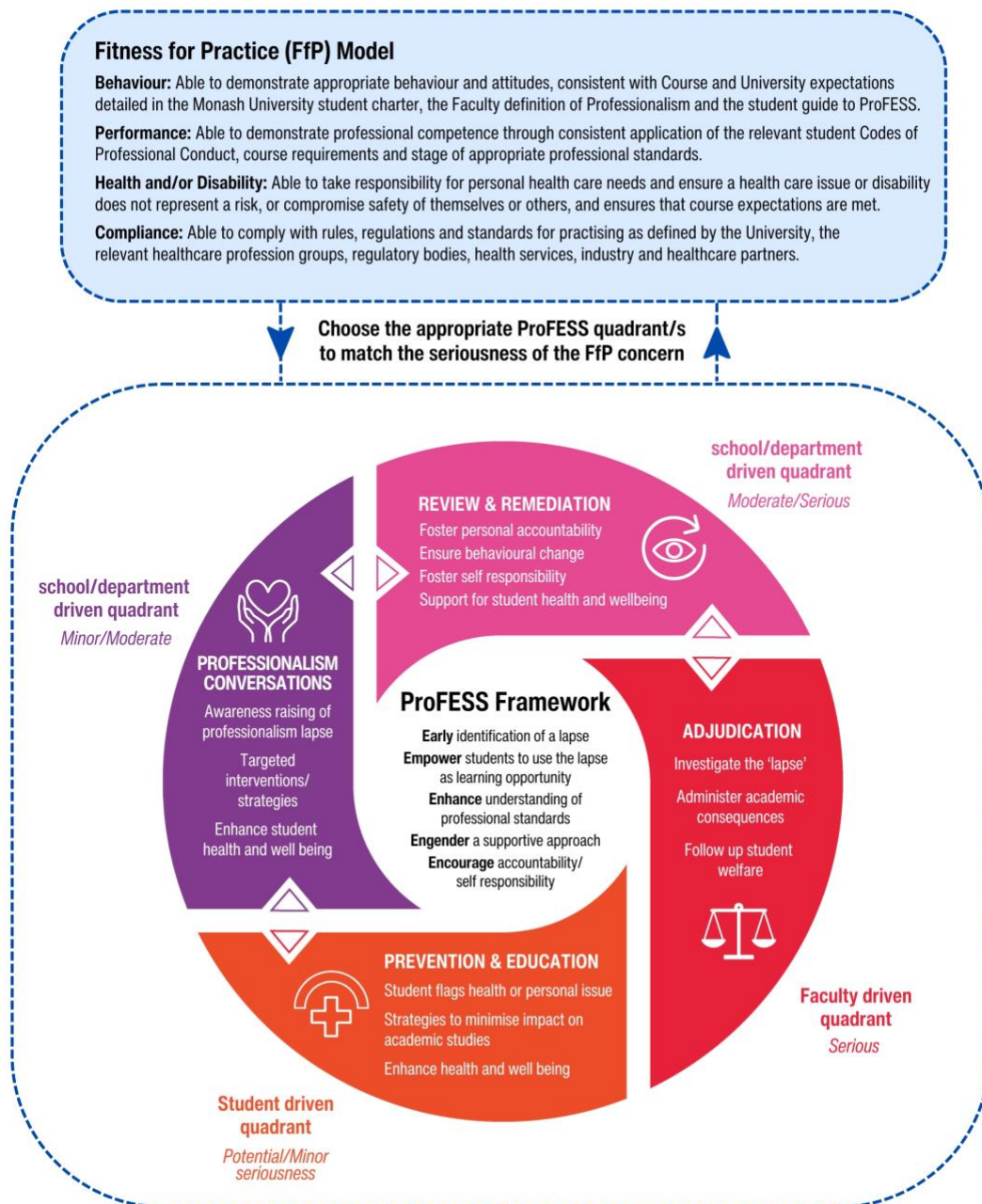
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## Professional Standards, Ethical Behaviours and Student Support (ProFESS)

Professionalism (faculty definition appendix A) and Fitness for Practice (see p 4) are regarded as core curricula in the faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

This information guide is an overview of the *Professional Standards, Ethical Behaviour and Student Support (ProFESS)* framework used to assist you meet Fitness for Practice course expectations especially if you are experiencing difficulties.



Fitness for Practice course expectations apply irrespective of where the teaching and learning are delivered - on campus, online, in a research laboratory or on clinical placement. These competencies demonstrate that you have the essential professionalism skills needed to be a safe and effective practitioner and/or researcher with the knowledge and skills about how to manage personal difficulties while continuing to meet professional standards and course expectations.

## ProFESS in a Nutshell

ProFESS has four integrated quadrants with access depending on the type of behavioural support needed and the nature of the Fitness for Practice concern.

ProFESS is a student centred process to empower you to be an active agent in your own learning. Sometimes a professional behaviour lapse can occur for unexpected reasons, including ill health and personal difficulties, resulting in a significant impact on your professional and personal growth (Appendix A). The ProFESS framework supports you to work through these difficulties. It uses a behaviour change approach to strengthen your understanding of professional standards and outline strategies to help you meet Fitness for Practice (FfP) course requirements (Appendix B).

This guide describes each of the quadrants of the ProFESS framework (Appendix C) and summarises the process for conducting a meeting when remediation is required (Appendix D).

When you are requested to attend a ProFESS meeting, this is to discuss a professional behaviour lapse(s), which has occurred. Your educators attempt to do this as early as possible to ensure you have sufficient time to address the concern so that you meet Fitness for Practice requirements. By engaging in the process you will find that your Professional Identity Formation and understanding of professionalism deepens. Attending any academic performance meetings can be stressful and bringing a support person with you often eases this tension. If you are an ATSI student, Gukwonderuk is able to provide a support person to accompany you if you wish. If you are registered as having a Disability, consider inviting your case worker as your support person. Please observe all university requirements in relation to a support person



**Key focus of ProFESS** *Identify a problem early and intervene quickly and appropriately to enable behaviour change consistent with course expectations.*

## Why do we need ProFESS?



*Professional excellence is as essential to effective health care and research practice as academic excellence. Having a strong sense of a professional identity and understanding of professionalism will assist you to function safely and effectively within your chosen field of endeavour. For many 21<sup>st</sup> century health professional groups this is regarded as a core competency.*

University studies occur within the broader contours of your life. Many students start their courses having already experienced significant life events, or these develop during their studies. In addition most of us have embedded personal values and beliefs, which may conflict with specific attitudinal/ behavioural course expectations and can result in unintended professional behaviour lapses. The underlying ethos of the ProFESS framework is to: :

- Foster all students health and wellbeing, triaging support options as needed and supporting the importance of personal care in professional and research practice.
- Develop appropriate habits of thinking and being that are consistent with the roles and responsibilities of a 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare practitioner and researcher.
- Build a strong understanding of the privileges and responsibilities of being a healthcare professional in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Promote professional standards and codes of conduct for guiding professional behaviour choices and decision-making when values and beliefs conflict.
- Address individual learners needs while simultaneously ensuring our assessment and progression pathways are consistent with our duty of care to the public.

## What is a Fitness for Practice concern?

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Fitness for Practice (FfP) has four domains, each with its own competency statement:

- **Behaviour**  
Able to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and attitudes, consistent with Course and University expectations detailed in the Monash University student charter, the faculty definition of professionalism and the student guide to ProFESS.
- **Performance**  
Able to demonstrate professional competence through consistent application of the relevant student codes of professional conduct, course requirements and stage appropriate professional standards.
- **Health and/or disability**  
Able to take responsibility for personal health care needs and ensure a health care issue or disability does not represent a risk, or compromise safety of themselves or others, and ensures course expectations are met.
- **Compliance**  
Able to comply with rules, regulations, and standards for practising as defined by the University, the relevant healthcare profession groups, regulatory bodies, health services, industry, and healthcare partners.

Fitness for Practice requirements apply to all University teaching settings including in the workplace, hospital or clinic, on campus, within a research laboratory or online.

## Assessment and Fitness for Practice

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Professionalism will continue to be taught and assessed through current curricula pathways. Fitness for Practice course expectations are also monitored by teaching, learning and support staff. When difficulties or concerns about professional behaviour or Fitness for Practice are noted then the ProFESS framework is activated to assist students **to meet** course expectations while managing difficulties. Fitness for Practice is a compulsory course requirement and not meeting those expectations may result in the academic progress process being enacted. [https://www.monash.edu/students/study-support/academic-progress/receiving-notice/course-requirements#\\_MNHS](https://www.monash.edu/students/study-support/academic-progress/receiving-notice/course-requirements#_MNHS)

An academic progress risk level three is triggered when you do not meet one or more compulsory Fitness for Practice course requirements usually for serious concerns(Appendix E). Referral to Adjudication may result in an Academic Progress Committee (APC) – Fitness for Practice hearing. (<https://www.monash.edu/students/study-support/academic-progress>).



**Key point** *Dual pathways of assessment for professionalism and professional identity formation occur through standard course curricula and Fitness for Practice (FfP) course expectations*

## Appendix A: Personal challenges or difficulties?

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A number of personal challenges can be impacting on your learning or demonstration of professionalism. As detailed below student concerns/problems can occur for a variety of reasons and discussing these with the appropriate staff can provide you with guidance and support to help remedy the problem. Additional support information is in [Managing the Maze](#).

*Common challenges students experience include:*

<b>Adjustment difficulties</b>	e.g. difficulty adapting to University; difficulty adjusting to clinical environment; international student or cultural challenges.
<b>Course challenges</b>	e.g. confused about placements or course expectations; difficulty with mandatory requirements.
<b>Family problems</b>	e.g. difficulty with a family member; abuse/harassment by family member; relationship challenges within the family.
<b>Financial concerns</b>	e.g. couch surfing, sleeping in car etc.
<b>Health concern</b>	e.g. acute illness; previously undiagnosed chronic illness/disability; recent trauma; stress/distress related to bullying/harassment/intimidation.
<b>Learning difficulties</b>	e.g. struggling with academic workload; difficulty with language or study techniques; difficulty with academic teaching staff; difficulty with course requirements.
<b>Lifestyle problems</b>	e.g. external demands on time (elite athlete); outside work commitments impacting on study time; use/misuse of alcohol or drugs; excessive engagement with hobbies such as online gaming or addictive activities.
<b>Personal issues</b>	e.g. recent personal trauma/challenge; death or illness of close friend/family member; personal relationship issues; existential problems.
<b>Social difficulties</b>	e.g. interpersonal difficulties within student cohort; feeling of isolation or not fitting in.

## Appendix B: What is a professional behaviour lapse?

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Professional behaviour lapses are grouped into six categories. At times some of the behaviours detailed here, may be managed under Academic progress, Discipline or Misconduct University policies and regulations.

<b>Behaviour Category</b>	<b>Example of Behaviour</b>
<b>Failure to Engage</b>	Absent or late for assigned activities; not meeting deadlines; poor initiative; general disorganisation; cutting corners; poor teamwork; language difficulties; poor participation.
<b>Dishonest behaviours</b>	Lying; cheating; data fabrication; data falsification; misrepresentation; acting without consent; denying responsibility.
<b>Disrespectful behaviour</b>	Poor verbal/nonverbal communication; not complying with rules & regulations; inappropriate use of social media; inappropriate clothing; disruptive behaviour in teaching sessions; privacy &/or confidentiality violations; bullying; harassment and/or abuse; discrimination; sexual harassment and/or abuse <sup>1</sup> .
<b>Poor self-awareness</b>	Avoiding feedback; not accepting feedback; not sensitive to another's needs; blaming external factors rather than own inadequacies; resisting change; not aware of own limitations; lacking insight into own behaviour; not demonstrating accountability.
<b>Delayed professional identity</b>	Not responsive to, or accepting the required standards; poor understanding of patient/client need; behaviour that presents risk to patient safety; unable to accept appropriate level of professional responsibility
<b>Unethical behaviour</b>	Poor demonstration of stage appropriate role virtues; Not demonstrating stage appropriate ethical principles; Not demonstrating integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Within Monash University this is initially managed as a Misconduct issue

## Appendix C: Initiating a ProFESS meeting

<i>Type of ProFESS meeting</i>	<i>Who identifies the concern? What is the seriousness of the concern?</i>	<i>Who conducts the meeting?#</i>
<b>Prevention &amp; Education meeting</b>	<p><b>Student initiated</b> Personal concern</p> <p><b>Staff initiated</b> In a preventive capacity or role</p>	<p>Monash professional or academic staff member selected by the student and approved to hold these meetings by the individual School/Department.</p> <p>Monash academic staff member at the level of Unit coordinator (or equivalent) or designated by the Director of Education (or equivalent), HOD or faculty</p>
<b>Support meeting</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b> Usually Minor FfP* concern</p>	<p>Monash academic staff member at the level of Unit coordinator (or above) or designated by the Director of Education (or equivalent), HOD or faculty</p>
<b>Review &amp; Remediation meeting</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b> Moderate to Serious FfP concern</p>	<p>Monash academic staff member at the level of Course Convenor (or equivalent) or designated by the Director of Education (or equivalent), HOD or faculty</p>
<b>Adjudication meeting</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b> Serious FfP concern</p>	<p>Referral to the ODDE** Fitness for Practice committee***</p>

# **ATSI students** are advised to contact the Gukwonderuk Unit for further information and support options

\*FfP – Fitness for Practice concerns (see Clinical Placement guide). FfP is governed by Monash University Academic Board regulations, Part 3

\*\*ODDE – Office of the Deputy Dean of Education

\*\*\* APC - Fitness for practice committee is an Academic Progress Committee governed by Monash University Academic Board Regulations, Part 4

## Appendix D: Conducting a ProFESS meeting

<b>ProFESS meeting</b>	<b>Structure of a meeting</b>	<b>Potential Impact/Outcome(s)</b>
<b>Prevention &amp; Education meeting</b>	<p><b>Student or staff initiated.</b>            Specific meeting time organised.            Length of meeting ~ 15 -20 mins.            Student concern discussed.            Student safety/welfare discussed.            Meeting notes kept at secure site.            Meeting logged on ProFESS database for audit purposes.</p>	<p><b>Impact</b>            Increase student wellbeing/performance.            Increase student confidence in support systems.            Empower students to manage problems.            Enhance student understanding of the importance and validity of managing personal needs.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b>            Student concern addressed OR triaged.            Concern resolves AND/OR followed up.            Potential for student to include the meeting outcomes for professional development (PD) purposes.</p>
<b>Professionalism Conversation (formerly Support meeting)</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b>            A Support person is encouraged for all ProFESS meetings (observe guidelines)            Specific meeting time organised.            Length of meeting ~ 20-30 mins.            FfP concern/professionalism lapse discussed and student perspective sought.            Relationship of concern to Fitness for Practice explained.            Student safety/welfare discussed.            Student given copy of meeting notes.            Meeting logged on the school site for audit purposes and to ensure appropriate follow up.</p>	<p><b>Impact</b>            Increase understanding of the importance of support in professional development (PD).            Increase awareness of fitness for practice concerns and professional standards.            Fosters behaviour change through student awareness.            Early identification of a concern.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b>            Opportunity for student to self-correct behaviour.            Increased staff understanding of student need and/or behaviour.            Concern may be triaged to appropriate support services.            Concern may require notification to Unit/Course coordinator, especially if safety/welfare concerns.            An action plan may be provided to assist student with managing a concern.            Meeting notes may be provided for an APC-FfP hearing.</p>
<b>Review &amp; Remediation meeting</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b>            Student notified of meeting time and place.            Encourage a support person (observe guidelines)            Length of meeting ~ 45-60 mins.            The PB lapse is discussed            Relationship of concern to Fitness for Practice explained.            Student perspective sought.            Student safety/welfare discussed if appropriate            Remediation strategies discussed.            Professional Performance Plan developed.            Student given a copy of meeting notes            All meeting notes filed on secure site.            Meeting is logged on the ProFESS database</p>	<p><b>Impact</b>            Improved understanding of Fitness for Practice expectations.            Improved management of student health and wellbeing.            Documentation that behavioural change has occurred.            Remediation strategies designed to assist student meet course expectations.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b>            Successful remediation completed.            Concern followed up to ensure resolution.            Support services triaged if wellbeing/welfare concerns            Notify Safer Communities If safety/welfare concerns,            Process may be used by students for PD purposes.            Meeting notes may be requested in course progression decisions.</p>
<b>Adjudication meeting</b>	<p><b>Staff initiated</b>            Staff referred to the ODDE*.            Student must complete appropriate documents if they wish to attend.            One week notification of meeting.            Support person if student requests.            Concern investigated and discussed by the APC - Fitness for Practice committee hearing.            Outcome decision provided at hearing.            Meeting is logged on the ProFESS database</p>	<p><b>Impact</b>            Increase student understanding of professional behaviour expectations and the need for change.            Potential course progression outcomes for student.            Parallel focus on student wellbeing.            Student, staff, society safety preserved.            Effective adjudication improves graduate outcomes.</p> <p><b>Outcome</b>            Case dismissed OR            Continue enrolment without enrolment conditions OR            Continue enrolment with enrolment conditions OR            Exclusion from the course.</p>

\*ODDE Office of the Deputy Dean of Education

## Appendix E: Defining the Seriousness of a FfP concern

This table provides you with a guide to how the faculty may decide whether a FfP concern is considered Minor, Moderate or Serious.

Minor	Moderate	Serious
A single FfP concern – student acknowledges the concern and responds to it. Apology is given if needed. Responsive to support and/ or remediation.	Repetitive episodes of a single FfP concern in spite of support and /or remediation; multiple educators reporting a single concern, and/or multiple episodes of different concerns.	Student has attended 1, 2 or 3 review and remediation meetings without satisfactorily addressing remediation plans and/or behavioural change targets within an acceptable timeframe.
FfP concern(s) that does not represent a safety concern for self, peers, patients, or staff, which resolves with support and/or remediation.	Behaviour that could potentially cause harm to self, peers, teachers, or patients. Behaviour that represents a low level safety concern to self, peers, teachers, or patients.	A significant safety concern for self, staff, peers, or patients and/or FfP concern resulting in removal from placement.
Student accepts responsibility and is responsive to feedback about the FfP concern.	Irresponsible/unethical behaviour. Student lacks insight/awareness and/or is resistant to feedback.	Student is nonresponsive to feedback, support and/or remediation strategies. Lacks insight and/or does not accept responsibility for unethical behaviour
Student is accountable for the FfP concern or professional behaviour lapse.	Student does not accept responsibility for the FfP concern or denies accountability.	Student does not demonstrate remorse or accept responsibility/accountability for the FfP concern. Repetitive behavioural issues despite prior remediation
Single/sudden/unexpected health issue affecting studies. Acute on chronic health issue(s) that affects studies and impacts on FfP performance. Student is well enough to address the concern.	Ongoing concerns re student's health &/or wellbeing that intermittently appears to affect studies. Student does not appear to be managing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant health issues impacting on academic studies or course requirements. Limited student response to care needs.</li> <li>• Illegal and/or Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) reportable behaviour.</li> </ul>

FfP = Fitness for Practice