Code of Practice for the Professionalism Concerns Group
**Membership**

Director of Undergraduate Education *Chair*

Phase 2 Lead

Phase 1 Lead

One or more lay members

A member of clinical academic staff who will be a psychiatrist

An administrative secretary appointed by the Departmental Manager

**The Professionalism Concerns Group**

The workings of the Professionalism Concerns Group (PCG) are governed by the GMC’s ‘Medical students: professional values and fitness to practise (2009)’ and ‘Good Medical Practice (2013)’ documents. The Professionalism Concerns Group is responsible for the monitoring of and improvement of the professionalism of any student whose unprofessional behaviour is giving cause for concern. The primary role of the Professionalism Concerns Group is to help unprofessional students improve their professionalism. The Professionalism Concerns group is not primarily a disciplinary group but may refer an unprofessional student to the Head of Department, or to the Fitness to practise Committee.

**Referral to the Professionalism Concerns Group**

The PCG receives reports from any individual, be they a member of staff, a student or lay person who is concerned that the behaviour of a student is unprofessional. The PCG may also receive referrals from the Academic or Professionalism Support Units. The referral is normally made using the form entitled ‘Request for Professionalism Support’ (see below). This form is available in paper form or e-mail from Mrs Sandie Smith (sms16@le.ac.uk) or from the Medical School website. Members of staff who complete this form must tell the student(s) involved at the time of the incident that the form is going to be completed and explain the reason. A copy of the completed form should be sent to Mrs Sandie Smith who will then send a copy to the student involved.

In the case of a fellow students or a lay person who has concerns about the lack of professionalism of a student it is not compulsory to complete a ‘Request for Professionalism Support’, however the student involved will always be informed by the PCG of the nature of the concern that has been raised and in this situation the student will always appear before the PCG in person so that he/she can have the opportunity to explain the background to the concern that has been raised.

**Assessment and Monitoring of Professionalism**

The Professionalism Concerns Group shall meet regularly and may require a student to appear before it. Depending on the severity/frequency of unprofessional behaviour, a student will be placed into one of five categories:
• **No concern:** A Student who has been referred to the Professionalism Concerns Group and is not considered a cause for concern and does not require monitoring.

• **Green concern:** This student has been either in the red or amber category, and has acted to reduce concern, leaving them under continuing lighter touch monitoring.

• **Amber concern:** This student is giving moderate cause for concern because of poor professionalism, or because they are in the process of resolving difficulties which led to a red categorisation previously. They remain subject to close monitoring and targeted support from the Professionalism Support Unit.

• **Red Concern:** This student is giving serious cause for concern, needs intense monitoring and support from the Professionalism Support Unit. A student in this category is at risk of being:
  a) Referred to the Head of Department with a recommendation that the student be deemed to have neglected their Professionalism Obligations (see below).
  b) Referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee. The Director of Undergraduate Medical Education will normally discuss students who are on the threshold of referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee with the Head of Department and a decision will be made regarding referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee. If it is decided not to refer the student to the Fitness to Practise Committee the Head of Department will ensure that the student concerned is aware of the seriousness of their unprofessional behaviour and will make it clear what needs to be done to prevent future referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee. It will also be made clear that future unprofessional behaviour will lead to referral to the Fitness to Practise Committee.
  c) Deemed to have neglected their Academic Obligations or be in breach of the University’s Student Discipline Regulations. Students who are deemed to have neglected their Academic Obligations or be in breach of the University’s Discipline Regulations will be referred to the Head of Department.

• **Severe concern:** Immediate referral to Fitness to Practise Committee

**Professionalism Concerns Student Register**

All students, other than those whose behaviour has never been found to be a cause for concern, will be placed on to a register of students whose unprofessional behaviour has been a cause for concern. This register will be kept and updated by the Administrative Secretary.

**Professionalism Support Unit**

Students whose behaviour is unprofessional may be referred to the Professionalism Support Unit who provide a range of interventions designed to promote reflection and learning concerning professional attitudes and behaviours. See Code of Practice for the Professionalism Support Unit.

September 2014
Serious Professionalism Concerns that require immediate action

In the event that the Director of Undergraduate Medical Education is made aware of unprofessional conduct by a medical student that places a patient, themselves or other students at significant risk, then the Director of Undergraduate Medical Education will remove the student from patient contact and either arrange for the student to appear before the Professionalism Concerns Group or refer the student directly to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Neglect of Professionalism Obligations

A medical student whose unprofessional behaviour has been a cause of serious concern, but not serious enough to be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee, may be referred to the Head of Department with a recommendation that the student be deemed to have neglected their Professionalism Obligations. A Student who has been deemed to have neglected his/her Professionalism Obligations would normally, but not always, be on a Red category of concern and would normally, but not always, have been warned that they are at risk of neglecting their Professionalism Obligations. A student who has been found by the Head of Department to have neglected his/her Professionalism Obligations will be referred to the next relevant Board of Examiners with a recommendation that the student should not progress (irrespective of whether or not the student has met all other progression requirements) due to neglect of Professionalism Obligations. The Chair of the Professionalism Concerns Group will provide a report explaining whether there are any health issues that have impaired the student’s professionalism that could not reasonably have been expected to have been resolved over the course of the academic year in question. The Board of Examiners will normally allow a repeat of the year. However, if there are student health issues that need addressing then the Board of Examiners may require the student to suspend their studies before repeating the year. A Student may repeat a year as a consequence of Neglect of Professionalism Obligations on a single occasion during the 4 or 5-year Programme.
Professionalism Support Form (PSF)

REFERRAL TO PROFESSIONALISM CONCERNS GROUP FOR PROFESSIONALISM SUPPORT

Name of Student

Date

Context/Teaching event

Reason for referral for support

Have you told the student at the time of the event?

Did the student respond professionally to being informed of this referral?