

# A16.1 Fitness to Study

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## 1 Introduction

SAE Institute is committed to ensuring prospective and current students have a fair opportunity to succeed within their studies, and that the provisions for reasonable adjustments are clearly identified and provided where necessary. This policy outlines the approach to these considerations, as well as when and how an offer of enrolment or active registration may be withdrawn where there is an identified significant potential risk to the student, their peers, Institute staff and/or members of the public.

### 1.1 Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- A01 Student Selection and Admissions Policy
- A08.3 Academic Misconduct
- A09 Progression, Transfer and Graduation Policy
- A16 Student Support Policy.

## 2 Definitions

*Individual.* The applicant or student to whom the policy is being applied.

*Staff Member.* Wherever a specific staff role is not stated, the generic term staff member is used. This is usually to account for the different roles involved in the support of an applicant versus the support of a student.

*Fitness to Study.* When students are fit to study SAE Institute can be confident that:

- Students are able to engage with and benefit from their academic studies with a reasonable chance of obtaining the qualification they have registered for.
- Their behaviour does not disrupt any other members of the SAE community (students, staff, or visitors) in their business.
- They do not put their own, or others', health and safety at risk.

## 3 Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all applicants and students of SAE Institute's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, validated by a partner UK Higher Education provider, as well as all unvalidated vocational programmes offered across the campuses.

This policy serves as a protection for students ensuring, where identified, adequate support is provided when there has been a significant disruption to a student's ability to study and engage properly, to afford a fair chance to succeed within their studies. This policy also serves as a protection for students, staff and the general public where there is a risk of harm to the student or others that is perceived to be serious.

SAE Institute will not prejudice any individual at any stage of the process, and all decisions should be made based on factual evidence. SAE Institute will, at all times, work to ensure fairness for the individual, while also protecting the individual and any other staff, students or members of the public who may be at risk.

Potential risks can vary in severity and may include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical health**, where there are significant concerns for the individual's health and safety, or their ability to adequately engage with their studies based on their physical health.
- **Mental health**, where there are significant concerns for the individual's health and safety, or their ability to adequately engage with their studies based on their mental health.
- **Diverse Learning Needs**, where an individual's learning needs require significant adjustment to their programme, which could not be deemed reasonable.
- **Attendance and Engagement**, where an individual's attendance and/or engagement with their learning is deemed significantly below a reasonable level required to achieve the aims and outcomes of their programme.
- **Behaviour and/or Conduct**, where an individual's behaviour poses a risk to them, their peers, staff members and/or members of the public. While behavioural risk can be considered within the scope of the Fitness to Study policy, actions taken would normally be taken under the guidance of the A18 Student Code of Conduct.

## 4 Application

The details contained within this policy should be considered alongside the policies outlined in Section 1.1, and as such should be considered an extension of these policies.

When a student's fitness to study is called into question under this policy, the campus in question must identify a member of academic staff who will be responsible for taking the Fitness to Study case forward ("Fitness to Study Lead"), normally the relevant Programme

Coordinator or the Academic Coordinator for an enrolled student, or the relevant Recruitment Officer or Academic Coordinator for an applicant.

Once a concern has been identified, it is expected that the Fitness to Study Lead will attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance, encouraging the student to access the campus support services where appropriate.

The Fitness to Study procedure should only be initiated once other informal attempts at addressing the situation have been explored.

#### **4.1 Preliminary Investigation**

Before a concern is to be considered under the Fitness to Study policy, a preliminary investigation will be conducted by the Fitness to Study Lead to determine context, ascertain evidence for consideration and to discuss such concerns with the individual. During this preliminary investigation there will be no changes to any individuals' circumstances, and SAE Institute will not prejudge the outcome of the investigation.

The overall purpose of the preliminary investigation is to establish whether there are suitable factual grounds for which this policy should be applied. At all times, the preliminary investigation should seek to establish documented facts that support the decision to apply this policy or discount the concern. In either case, the Fitness to Study Lead should be able to support their decision through the evidence gathered.

The preliminary investigation should be completed in a timely manner so as not to cause any undue stress to those involved, or cause unnecessary delay in any further actions arising. Where no further action is required, the case will be dismissed.

Where the preliminary investigation has identified a potential risk, the individual will be notified by the Fitness to Study Lead in writing, who will outline the concerns and invite them to a preliminary meeting to review their circumstances alongside the initial evidence gathered. The meeting will be chaired by the Fitness to Study Lead. At this meeting, the individual will be given an opportunity to be accompanied by a companion for support, where they will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide any additional information.

This meeting should facilitate constructive discussions on how the individual may be supported through their studies based on the reasonable adjustments that can be made.

#### 4.1.1 *Preliminary Investigation Outcome*

In closing the preliminary investigation, the Fitness to Study Lead may decide to dismiss the case or may recommend further action. This could include, but is not limited to:

- **Recommend specific external action.** Where the scope of the identified support and/or severity of the situation is beyond the provisions available to SAE Institute, the individual will be directed to an external service for support. This could be a health professional or an educational support professional.
- **Recommend a minor review of existing support provisions.** Where a pre-existing support plan can be easily adapted within the scope of provisions available to SAE Institute, the Fitness to Study Lead can, in discussion with the individual, the Academic Coordinator and Campus Manager, amend the support plan.
- **Recommend further action through a Student Support Review Panel.** Where no support plan exists, or where it has been determined that there are significant gaps in the support plan, the Fitness to Study Lead can request the Academic Coordinator to convene a Student Support Review Panel.
- **Recommend further action through a Fitness to Study Panel.** Where there is a concern that the individual cannot reasonably be supported through their studies, the Fitness to Study Lead can request the Academic Coordinator to convene a Fitness to Study Panel.
- **Recommend further action is deemed necessary under the Student Code of Conduct policy.** Where there is a behavioural and/or conduct concern, the Fitness to Study Lead can instruct the Academic Coordinator and Campus Manager accordingly. In this instance, the Fitness to Study Policy is superseded by the A18 Student Code of Conduct policy.

## 5 Right to Complain and Appeal

At all times throughout the preliminary investigation, and during any further actions taken in accordance with section 4.1, the individual will be kept informed of the process and given reasonable opportunities to contribute to achieving the most appropriate outcome.

Where an individual feels this policy has not been applied correctly, or where they believe there has been a procedural oversight in carrying out the duties outlined within this policy, the individual may complain in line with SAE Institute's A14 Complaints Policy.

Where an individual feels the outcome of the processes outlined is unfair or inappropriate, the individual has the right to appeal. The appeal should come from the individual, unless the individual is a minor in which case a named parent or guardian may correspond with the Institute on the individual's behalf. SAE Institute will not respond to communication from legal representatives.

Appeals should be made in writing to the relevant Academic Coordinator or Campus Manager. The individual should include clear evidence-based reasons for their appeal. Appeals based on circumstantial or anecdotal evidence will not normally be considered. Where an appeal has been submitted, an "Appeal Lead" will be appointed to review the further evidence and respond to the individual in a timely manner.

## 6 Policy History

Policy Created:	August 2021
Date of Last Revision:	November 2021
Approved by:	UPSQC, November 2021