

Declaring your Fitness to Practice in a Work Integrated Learning Setting

Guide for Students

To provide a safe and successful Work Integrated Learning experience, students are required to indicate and demonstrate their *Fitness to Practice (FTP)*.

Please review the expectations outlined below and sign the Personal Declaration form.

Fitness to Practice Procedure:

1. If you present yourself to a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) site or class, you are declaring your fitness to practice to your instructor.
2. Sometimes your FTP is compromised in ways that cannot be avoided. For example, you may experience an injury or an illness that affects your physical or emotional health. When you recognize that your FTP is potentially compromised, you must discuss the situation immediately with your instructor, who will notify the Program Chair in writing, so that processes to support you in your efforts to regain your ability to practice safely can be assessed. Your instructor will summarize the concerns and share this document with you, the Program Chair and the Associate Dean within 24 hours.
3. It is important that you develop the professional habit of self-reflection and self-assessment regarding FTP. If you feel that there are emerging circumstances or conditions that may compromise your ability to practice safely, you need to immediately inform your instructor. You may also take steps to improve your health and wellbeing by accessing appropriate resources as outlined in your course outline. It may be that through collaboration between you, your instructor, and the Program Chair, you may be able to avoid a situation where your FTP is actually compromised.
4. Sometimes, factors impairing your FTP also impair your ability to self-assess your FTP. In that case, it may be that someone else in the practice setting identifies concerns about your FTP; note that staff and peers have a duty to report concerns with your fitness to practice. These concerns will be directed to your instructor, who will then initiate a conversation with you about the concerns. This conversation will also involve the Program Chair so that if needed, the processes to support you in your efforts to regain your ability to engage safely in practice can be assessed. If, in the judgment of your instructor or staff in the practice setting, your personal safety or the safety of others in the practice is compromised, you will be required to leave the practice environment in a safe and supported manner, and FTP processes will be initiated.

5. Once the FTP concern has been identified (via one of the processes above), you must make an appointment to see the Associate Dean of your academic program. You will then be advised of the next steps.
6. If you receive a failing grade related to your fitness to practice and you later identify a medical condition that impacted your FTP, you will also be required to follow the process outlined below.

Process for medical clearance

If, upon discussion with the AD, it is determined that your FTP has indeed been compromised, you will not be permitted to return to the practice setting until appropriate steps have been taken:

1. You will receive guidance to seek a health assessment by an appropriate, regulated, or accredited health care professional. Seeking that assessment and any associated costs will be your responsibility. If you are unable to pay for all or part of the costs, you can apply for financial assistance.
2. The College reserves the right to have an independent assessment if there is a concern with the medical documentation provided by you. The College will cover the costs of this assessment.
3. Once the assessment and recommendations have been completed, you will need to submit the document to the Lethbridge College Care Team via the Guardian Reporting platform. The Care Team will provide a recommendation to the Dean of your program. The Dean will review the summary from the Care Team and decide about your potential return based on the outcomes of the course and seat availability.
4. You may receive a Required to Withdraw (RW) grade if you are unable to complete your WIL assignment.

Declaring your Fitness

1. The *Personal Declaration Form* will be attached to any course with WIL hours, and you will be required to sign the form once per year at the beginning of the term in which you are registered to complete the WIL component.
2. You are required to sign the form and return it to the WIL coordinator (or the person who coordinates this function in your program area) prior to attending your Work Integrated Learning experience. Signing this form indicates that you are ready to practice in a safe and competent way. If you are unable to sign the form, please contact your Academic Centre or Support Service to discuss.

3. This form will be stored for two years in your academic centre as part of the work integrated learning records.

Definitions:

1. **Fitness / Fitness to Practice** – means being mentally and physically able to perform one's duties and meaningfully participate in learning activities without endangering property or the safety of any person, including oneself.
2. **Protected Grounds** – means protection from discrimination based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender (including pregnancy, sexual harassment, and gender identify), physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income and sexual orientation (Alberta Human Rights Commission)