



GORDON T. & ELLEN WEST COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL FITNESS POLICY

Policy

Admitted candidates (teacher, educational diagnostician, school counseling, principal and superintendent) are expected to meet specified non-academic standards that are necessary to be competent teachers/educator professionals. The intent is to ensure that the candidates recommended for certification are able to effectively and independently carry out the duties for which they are being prepared. The fitness criteria include personality characteristics, responsibility characteristics, communication skills, social relationships, adherence to the educator code of ethics and commitment to the teaching profession. Students who have been identified with a demonstrable discrepancy by one or more professors or cooperating teachers will meet with the Fitness Alert Committee to discuss options and develop a growth plan. The Fitness Alert Committee consists of five faculty members in the West College of Education appointed by a department chair. Failure to make satisfactory progress on the growth plan may result in denied admission to clinical teaching or removal from the program. In extreme cases, the student may be immediately removed.

Fitness Alert Procedure

If any WCOE degree candidate or candidate in the educator preparation program demonstrates inappropriate behavior leading a faculty member to question the student's fitness for assuming a professional role, the professor will warn the student that said behavior is unacceptable and will document the warning(s). If the candidate's behavior and/or response to warnings do not demonstrate a change, the faculty member will complete the *Professional Fitness Alert Form* and inform the student of the Professional Fitness Procedures that will occur. If a candidate shows an egregious lack of judgment suggesting lack of professional fitness, a fitness form may be issued without a previous warning. A five-member fitness alert committee is appointed by the dean and includes at least one representative from outside the candidate's department.

Issuing the *Professional Fitness Alert Form* requires the following action:

1. Professor issuing professional fitness alert form will attach accompanying narrative to document the situation or incident and give both to their department chair.
2. Department chair will give the completed *Professional Fitness Alert Form* to the fitness alert committee chair.
3. Fitness alert committee will meet to determine if Professional Fitness Alert documentation meets minimum requirements.
4. The student's program coordinator and the candidate will receive a copy.
5. Within ten days from the time the *Professional Fitness Form* was submitted, the committee will convene and meet with the candidate and the reporting faculty member.

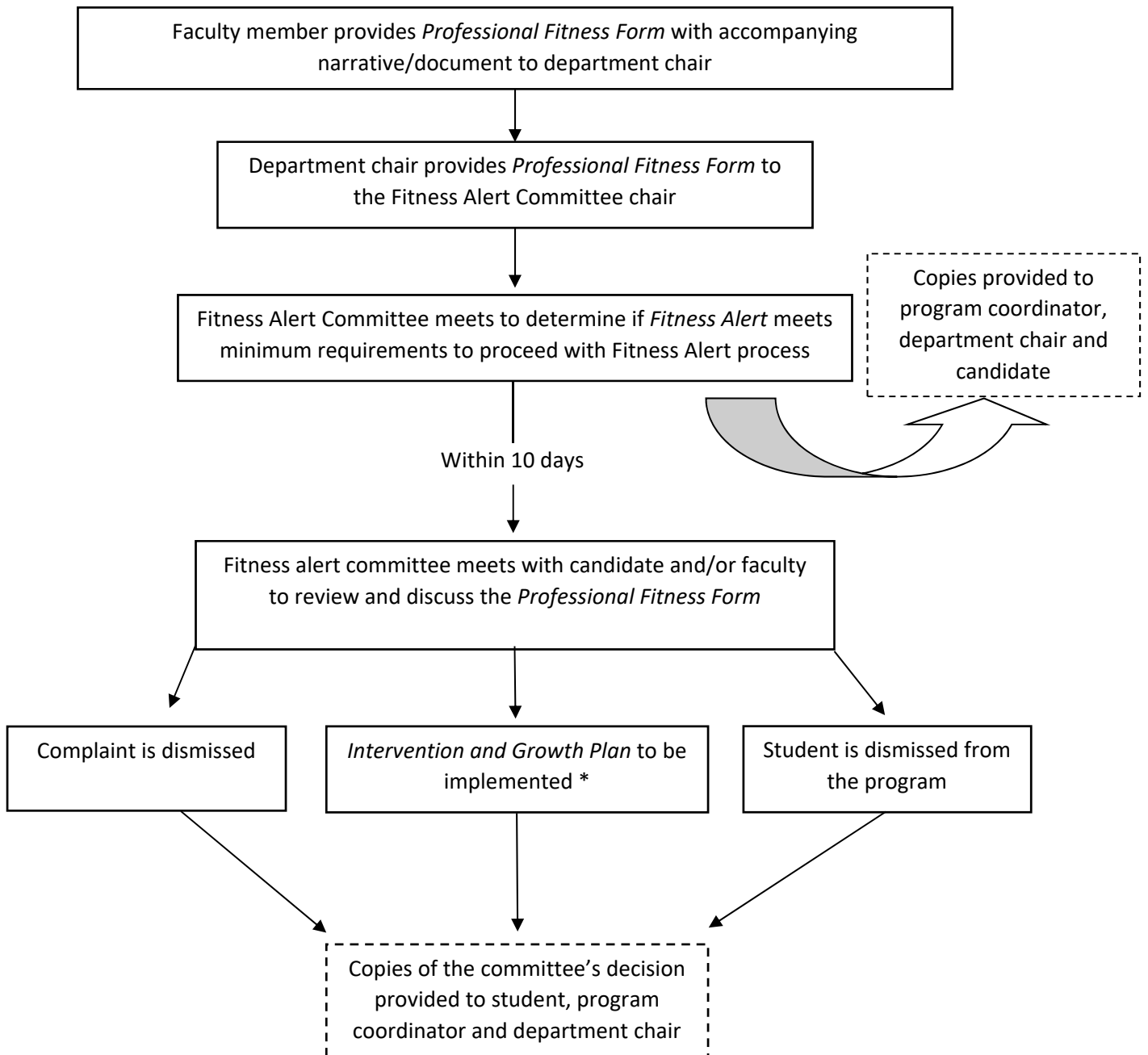
6. The situation will be described and discussed. The committee can dismiss the complaint, issue the *Intervention and Growth Plan*, or dismiss the candidate from the academic or educator preparation program.
7. The candidate, the program coordinator, and the department chair will receive a copy of the decision of the committee.
8. During the *Intervention and Growth Plan* time period, if credible information of continued inappropriate behavior is brought to the attention of the committee in writing, the professional fitness alert committee will reconvene to consider further action or candidate dismissal from the program.

Counseling Out Procedure

Candidates who have multiple Fitness Alerts/concerns forwarded to a department chair, certification officer or dean may receive counseling regarding the appropriateness of the teaching/education profession. WCOE concerns may be based upon the knowledge, skills and/or disposition outlined in syllabi and the conceptual framework, but may also include engagement in the profession. WCOE is ultimately responsible for the performance of its completers and reserves the right to determine who is identified as a WCOE teacher/educator professional.

Procedure Schema

Issuing the *Professional Fitness Alert Form* requires the following action:



*During the intervention period if credible information of continued inappropriate behavior is brought to the attention of the committee in writing, the fitness alert committee will reconvene to consider further action.