



Education Workforce Council

Remote meetings

Remote meetings: Fitness to Practise

As a result of the restrictions which remain in force in Wales following the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020, we have determined that, unless there are exceptional factors, all meetings will be conducted using a **remote** meetings process. A remote meeting (sometimes referred to as a virtual meeting) is one held online, using a video link.

This is a high-level guide which explains how we will conduct remote meetings for the purpose of assessing suitability for registration in the short term.

Background

Our responsibilities

Established in 2015 by the Education (Wales) Act 2014, we are the largest, independent professional regulator in Wales for more than 80,000 school and FE-based teachers and learning support staff, qualified youth/youth support workers and work-based learning practitioners.

Our aims include to maintain and improve standards of professional conduct amongst our registrants, to safeguard the interests of learners, parents and the public and maintain public trust and confidence in the education workforce in Wales. We do this by keeping a Register of Education Practitioners, and by investigating and meeting allegations of misconduct, incompetence and criminal offences that question whether a registrant is fit to continue to practise.

The Act also requires us to assess the suitability of persons applying for registration with us.

The Code

Registrants are expected to adhere to the key principles of our Code of Professional Conduct and Practice. The Code can be found [here](#).

Legislation

We are bound by the requirement to hear cases as set out in the Education Wales (Act) 2014, as amended, and the Education Workforce Council (Functions) Regulations Wales 2015, as amended.

We are also bound by, and committed to, the Wales-specific public sector equality duty, Welsh Standards and GDPR legislation.

Principles we apply

We apply the same, fundamental principles to each assessment and meeting, namely those of **fairness, efficiency, transparency, impartiality, confidentiality** and **natural justice**.

Remote meeting

Even in these unprecedented times, we still have a responsibility to discharge our aim and functions.

Having postponed our meeting activity since March, we have taken legal advice which confirms continuing with meetings on a remote basis is proportionate and fair. We also know from our extensive research this approach has been in place for some time with other regulators, as well as the judiciary allowing the court system to continue operating.

Process

Meetings will be managed remotely using Zoom Professional software, which all our panel members and staff have been trained to use.

We will issue Zoom Professional user guidance to those involved in a meeting in good time, carry out test calls in advance and on the day. This is to make sure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible, although we accept technical problems may still arise. Direct dial numbers and email addresses of our Team will be provided to participants in advance to help resolve any problems quickly on the day.

We will still record our meetings. However, it is **strictly prohibited** for any other person to audio or video record, screen shot, photograph, copy or share our meeting proceedings.

Procedure

We accept meeting cases remotely may take longer, but our process otherwise remains broadly the same. The Chair of a meeting committee controls how a meeting will be run, and is responsible for following the procedure set out in our Registration Rules.

An independent legal adviser sits with the Committee to ensure the procedure is fair, and to deal with any points of law.

Our staff will closely monitor any breaks in connection for any participant, recommend to the Chair that an adjournment is needed, and aim to resolve those issues quickly.

We provide applicants with detailed guidance in good time before the meeting in order to prepare.

Further information

We can be contacted at fitnesstopractise@ewc.wales

For general information about the EWC, please visit www.ewc.wales