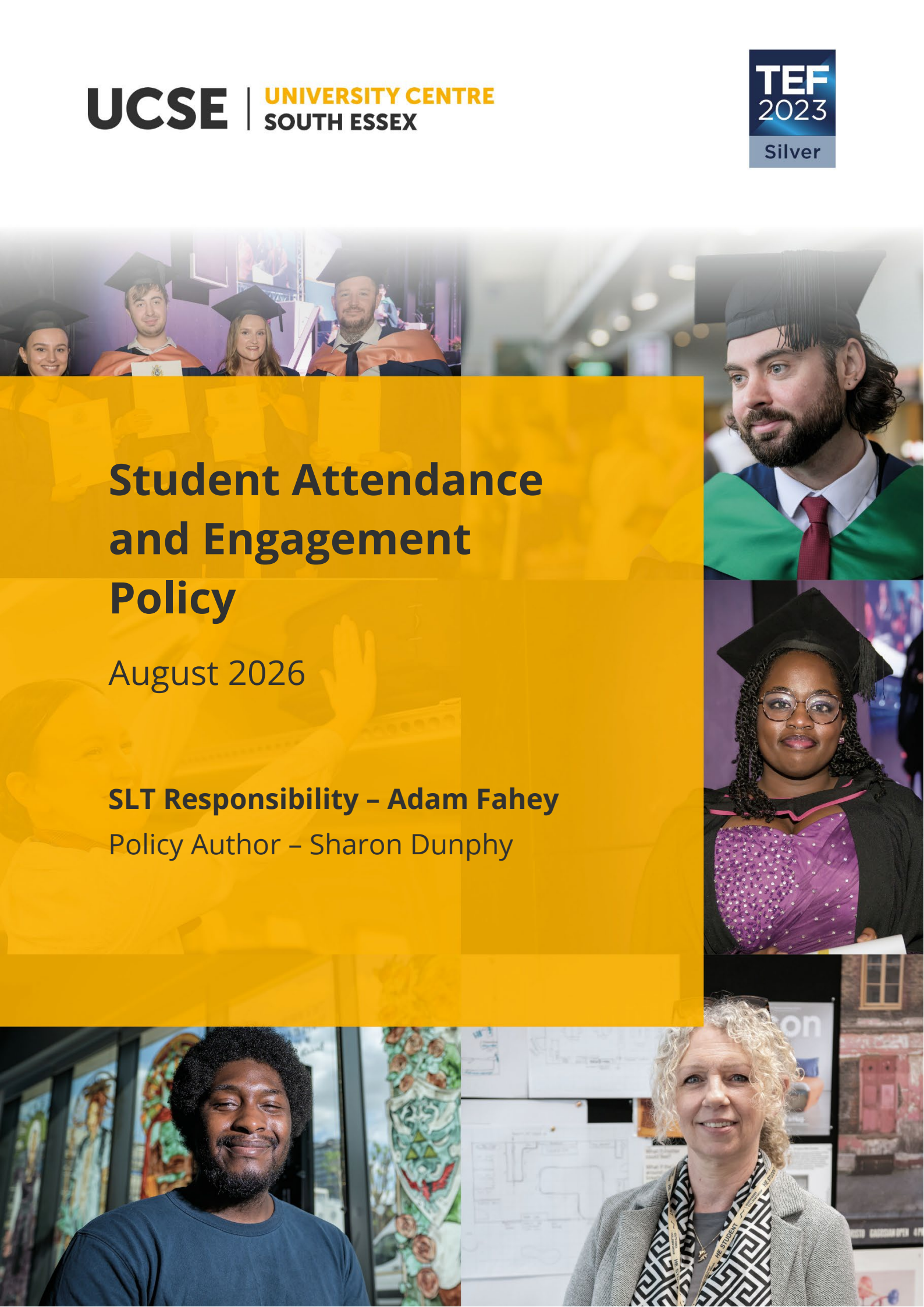




Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

August 2026

SLT Responsibility – Adam Fahey

Policy Author – Sharon Dunphy

Significant Changes Following Review

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
2-5	EAI updated	Sharon Dunphy

POLICY AVAILABILITY NOTICE

This policy is available in alternative formats upon request to accommodate different needs including word. To request an alternative format, please contact HE support at HEsupport@southessex.ac.uk

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	August 2026
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Deputy Executive Director Higher Education and Quality
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change?	All Higher Education students, Programme Leaders, Programme Partnership Managers, HE Student Support staff and other staff involved in monitoring, supporting and reviewing student attendance and engagement.
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.?	The policy has been reviewed to strengthen monitoring of attendance and engagement, provide a clearer three-stage intervention process, ensure consistent decision making, and improve support mechanisms for students experiencing barriers to participation and academic success.

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate?	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage?	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit?	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy?	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	Neutral impact. The policy applies consistently to all HE students irrespective of age.	Monitor attendance and engagement outcomes annually to ensure no age group is disproportionately affected.	Ongoing. Deputy Executive Director HE & Quality
Disability	3	Positive impact. The policy recognises disabilities, health conditions and exceptional circumstances and provides for reasonable adjustments, alternative engagement methods and support plans. Potential disadvantage may occur if support needs are not identified early.	Ensure reasonable adjustments are discussed and implemented before intervention stages are progressed. Provide accessible communications and support through HE Student Support Services.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager
Gender (Sex)	1	Neutral impact. The policy applies equally to all students.	Continue annual monitoring of outcomes.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager
Gender Reassignment	1	Neutral impact. The policy applies equally to all students and supports fair treatment.	Ensure confidentiality and dignity are maintained throughout implementation of the policy.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	No adverse impact identified.	Continue monitoring through annual policy review.	Annual Review. Deputy Executive Director HE & Quality
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	Potential impact where pregnancy, maternity leave or caring responsibilities affect attendance, engagement or participation requirements.	Consider flexibility in attendance requirements, online participation, assessment deadlines and support plans where appropriate.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager
Race	2	Positive impact through consistent application of attendance and engagement procedures. Potential risk of unconscious bias in escalation decisions.	Monitor outcomes and ensure staff involved in decision making undertake Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.	Ongoing. Deputy Executive Director HE & Quality

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Religion or Religious Belief	2	Potential impact where attendance requirements or meetings coincide with religious observance.	Consider reasonable flexibility in scheduling meetings and engagement activities where possible.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager
Sexual Orientation	1	No adverse impact identified. The policy applies equally to all students.	Continue monitoring through annual policy review.	Annual Review. Deputy Executive Director HE & Quality
Any other element that needs to be considered.	3	Attendance and engagement may be affected by mental health concerns, caring responsibilities, financial hardship or personal circumstances. The policy recognises exceptional circumstances and provides routes to support.	Ensure referral to HE Student Support, Fitness to Study processes and appropriate support services where required.	Ongoing. Programme Partnership Manager and HE Student Support Team

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HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE 2025-26

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group expects all of its Higher Education students (with the exception of those that have deferred or intermitted): in line with University South Essex student general terms and conditions.

- To attend in a timely manner and contribute fully to timetabled lectures, teaching sessions, seminars, and tutorials.
- To attend in a timely manner and in accordance with agreed protocols during work related activities, such as placements with employers and meetings as part of consultations with stakeholders on live briefs.
- To contribute to University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group's Higher Education (HE) community and learning experience of students in teaching sessions and, where agreed, fulfilling commitments as a Student Mentor, Student Representative, and/or Student Ambassador.
- To contribute to class, listening to and reflecting on the contributions of others.
- Timely completion of and adequate performance in assessments.

1.2 The following terms in this document have the meanings indicated below:

- "Attendance" – the participation of a student, either physically or remotely, in a timely manner at scheduled teaching sessions or other required activities (including, but not limited to, programme-related trips and work-related activities such as placements) as prescribed by University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group.
- "Engagement" - the active involvement of the student in their studies as evidenced, for example, by meaningful contributions to taught sessions (however delivered), to online programme related discussions, message boards, viewing, downloading and interacting with learning resources on the University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group virtual learning environment (VLE), appropriate preparatory work in advance of teaching events, constructive working with fellow students as required by the structure of the programme.

- “Progress” - the achievement of satisfactory academic results, evidence of developing academic, employability and transferrable skills in line with programme requirements.
- “Higher Education / HE” refers to all programmes that are Level 4 and above.
- “Student” refers to all those enrolled on a HE programme at Level 4 and above at University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group of Further and Higher Education.
- “Work placement” is any work-related setting overseen by the University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group as part of the HE Programme, whether arranged by the University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group or the student.

1.3 Communication Standards

All communication with students regarding attendance and engagement concerns should be conducted in a supportive and constructive manner.

Decisions, especially those related to formal intervention stages, must be communicated clearly and empathetically, providing specific information on available support services.

Staff are encouraged to use positive language and focus on how students can be supported to overcome challenges and meet expectations.

Each communication should include contact details for relevant support services and encourage students to reach out for assistance.

2. MONITORING OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND/OR ENGAGEMENT AND INTERVENTIONS

- 2.1 Students are expected to make a concerted effort to attend or participate in every timetabled session, whether in person or remotely, on time and remain for the duration of each session. However, this might not be possible due to underlying issues or other barriers to regular attendance or engagement. Students should notify the University/College absence line and communicate non-attendance or non-participation in a timely manner to the programme leader/lecturer responsible for the session. Students are also expected to engage fully with their studies, whether attending in person or participating remotely, and make adequate progress. Consequently, the following stages/interventions are triggered due to lapses in attendance, participation, engagement, or progress

- a) A student's attendance falls below 90% within a four-week period or overall attendance in any one term falls below 85%: students will be asked to attend a first formal meeting (stage 1) with their Programme/Course Leader.
- b) Engagement or unit/module performance falls below an acceptable standard: students will be asked to attend a first formal meeting (stage 1) with their programme/course leader. Examples, although not exhaustive, include:
 - Late or non-submission of work without authorised extensions.
 - Lack of engagement in required activities.
 - Minimal or no interaction with online resources.
- c) If there are exceptional circumstances that impact when a student may not be able to fully participate fully and satisfactorily in relation to their academic studies and student life the student will be referred for support and necessary action under the Fitness to Study policy.
- d) In certain situations, the College may escalate attendance and engagement concerns directly to a higher stage of this policy without completing earlier stages. This will apply where the pattern of non-attendance, non-participation, or disengagement poses a significant risk to the student's academic progress or wellbeing, or where the behaviour is considered particularly serious (for example, repeated unauthorised absences, refusal to engage with support, or persistent non-participation in online learning activities). Any such escalation must:
 - Be authorised by a senior member of staff, such as the HE Programme Partnership Manager, Curriculum Lead, or Deputy Executive Director/Head of School.
 - Be applied proportionately, taking into account the student's individual circumstances, including any barriers to engagement or participation.
 - Be recorded on ProMonitor with clear justification, including evidence of prior concerns and any opportunities the student had to respond, to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency.

3. STAGE 1

3.1 The programme/course leader will:

- i. Invite the student concerned to a formal meeting*
- ii. Actions are set.
- iii. Notes of the meeting are to be recorded on Promonitor.
- iv. Ensure that the student is reminded of the HE Student Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure and the importance of attending.
- v. Remind students of the relevant extenuating circumstances policy

* When inviting a student to a meeting, the Programme/Course Leader will consider any declared exceptional circumstances (see section 7) and ensure that relevant support is offered in alignment with the student's needs.

3.2 Where a student fails to attend a meeting as per 3.1 above and fails to give a reason for the non-attendance or fails to make alternative arrangements. The programme/course leader will contact their programme partnership manager/head of school to initiate a formal stage 2 meeting.

3.3 The following (one or more) are possible outcomes of a stage 1 meeting that the programme/course leader can implement.

- Take no further action,
- student's attendance/engagement continues to be monitored for 4 weeks.
- Refer the student for HE student support.
- Invoke fitness to practice/study procedure.

The overview and outcome of the meeting is to be recorded on ProMonitor.

3.4 Following a Stage 1 meeting, the Programme/Course Leader will communicate the outcomes and any required actions to the student in writing via their student email address within 5 working days. This communication should be supportive, outline the next steps clearly, and provide information on relevant support services that the student can access.

3.5 Where a student's attendance/engagement improves satisfactorily over a period of 4 weeks and actions have been met following a stage 1 meeting with the Programme/Course Leader, then the process comes to an end and no further action is necessary.

4. STAGE 2

- 4.1 If a student has not met the actions agreed upon during stage 1, or if their attendance or engagement continues to fall below the expectations outlined in 2.1, the Programme Partnership Manager/Curriculum leader will invite the student to a formal stage 2 meeting, the possible outcome of this meeting could include:
- No further action is taken, but that the student's attendance continues to be monitored.
 - Refer the student to HE Student Support for support or as part of a package of support measures.
 - Invoke the fitness to practice/study procedure.
 - Issue a written warning.
 - Recommend withdrawal or intermission and/or move to stage 3.
 - Escalation to stage 3
- 4.2 Before proceeding with a stage 2 meeting the programme partnership manager/head of school will review the students' exceptional circumstances if applicable (see section 7) If necessary, adjustments will be made to the action plan.
- 4.3 The outcomes of the Stage 2 meeting will be recorded on ProMonitor and communicated to the student in writing via their student email address within 5 working days. The communication should highlight available support services, offer encouragement, and emphasise University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group commitment to the student's success.
- 4.4 Where a student's attendance/engagement improves satisfactorily over a period of 4 weeks and they meet the actions set out in the stage 2 meetings, the process will conclude, and no further action will be necessary.

5. STAGE 3

- 5.1 If a student's attendance or engagement fails to improve satisfactorily following a Stage 2 meeting, or if the student does not meet the actions set out during the Stage 2 process, Stage 3 will be initiated. The student will be invited to a formal Stage 3 meeting with the Deputy Executive Director of Higher Education/Head of School or a designated representative.

- 5.2 Before proceeding with a stage 3 meeting the Deputy Executive Director will review the students' exceptional circumstances if applicable (see section 7). If necessary, adjustments will be made to the action plan.
- 5.3 The possible outcomes of a Stage 3 meeting include:
- Final Written Warning
 - Withdrawal or Intermission
 - Invoke Fitness to Practice/Study Procedure
- 5.4 Following the meeting, the Student Services Officer (Behaviour Improvement & Customer Service) must; make a written record of the meeting and outcome is communicated in writing to the student via their student email address with agreed actions and is to be recorded on student's Promonitor record within 5 days of the meeting. The communication should remain supportive, emphasising available resources and support options to help the student, even if withdrawal or intermission is the outcome.

6. CLOSURE OF STAGE 3 PROCESS

- 6.1 If a student meets the requirements of a final written no further action will be taken, and the monitoring process will conclude. The student will be encouraged to maintain these improvements to prevent further interventions.
- 6.2 Where a student does not meet the requirements of the final written warning issued a stage 3 meeting will be reconvened.
- 6.3 Where the fitness to study/practice policy has been invoked the stage 3 process for attendance and engagement closes and the procedures within the invoked policy will be followed.
- 6.4 In cases where a decision is made for the student to withdraw or intermit, University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group will provide guidance on the next steps, including potential readmission processes and any conditions that must be met for a future return to study.
- 6.5 The University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group remains committed to supporting all students in achieving their academic goals and will continue to provide access to relevant support services throughout this process.

7. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 7.1 University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group recognises that students may face exceptional circumstances that impact their ability to meet attendance and engagement expectations, including but not limited to disabilities, ongoing health issues, personal crises, or other significant barriers.
- 7.2 In cases where a student has declared a disability, ongoing health condition, or other exceptional circumstance that may affect their attendance or engagement:
- The Programme/Course Leader, in consultation with HE Student Support Services, will work with the student to create a reasonable accommodation plan tailored to the student's specific needs.
 - Students are encouraged to communicate their circumstances early and provide relevant documentation to facilitate appropriate adjustments, such as modified attendance requirements, extensions, or alternative engagement methods.
 - University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group will consider these circumstances before triggering any formal intervention stages, ensuring that support measures are in place to help the student succeed.
- 7.3 When reviewing a student's attendance and engagement, staff will take into account any agreed-upon accommodations or adjustments. Students with recognised exceptional circumstances will not be penalised for their inability to meet standard requirements if they are adhering to their accommodation plan.
- 7.4 If exceptional circumstances arise after an intervention stage has been initiated, the student should notify their Programme/Course Leader as soon as possible. The intervention process may be adjusted or paused to accommodate the student's needs, ensuring that support and flexibility are prioritised.
- 7.5 All decisions and accommodations related to exceptional circumstances will be documented in ProMonitor, and students will be kept informed of any adjustments made to their attendance and engagement expectations.

8. WITHDRAWAL OR INTERMISSION

- 8.1 University Centre South Essex/South Essex College Group recognises that, in some cases, the most appropriate course of action is to withdraw a student or agree to an intermission (by mutual agreement) and on approval from the validating University. The average timeframe for this process is expected to be 4 weeks from the last date of attendance, particularly in cases where the student refuses to engage meaningfully with this policy and procedure, such as by not attending their classes. In these cases, the student's fee liability is adjusted accordingly. For more details, please refer to the Higher Education Fee Policy 2025-2026 (including fee liability, refunds, and compensation).

9. APPEALS PROCESS

- 9.1 Students who are dissatisfied with a decision can lodge a complaint in writing under HE students compliments and complaints policy which is located here [Contact us | South Essex College](#)
- 9.2 Students may refer the case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator within 12 months if the appeal is not upheld. [How to complain to us - OIAHE](#)

10. POLICY LINKS

- Intermission Policy and Procedure
- Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure
- Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure
- HE Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- UCSE Student General Terms and Conditions
- HE Fees Policy

All Policies are Available on the College Website: [HE Policies and Procedures | South Essex College Group](#)

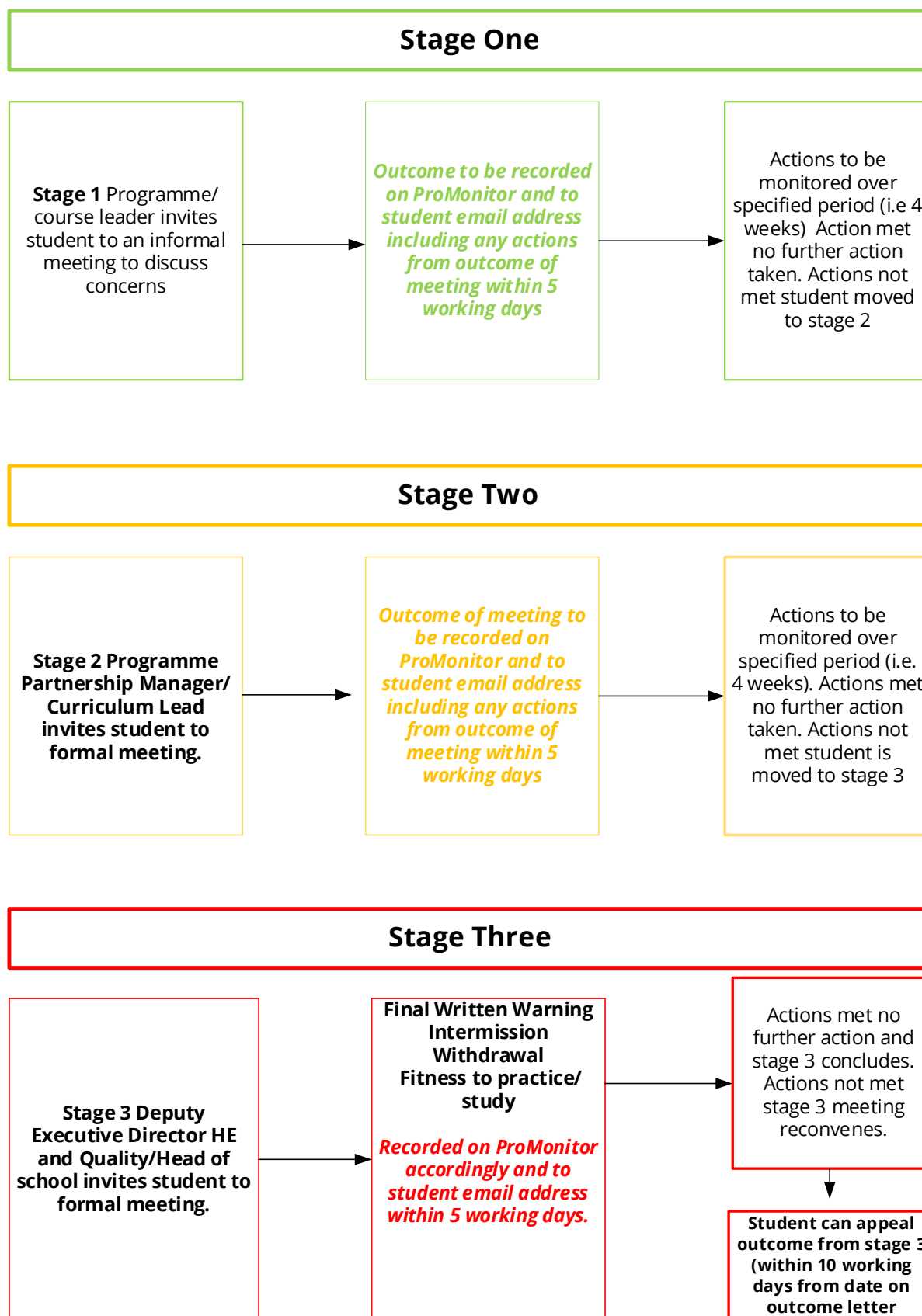
11. RIGHT TO POSTPONE

- 11.1 Students may request postponements for hearings on reasonable grounds. Requests should normally be made at least 48 hours in advance. In exceptional circumstances, shorter notice may be accepted at the discretion of University Centre South Essex.

12. FAILURE TO ATTEND

- 12.1 Students must make reasonable efforts to attend hearings. Failure to attend without good reason may result in the hearing proceeding in their absence. Students should notify the College of their inability to attend or of any delays as soon as possible. Notification should normally be made at least 48 hours before the scheduled hearing. In exceptional circumstances, shorter notice may be accepted at the discretion of University Centre South Essex.

APPENDIX ONE: STAGES



Senior Leadership Responsibility	Deputy Chief Executive – Curriculum & Quality
Policy Author	Deputy Executive Director HE and Quality
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Head of Safeguarding Deputy Executive Director Higher Education & Quality
Issue date of current version	September 2026 V3
Date to be reviewed	August 2027
Type of Policy	Public

