

Online and Distance Learning and Behaviour Addendum

2026-2027

SLT Responsibility – Adam Fahey

Policy Author – Sharon Dunphy



Significant Changes Following Review

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY

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.	5.9.25
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Deputy Executive Director HE and Quality
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change?	Students and Staff employed
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.?	New Policy

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.

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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	2	Neutral to minor negative. Mature students may be less familiar with digital platforms or online etiquette.	Provide digital literacy support and clear guidance on online tools.	Ongoing – Digital Learning Team
Disability	4	Potential negative. Students with sensory, cognitive, or physical impairments may face barriers in accessing online content or participating in live sessions.	Ensure compatibility with assistive technologies, offer alternative formats, and allow flexibility in camera/mic use.	Ongoing – HE Disability Support Officer
Gender (Sex)	1	Neutral. No specific barriers identified.	Continue to monitor for equitable participation and ensure inclusive language.	Annual Review – WP Officer
Gender Reassignment	2	Neutral to minor negative. Risk of misgendering or lack of inclusive communication.	Reinforce inclusive communication standards and provide staff/student training.	Termly – WP Officer
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	Neutral. No direct impact identified.	No action required.	N/A
Pregnancy / Maternity	3	Potential negative. Students may need flexibility due to health or caring responsibilities.	Allow flexible participation and access to wellbeing support.	As needed – HE Student Support and Programme leaders
Race	3	Potential negative. Risk of discriminatory behaviour in online forums or exclusion in group work.	Monitor online interactions, provide clear reporting mechanisms, and promote inclusive practices.	Ongoing – programme partnership manager
Religion or Religious Belief	3	Potential negative. Scheduling of live sessions may conflict with religious observances.	Offer session recordings and flexible participation options.	Ongoing – Programme Leader

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Sexual Orientation	2	Neutral to minor negative. Risk of exclusion or inappropriate behaviour.	Reinforce inclusive behaviour and zero tolerance for discrimination.	Ongoing – Programme partnership manager and HE student support
Any other element that needs to be considered.				

Online and Distance Learning Behaviour Statement

Students undertaking online and distance learning are required to adhere to the same standards of conduct, professionalism, and respect as expected within face-to-face learning environments. The following principles set out the expectations for appropriate behaviour in online learning spaces:

1. Respectful Communication

- Students must communicate in a courteous, professional, and inclusive manner across all online platforms, including virtual classrooms, discussion forums, and email.
- Offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate language or behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Students should respect the right of others to contribute and must engage constructively in dialogue.

2. Academic Integrity

- All work submitted must be the student's own and appropriately reference sources in accordance with institutional regulations.
- The sharing, reproduction, or unauthorised distribution of assessment materials is prohibited.
- Students must respect copyright and intellectual property rights when using or reproducing digital materials.

3. Engagement and Participation

- Students are expected to attend scheduled online sessions punctually and to participate actively, as required by the programme of study.
- Regular engagement with College email accounts and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is required to ensure awareness of academic information and communications.
- Where group work is required, students must contribute responsibly and equitably.

4. Professional Online Conduct

- Students must present themselves in a manner appropriate to a formal learning environment, including during live online sessions.
- Cameras and microphones should be used in line with tutor guidance, and students should ensure their contributions are appropriate to the learning context.
- Learning should be conducted in an environment that minimises disruption to the student and their peers.

5. Digital Responsibility

- Students must safeguard personal data and respect the privacy and confidentiality of peers and staff.
- Recording, screen-capturing, or sharing online sessions without explicit prior consent is strictly prohibited.
- Institutional systems, platforms, and resources must be used solely for educational purposes and in line with IT policies.

6. Support and Wellbeing

- Students should seek support if experiencing challenges with online learning, including access to technology or wellbeing concerns.
- Consideration should be shown for the diverse needs and circumstances of peers within the online environment.
- Students are encouraged to maintain an appropriate balance between study, rest, and wellbeing.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the College's Student Engagement Policy, HE Student Disciplinary Policy, Fitness to Study Policy and Fitness to Practice Policy.

Non-compliance with this statement may result in action under the College's Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, and where appropriate, may also invoke other related policies.

Senior Leadership Responsibility	Adam Fahey
Policy Author	Sharon Dunphy
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Deputy Executive Director HE and Quality
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Type of Policy	Public / Internal

