

Equality Impact Statement

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.	14/06/23
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Steve Bright
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Director of HE Operations
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	No stakeholder is affected by this
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	Annual update of 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.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being 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	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Disability	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Gender (Sex)	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Gender Reassignment	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Pregnancy / Maternity	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Race	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Religion or Religious Belief	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Sexual Orientation	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	No impact of any changes	No action required	N/A



UNIVERSITY CENTRE south essex

Higher Education Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedure 2023-24

Member of management responsible	Steve Bright
Author of policy/procedure	Colin Bladen-Kopacz
Date agreed by CQC (if relevant)	
Date effective from	1.9.23
Date last amended	15/06/23
Review date	August 2024

**Significant changes following review
24th August 2022**

Higher Education Fitness to Practice Policy 2022-23

Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
Throughout	South Essex College of Further and Higher Education amended to South Essex College Group	Steve Bright

1. Introduction

- 1.1 South Essex College Group, acknowledges that it has both a role and responsibility in ensuring the welfare of its HE students, staff and the wider community.
- 1.2 This policy and procedures applies to students on voluntary placements/work experience studying on a programme of study that may lead to entry to a profession overseen by a professional, statutory and regulatory body, or you are accredited by or registered with such a body.
- 1.3 It therefore expects that students studying on a UEA/UAL/OU validated award are in a fit state, subject to the terms of relevant disability discrimination law, to benefit from their placement learning and pursue it for the required period with a reasonable chance of successfully obtaining the award for their programme of study for which they are registered.
- 1.4 If a student is an employed member of staff in their placement any concerns as outlined below will be discussed with the students employer in the first instance.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 A student (or professional) is said to be fit to practice where they have the skills and knowledge (competence), character, and health to practice safely and effectively. Anything that can impact on skills, knowledge, character, and health can compromise an individual's fitness to practice. This means that fitness to practice may involve issues which arise outside of professional performance, but which may impact on students' professional suitability e.g., their fitness to practice.

2.2 Issues which may impact on a student's fitness to practice are listed below, however, this is not a definitive list:

- Health and safety breaches in the workplace setting
- Unsafe practice, incompetence, failing to use initiative/requiring too much supervision in the workplace
- Unprofessional behaviour in the workplace, e.g., lack of respect, aggression, poor attitude, laziness, dress-code issues, working inappropriately with clients, poor attendance or timekeeping, poor self-management etc.
- Failure to self-reflect
- Lack of professional insight
- Breaking client confidentiality
- Dishonesty
- Failure to engage with investigations of unprofessional behaviour
- Failure to disclose convictions or other information that the student is required to disclose

- Disclosure of offences during the student's time on their programme, or upon enrolling to the programme
- Disclosure of issues that potentially make the student unsafe/unfit to practice, e.g., homelessness, domestic abuse, evidence of substance/alcohol misuse, involvement of social services in the student's family (e.g., removal of student's children from the family home), sexual misconduct, evidence of bullying or harassment, including sexual harassment of staff/students, disruptive behaviour in the community, inappropriate use of social media etc.
- Personal safeguarding concerns
- Failure to engage with appropriate services in relation to health issues

3. Professional Misconduct

3.1 Professional misconduct concerns may arise from a pattern of behaviours or an attitude or approach, from a single event or issue or a series of them, or from any other breach of this policy such that there are concerns that as a student are not meeting the expectations of the profession or industry in which they are placed.

3.2 As a student you are always required act in a way that is compatible with the standards required by the profession or industry in which as a student you are placed. This is known as professional suitability.

3.3 Students must not:

- jeopardise the welfare of the professional subject, such as a pupil, patient, or client; or the welfare of a colleague; or
- contravene the relevant professional/ethical code of conduct the profession or industry. Doing so may constitute professional misconduct and may, depending on its nature and seriousness, also render you as a student unsuitable for the profession.

3.4 As a student you jeopardise the welfare of your professional subject if:

- As a student you have, on the balance of probabilities, jeopardised the welfare of your professional subject; and/or
- based on facts found there is a real possibility (that cannot, in light of its nature and seriousness, safely be ignored) as a student you doing so in the future.

3.5 This policy applies to you as a student at all times that you are enrolled on your programme of study and are not limited to the periods spent on professional placement or on campus or to issues arising on placement or in a professional context.

3.6 If as a student, you are found to be in breach of this policy:

South Essex College Group may levy a penalty in accordance with the Higher Education Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure up to and including expulsion; and or require as a student you to meet the outcomes specified by the Higher Education Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure(found at [HE Policies and Procedures | South Essex College](#))

3.7 In determining the appropriate outcome of any professional misconduct, South Essex College Group must consider whether as a student you may become capable of meeting the requirements of the profession within a reasonable period.

3.8 Where the South Essex College Group believes that its concerns are inextricably linked to your health and wellbeing or disability, the college will consider whether it is appropriate to direct you as a student to the Higher Education Fitness to Study Policy and/or the Higher Education Attendance and Engagement policy.

4. Fitness to Practice Panel Meeting

4.1 Where an incidence of professional misconduct has been identified a Fitness to Practice meeting will be held. As a student you will be informed of the meeting arrangements and who will be on the Panel at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Normally in attendance will be the HE Practice Learning Co-ordinator (chair), Programme Partnership Manager or equivalent, relevant Programme Leader, HE Practice Learning Administrator (minute taker), and the student.

4.2 This meeting will determine the nature of the misconduct, and specifically, whether the misconduct constitutes a Fitness to Practice issue, a Fitness to Study issue, a student disciplinary matter, or an attendance and engagement concern. Once determined, the relevant policy and procedure will be followed. Policies can be located here: [HE Policies and Procedures | South Essex College](#)

4.3 It is important that as a student you participate and engage with the fitness to practice process. If you think it would be helpful you may bring a support person along. If as a student you do not participate in the process, the Fitness to Practice meeting will be held in your absence.

4.4 As a student the panel members will discuss their concerns with you and may ask you further questions. You will be given you the opportunity to inform the Panel of anything you want them to take into consideration. The Panel will meet on their own after meeting with you, to consider which outcome would be most appropriate for you in the circumstances.

5. Outcome

5.1 Following the discussions, the Fitness to Practice Panel will agree the most appropriate outcome for your situation. This could be referral under other HE policies and procedures outlined above, or continuation under this Fitness to Practice policy and procedure.

5.2 Outcomes will be determined by the nature of the misconduct. These could include the following:

- Referral to HE Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure
- Referral to HE Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Referral to HE Attendance and Engagement Policy and Procedure
- Target setting and action planning
- Immediate determination of placement
- Withdrawal of registration for a period up to 12 months (recorded as intercalation)
- Recommend expulsion

5.3 As a student you will be notified of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 working days of the date of the meeting.