Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy

POL147

Lead Officer (Post):	Dean of Students
Responsible Office/ Department:	Student Services
Responsible Committee:	Academic Council
Review Officer (Post):	Single Policy Environment Project Manager / Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy Ownership Group
Date policy approved:	01/09/2019
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	n/a
Date policy due for review:	September 2021
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	06/02/2019
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	n/a

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

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Policy Summary

Overview	The policy aims to promote a positive learning environment. This is set within the context of the broader framework of policies and related procedures.
Purpose	The policy seeks to promote, encourage and recognise a positive learning environment, and engender a culture of equality, diversity and openness. We expect conduct that helps to create a positive and safe learning environment that reinforces our culture. This policy fits into a broader framework of policies related to culture, conduct and discipline.
Scope	This policy applies to all current and prospective students regardless of level or mode of study, and applies to all areas of student engagement in their learning environment and/or which may affect other students and staff, including online activities.
Consultation	The policy has been developed by a group of practitioners from across the Academic Partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands to ensure that best practice is reflected in the policy and accompanying procedures.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic Partners are responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed in their own organisation.
Risk Implications	This policy will reduce risk for Academic Partners by ensuring that best practice from across the partnership is being shared and followed.
Link with Strategy	This policy supports the University's commitment to provide a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all, aligned with the Strategic Theme of "Our Students", responding to the diversity of our student population.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed 06/02/2019 – no further action required.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

1.1   The University of the Highlands and Islands aims to promote a positive learning environment. This is set within the context of the broader framework of policies and related procedures.

1.2   In developing this aim, the University recognises that the appropriateness, development and acceptability of certain conduct may be different depending on the background and maturity of the learner(s) involved, and that individuality and context will be recognised.

1.3   This policy sets out how we seek to promote and maintain a positive learning environment, with reference to the Student Code of Conduct, and procedures in the event of breach of the Code. The relevant Procedures explains the process that will be followed (see Appendix 1 – Disciplinary Framework).

1.4   This policy applies to the University of the Highlands and Islands and all Academic Partners.

2. Definitions

2.1   **Behavioural misconduct**: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner, both on and off campus, in a manner which demonstrates respect for the University, its staff, fellow students and property, and for other members of the local community in general. Behavioural misconduct is a breach of this expected standard.

2.2   **Student Code of Conduct**: This is a document that is made available to and is applicable to all students that states the University 's expectations for student conduct. It gives examples of misconduct offences and the types of disciplinary action likely to occur.

2.3   **Academic misconduct/malpractice**: A generic term to describe any type of cheating or dishonest conduct in relation to a formal academic exercise. It may be deliberate or unintentional and may take different forms, including, but not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, collusion, falsification or fabrication of data, personation and bribery.

2.4   **Academic maladministration**: Any activity or practice which arises due to ignorance of Awarding Body requirements, or carelessness or neglect in applying the requirements. This results in non-compliance with an Awarding Body's requirements.

2.5   **Disciplinary Framework Decision Tree**: Located in Appendix 2, this is a document used to establish which Policy and Procedures should be used in order to set out a transparent process for students and staff.

2.6   **Exclusion from campus:** the removal of the student's access to all sites constituting the University campus for a specified period of time in response to a disciplinary incident. In some circumstances this exclusion may extend to all University and Academic Partner campuses. The student may continue to study remotely throughout this period.

2.7   **Exclusion from studies**: the removal from the student's course of study in response to a disciplinary incident, resulting in the loss of registered student status and loss of access to all facilities.

In some circumstances this exclusion may apply to the University and all Academic Partners for a period of time deemed appropriate by the disciplinary process. In some cases this may result in any future applications from the student being rejected.

2.8   **Suspension of Studies**: A Suspension of Studies is not a disciplinary measure. When a student chooses to take a period of time out from their studies because of a change in their personal circumstances, with the intention to return at a later date.

3.   Purpose

3.1.   The University seeks to promote, encourage and recognise a positive learning environment, and engender a culture of equality, diversity and openness.

3.2.   We expect conduct that helps to create a positive and safe learning environment that reinforces our culture. Examples of unacceptable conduct can be found in the Student Code of Conduct.

3.3   This policy fits into a broader framework of policies related to culture, conduct and discipline. Please refer to Appendix 1 – Disciplinary Framework for further details.

3.4   All breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will be investigated in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. Any such instance which may also constitute a criminal offence will be reported to the police and may lead to separate criminal proceedings.

3.5   All disciplinary matters will be dealt with in strict confidence and all personal data will be dealt with following legislative guidelines.

4   Scope

4.1   This policy applies to all current and prospective students regardless of level or mode of study.

4.2   This policy applies to all areas of student engagement in their learning environment and/or which may affect other students and staff, including online activities.

4.3   This policy applies to students in accommodation managed by the University, but may be brought into effect where a student residing in privately managed accommodation conducts themselves in a manner which brings the University into disrepute.

4.4   **School Link Programmes:** School Link pupils fall within the scope of the Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy when they are studying on University/Academic Partner campuses and are expected to observe the Student Code of Conduct.

4.5   Fitness to Practice and Fitness to Study are not explicitly within the scope of this Policy but are linked processes and as such are signposted within the Student Disciplinary Procedure and the Student Code of Conduct.

5   Exceptions

5.1   Students who are subject to disciplinary investigations related to official Highlands and Islands Student Association business are subject to the HISA Disciplinary Procedures.

6   Notification

6.1   All staff members will be notified of changes to the Policy and Disciplinary Procedures through the normal channels.

6.2   Staff responsible for overseeing the process should have a detailed knowledge of the Policy and Disciplinary Procedures.

6.3   Students will be made aware of the Policy, Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures within four weeks of commencing their course.

6.4   The Policy and Disciplinary Procedures will be publicly available on the Academic Partner's website.

6.5   The Disciplinary Framework Decision Tree will be updated to reflect any changes in the Framework.

7   Roles and Responsibilities

7.1   Academic Council is responsible for approving the policy and ensuring that it is followed. Academic Council are also responsible for ensuring the strategic effectiveness of the policy.

7.2   The Principal and Senior Management Team are responsible for operational compliance with the policy. The Principal and Senior Management Team are also responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the policy and making provision for training for all staff.

7.3   Line managers are responsible for ensuring staff participate in training and follow the policy and procedures in their day-to-day role.

7.4   All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and procedures.

8   Legislative Framework

Data Protection:
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

General:
- Equalities Act 2010

Protection of Vulnerable People:
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

Staff should also note the detailed list of policies specific to Safeguarding listed in that policy.

9   Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- Academic Standards and Quality Regulations
- Approved Placement Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedures
- Fitness to Study Guidelines
- IT Acceptable Use Policy (link forthcoming)
- Safeguarding Policy (link forthcoming)

- Student Code of Conduct (link forthcoming)
- Study Abroad Policy and Guidance (forthcoming)

10 Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	Sep 2019	Academic Council	n/a	PPLE Policy Ownership Group
1				
2				
3				
4				