



Student Conduct Policy

QPO014 / POL147

Lead Officer (Post):	Head of student experience
Responsible Office/ Department:	Student Experience team
Responsible Committee:	Academic Board
Review Officer (Post):	Depute Principal
Date policy approved:	30/09/2025
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	01/06/25
Date policy due for review:	01/06/28
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	TBC
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.

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 (including apprentices) 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 UHI 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 which aligns with UHI's core values as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2030 .
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Completed – 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. The Student Conduct Policy is part of a suite of documents, including:
- Academic Misconduct Policy
 - Fitness to Practise Guidelines (course-specific)
 - Gender Based Violence Policy
 - Mental Health Strategy
 - Mitigating Circumstances Procedure
 - Support to Study Procedure
 - Student Code of Conduct
 - Student Criminal Offence Data Disclosure Policy (forthcoming 2022/23)
 - Student Disciplinary Procedure
 - Student Mental Health and Counselling Policy
 - Suicide Intervention and Risk Management Policy and Guidance
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - University of the Highlands and Islands Academic Standards and Quality Regulations
 - University of the Highlands and Islands Academic Misconduct Guidance
- 1.2 UHI Shetland 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 acceptable student conduct in a positive learning environment, with reference to the Student Code of Conduct, and Student Disciplinary Procedure in the event of breach of the Student Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 This policy applies to UHI, all academic partners and university managed accommodation.

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 wider 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 **Suspension from campus:** the removal of the student's access to all sites constituting the University campus for a period of time in response to a disciplinary incident. In some circumstances this exclusion may extend to all university and academic partner campuses.

Where possible, the student may continue to study remotely throughout this period. If the suspension includes exclusion from campus, the student may also be asked to temporarily vacate UHI Shetland accommodation, depending upon the nature of the incident and associated risks.

- 2.6 **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. If the suspension includes exclusion from studies, the student may also be asked to temporarily vacate UHI Shetland managed accommodation, depending upon the nature of the incident and associated risks.

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.

- 2.7 **Voluntary Suspension of Studies:** A suspension of studies which 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. The option of suspension of studies is dependent on what the student's course allows.

- 2.8 **Precautionary Action:** In the event of an allegation of misconduct, a student may be suspended from UHI Shetland until the investigation is completed if there is risk of harm to themselves, other students or staff. Where possible, during this time they will be able to continue to study remotely and will continue to receive student support funds.

Precautionary action is not a punishment but is intended to protect the interests of all parties, and when taking such action it will be done without prejudice.

Where precautionary action is to be used the Head of Student Experience should inform the student by letter explaining that they are being excluded to allow an investigation to occur.

3. Purpose

- 3.1. The university seeks to promote, encourage and recognise acceptable conduct in 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 and which conforms with our 4 key values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Excellence as detailed in the UHI Strategic Plan 2030. 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 Section 1.1 and Section 9 for further information.
- 3.4 All breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will be investigated in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Procedure or the Support for Study procedure. 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 In the event of a police referral, UHI Shetland will be unable to investigate any incidents whilst an official police investigation is underway however precautionary actions may be

taken to reduce risk, ensure the safety of others and protect the integrity of the police investigation and a potential future UHI Shetland investigation. UHI Shetland will consult with the police during this period, and appropriate support will be provided to any students and staff involved.

- 3.6 All disciplinary matters will be dealt with in strict confidence and all personal data will be dealt with following legislative guidelines. Should any queries arise regarding data protection and GDPR, the local Data Protection Officer should be consulted.
- 3.7 Students have a right to be accompanied by a HISA Advice Service Advisor, peer, or advocate throughout the disciplinary process.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all current and prospective students regardless of level or mode of study and includes domestic, RUK and International students.
- 4.2 This policy applies to all areas of student engagement in their learning environment (physical, placement or virtual) 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 their own or privately managed accommodation conducts themselves in a manner which brings the university and/or academic partner into disrepute.
- 4.4 **Senior phase programmes:** Senior phase programme students fall within the scope of the Student Conduct Policy when they are studying on UHI Shetland campuses or online and are expected to observe the Student Code of Conduct.
- 4.5 **Apprentices:** These students fall within the scope of the Student Conduct Policy when they are studying on university/academic partner campuses, or online, and are expected to observe the Student Code of Conduct. A breach of the Student Code of Conduct may result in the student's employer being informed. There may be occasions if an apprentice discloses an incident of gender-based violence (GBV) while under the influence of drugs/alcohol, their employer must be informed of either or both the GBV disclosure, if appropriate to do so, and their substance use. This is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees, as workplace policies require appropriate risk assessments and interventions. The disclosure will be handled with sensitivity, following safeguarding protocols and legal obligations to protect both the individual and their colleagues.
- 4.6 **Gender-Based Violence:** Where a student reports an incident of gender-based violence (GBV), the College must give primary consideration to the report of GBV. Any additional factors which may be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct, for example a student's use of substances should only be considered in relation to their direct relevance to professional standards, such as fitness to practise. These factors must not detract from or diminish the seriousness of the GBV report and must be assessed in a sensitive and trauma-informed manner.

4.7 The Support to Study Procedure and course specific Fitness to Practice Guidelines are not explicitly within the scope of this policy but are linked and as such are signposted within the Student Disciplinary Procedure and the Student Code of Conduct.

4.8 **HISA Student Code of Conduct**

HISA has its own Code of Conduct, to which all HISA members are subject. Behavioural misconduct by a student that constitutes a breach of both the Student Code of Conduct and the HISA Code of Conduct may be investigated by both UHI Shetland and HISA.

UHI Shetland and HISA will work together to ensure that any such investigations are conducted in a trauma-informed and supportive manner. Wherever possible, and especially where trauma is involved, UHI Shetland and HISA will coordinate to ensure a single, joint fact-finding investigation takes place, minimising the need for students to recount distressing experiences multiple times.

While investigative processes may be collaborative, the determination of outcomes will remain independent for each organisation, though outcomes may be communicated jointly where appropriate.

Should the incident(s) occur as part of a HISA event or business, HISA should conclude their investigation before the UHI Shetland begins their own, or vice-versa. The outcome of the HISA investigation or UHI Shetland one should not prejudice the other, and the UHI Shetland reserves the right to take precautionary action pending the outcome of the investigation(s).

5. Exceptions

5.1 In some circumstances a disciplinary issue may involve an externally stipulated process, such as complaints or a safeguarding referral. In these circumstances, careful consideration should be given to how the issue should be managed and the other key staff e.g. complaints manager or safeguarding lead, involved at the earliest opportunity.

5.2 Student attendance and engagement is not normally managed using the Student Conduct Policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure.

6. Notification

6.1 All staff members will be notified of changes to the policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure through the normal channels.

6.2 Staff responsible for overseeing the process should have a detailed knowledge of the policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure.

6.3 Students will be made aware of the policy, Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedure within four weeks of commencing their course. Students have the opportunity to read the Student Code of Conduct before agreeing to it as part of the enrolment process. Students should be made aware unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

- 6.4 The UHI Shetland are encouraged to undertake additional promotional activities to highlight the Student Code of Conduct, Student Conduct Policy and procedures, as they see fit.
- 6.5 The policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure will be publicly available on the UHI Shetland's website.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 Academic Board is responsible for approving the policy and ensuring that it is followed. Academic Board are also responsible for ensuring the strategic effectiveness of the policy.
- 7.2 The Principal and Senior Management Group are responsible for operational compliance with the policy. The Principal and Senior Management Group 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 procedure in their day-to-day role.
- 7.4 All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and procedure.
- 7.5 A practitioner group, made up of representatives from across the partnership and HISA, are responsible for periodic review of the policy and providing operational feedback.

8. Legislative Framework

Data Protection:

- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) 2018](#)

General:

- [Equality 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](#)
- [Post-16 Education Act \(Scotland\) \(2013\)](#)
- [Protection of Children \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#)
- [Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)
- [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- Fitness to Practise Guidelines (course-specific)
- [Gender Based Violence Policy](#)
- [HISA Code of Conduct](#)

- [Mental Health Strategy](#)
- Mitigating Circumstances Procedure
- [Support to Study Procedure](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Criminal Offence Data Disclosure Policy](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- Student Mental Health and Counselling Policy – awaiting approval
- [Suicide Intervention and Risk Management Policy and Guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [University of the Highlands and Islands Academic Standards and Quality Regulations](#)
- [University of the Highlands and Islands Academic Misconduct Guidance](#)

10. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Endorsed by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	Sep 2019 TBC	Academic Council	n/a	PPLE Policy Ownership Group
1	May 2022	TBC	Name change from Promoting a Positive Learning Environment to Student Conduct Policy; removed references to Disciplinary Framework Decision Tree due to removal of that document; 1.1: added suite of documents list for consistency; 2.7: added ' If a student is excluded from studies, they can also expect to have their university-operated residence contract terminated'; 2.8: added 'The option of suspension of studies is dependent on what the student's course allows'; 2.9: new section on precautionary action to align with Student Disciplinary Procedure; 3.3: Second sentence changed to 'Please refer to Section 1.1 and Section 9 for further information'; 3.5: new section on involvement of police in investigations; 4.2: 'physical or virtual' added; 4.4: 'schools link' updated to 'senior phase'; 5.1: added 'code of conduct' and new paragraph regarding HISA; 5.2: new section regarding externally stipulated processes running in parallel; 5.3: added for clarity regarding policy and attendance; various grammatical amendments; 6.3: 'Students have the opportunity to read the Student Code of Conduct before agreeing to it as part of the enrolment	Student Conduct Policy Ownership Group

			process' added; 7.5: added for clarity around policy creation and revision; 8: Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 added; updating the names of related policies, procedures and guidelines. 9: List updated to reflect 1.1	
2	June 2025		<p>Scope: Text addition to include apprentices.</p> <p>Link with UHI strategy: Updated text linking to Strategic Plan 2030.</p> <p>Policy statement: Text to include university accommodation.</p> <p>Definitions: added text re Suspension from Campus and Exclusion from Studies.</p> <p>Purpose: Addition of text to clarify policy conforms to UHI's key values.</p> <p>Scope: Added paragraphs regarding apprentices and gender-based violence. Replacement of text advising HISA will carry out their own investigations. This has been rewritten to clarify UHI/HISA can carry out joint investigations.</p> <p>Notification: Additional text under 6.3 to reinforce unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated.</p> <p>Additional text under 6.4 to encourage UHI/APs to undertake further promotion of Code of Conduct, policy and procedures.</p>	Student Conduct Policy Ownership Group