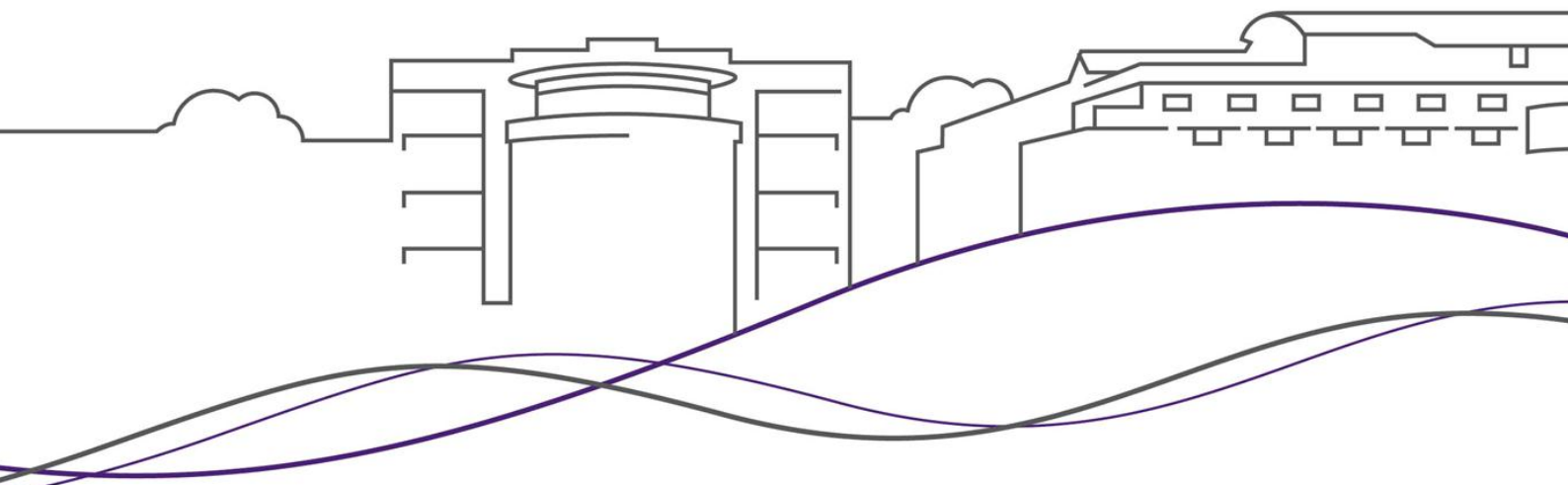HIGHER EDUCATION

Teaching Learning and Scholarship Policy

2019-20

HEFSPPD4

Document Control

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REVISION HISTORY			
Ver	**Date**	**Author**	**Description**
1.1	07/11/17	Alastair Wilson	Drafted from relevant sections of the HE strategic plan, taking into account amendments recommended by the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Group at its meeting on 09 October 2017.
1.2	06/11/18	Alastair Wilson	Updated to include additional aim of staff as students. General update to reflect changes in other policies and include academic freedom.
2.0	30/10/19	Alastair Wilson	Updated to include new OfS Conditions of registration

APPROVAL			
Ver	**Date**	**Author**	**Description**
1.1	07/11/17	Alastair Wilson	Approved (with amendments) by College Higher Education Board of Studies.
1.2	06/11/18	Alastair Wilson	Approved
2.0	12/11/19	A Wilson	Approved

Teaching Learning and Scholarship Policy

Contents

This teaching learning and scholarship framework supports South Devon College's (SDC), mission and strategic objectives as presented in the HE strategic plan 2018-2023. The framework outlines SDC's commitment to promotion and sustaining high standards in teaching, supporting learning and assessment in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities for all its students. The framework recognises that students are at the heart of all teaching, learning and scholarship developments, which in turn lead to curriculum and college benefit. The framework emerges in response to unprecedented change in the Higher Education landscape and the framework outlines SDC expectations of academic staff with regards to scholarship informed and where appropriate research informed academic practice.

1. Context

1.1. Within the existing and developing policy context there is little doubt that now and in the future higher education providers must commit to the highest standards in teaching and learning. (BIS 2012)

1.2. The Office for Students Conditions of Registration and Ongoing Conditions state:-

1.2.1. The provider must deliver well designed courses that provide a high quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

1.2.2. The provider must support all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

1.2.3. The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study.

1.2.4. The provider must ensure that qualifications awarded to students hold their value at the point of qualification and over time, in line with sector recognised standards.

1.2.5. The provider must deliver courses that meet the academic standards as they are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications at Level 4 or higher.

1.2.6. The provider must participate in the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

1.3. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), recognises and rewards excellence in teaching and learning. SDC was recognised through this framework with a Gold outcome

1.4. With an increasing focus on the nature and quality of higher education, through published information quality and standards, Unistats as well as presenting students with opportunity to become partners in their learning development it is essential that institutions respond to this focus through the enhancement of teaching and learning.

1.5. SDC continued commitment to developing its HE teaching, learning and scholarship is timely and central to the changing policy context and its desire to align its teaching development to nationally recognised standards within a local context, promoting increased levels of student's satisfaction and achievement.

1.6. SDC has was Reviewed by the QAA using the Higher Education Review methodology in Dec 15. The College was commended in two areas and received no recommendations.

1.7. SDC is an Ofsted Good College, is widely recognised for having outstanding teaching and learning across all levels and frameworks of delivery. Within Higher Education, it notably has significantly above average scores in both the Student perception questionnaire and the National Student Survey, which reinforces the recognition from students on teaching and learning.

1.8. SDC has in place a Higher Education Observation Process, which as part of this Policy is updated and refocused.

1.9. This policy recognises academic staff are protected in law in areas of academic freedom and freedom of speech. The College response to these protections are outlined in the SDC Position paper reflected in Appendix A

1.10.   This framework supports and is driven from the SDC Higher Education Strategy, and addresses specifically the following Higher Education aims:-

- o To strategically develop our approach to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- o To work in collaboration with students in developing learning and assessment approaches that meets and enhances students opportunities
- o To provide students with an engaging and inspiring learning experience
- o To peer review teaching and learning as part of a continuous quality cycle
- o To strategically develop our approach to the Scholarship of staff within Higher Education at SDC
- o To employ, retain and support appropriately qualified staff to teach and support HE
- o To provide those staff teaching and supporting HE with appropriate and relevant development opportunities

2. Development of framework

2.1. College

This Policy has been developed by a working group of lead HE academics at SDC, along with the Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality and Innovation Manager, consultation was undertaken with a range of internal stakeholders.

2.2. Students

This framework was presented to students as a working draft for students input, the Lead Student Representative informed the final development of the document and in the capacity of their role endorses the Policy

2.3. External

Plymouth University as the Degree Awarding Body for South Devon College has through their representatives in Academic Partnerships supported the development of this Framework.

3. Vision

"South Devon College is passionate about providing accessible, employment focussed and high quality Higher Education"

4. Principles

There are **six** principles that form the basis of implementing this framework

Principle 1

4.1. Provide a supportive accessible environment where teaching and learning is recognised as the fundamental focus, is valued and is a rewarding experience for all involved in teaching and supporting learning

4.1.1. Promoting dissolved ownership for the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that management of quality is embedded as close to the point of delivery and in partnership with students.

4.1.2. Overseeing and reporting on institutional teaching, learning and scholarships activates, performance and trends

4.1.3. The dissemination of good practice through a variety of events and publications

4.1.4. Providing an innovative VLE platforms that enables best practice including to offsite students

Principle 2

4.2. Enhance the teaching expertise of newly appointed academic HE staff through continuous professional development

4.2.1. Ensuring that all new teaching staff in HE at SDC complete the SDC HE CPD programme for new HE tutors *devised and coordinated by the HE Management team*

4.2.2. The CPD programme (aligned to descriptor 1 of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning 2011) must be completed within the first year of appointment

4.2.3. The CPD programme for new staff will encompass key themes that must be completed within the first six weeks of appointment which is inclusive of:-

- Conditions of Registration and the role of the OfS

- The Quality Code for Higher Education

- Teaching Learning and Assessment strategies in the subject area and level of study

- Observation for Higher Education

- Integrating research and scholarship activities into teaching and learning

- Writing module guides and assessments

- Annual quality cycles for Higher Education

- Using innovative Learning Technologies in the UC to support students

And will be supported by a designated mentor

4.2.4. Teaching and Learning in Higher Education provision at South Devon College will be enhanced through a systematic observation schedule that responds to College priorities, aligns the UKPSF and is referenced within the annual PPDR. New staff will have a Peer Observation within the first 6 weeks of teaching

4.2.5. Teaching and Learning in Higher Education provision at South Devon College will be enhanced by a programme of CPD activity throughout the year

4.3. Principle 3

4.4. Promoting high quality teaching and learning that is informed by relevant scholarly and research activity

4.4.1. Update Scholarly Activity and Research Procedure

4.4.2. To support staff in providing excellence in their practice

4.4.3. Engaging staff to contribute to the design and delivery of HE staff development programme, CPD and seminars

4.4.4. To measure the impact of activity

4.4.5. Providing opportunities to engage in publications and dissemination events

4.4.6. Making available external scholarship events through our partnership with Plymouth University and wider partners

4.4.7. Promote and disseminate effective innovations in pedagogy of teaching in Higher Education to ensure challenging and progressive approaches

Principle 4

4.5. To achieve the highest possible quality in teaching and learning performance

4.5.1. To use Metrics to inform areas for development

4.5.2. To align staff development to the UKPSF Descriptor 2

4.5.3. To support staff with applications to apply for HEA Fellowships

Principle 5

4.6. Engaging all learners in partnership to develop and review strategies focused upon enhancing student centred learning opportunities

4.6.1. Organise and implement projects designed to involve students and employers in teaching and learning

4.6.2. Constantly assessing the ways in which the student voice can be utilised to enhance teaching and learning

4.6.3. Increasing students attendance and participation in committees and decision fora

Principle 6

4.7. Enhancement of student learning opportunities

4.7.1. Develop a strategic approach to enhancement of student learning opportunities
4.7.2. To integrate enhancement initiatives in a systematic and planned manner at provider level
4.7.3. To promote an ethos which expects and encourages enhancement of student learning opportunities
4.7.4. To identify, support and disseminate good practice
4.7.5. To use quality assurance procedures to identify opportunities for enhancement

Principle 7
4.8. To ensure Academic Freedom and Freedom of speech

4.8.1. Academic staff shall have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions, without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges
4.8.2. Freedom in teaching and discussion
4.8.3. Freedom to carry out research
4.8.4. Freedom to disseminate and publish
4.8.5. The College agreed position is reflect in Appendix A

4.9. Principle 8 Academic Integrity – staff as students
4.9.1. The college recognises and supports staff development opportunities that might present themselves for staff as students on both tertiary and higher level study.
4.9.2. The college will provide guidance to both staff and students to mitigate and actual or perceived conflicts of interests
4.9.3. The College agreed guidelines are provided in Appendix B

Appendix A

SDC Position paper on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

1   Introduction

The law imposes certain duties on the College through the Board of Governors to **ensure** (*not promote*) academic freedom and freedom of speech and the College has instituted the following policy.

Education plays an important role in society as places of debate and discussion within the law, where ideas can be tested, where students learn to challenge ideas and think for themselves, and where rationality underpins the pursuit of knowledge.

South Devon College is fully committed to promoting an environment in which intense inquiry and informed argument generates lasting ideas, and where members of its community have a responsibility both to challenge and to listen fully.

This commitment is of long standing. This commitment is asserted through in the Strategic Aims Aim 8: 'Sustain and further develop our high performing and innovative learning culture'.

Just as the College will not restrict debate or deliberation simply because the views being expressed might be considered unwise or even offensive, it also expects members of the College community to show commitment to this same principle by not obstructing or interfering with the rights of others to express views with which they might disagree profoundly.

In order to give expression to this policy, the College will develop a set of procedures, Codes of Practice and guidelines, that specify the arrangements to be applied *eg this may need to relate to events or room bookings where the College will want to decline, impose restrictions on or cancel a booking*.

2   Outline of legislative framework

The Education (Number 2) Act 1986 s43 imposes a duty to ensure **freedom of speech** within the law is secured for members, students and employees, and requires there to be a code of practice.

The Education Reform Act 1988 s202 established **academic freedom** for academic staff to have freedom within the law 'to question and test received wisdom and put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges.' This freedom is reiterated in the Higher Education Reform Act 2017 s2, 14 and 36.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 s31 requires governing bodies to have regard to both duties: to ensure freedom of speech and have regard to the importance of academic freedom when carrying out duties to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The Human Rights Act (1998) also embodies certain freedoms including freedom of thought, belief and religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. However that Act also recognises limits to freedom as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society.

Freedom of speech cannot include:

- Threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour intending or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress, or cause a breach of the peace
- Incitement to racial or religious hatred or incitement to terrorism, and all protected characterises

Under the Equality Act 2010 the College also has a duty which it actively promotes to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other unlawful conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations through tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

3   Academic freedom

The College will maintain the academic freedom of staff **within academic staff contracts** of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

4   Freedom of speech

The College commits, so far as is reasonably practicable, not to deny access to its premises to any registered student or employee of the College, or to any individual or body of persons invited to the premises of the College by a registered student or employee on the grounds (as set out in the Education (Number 2) Act relating to:

- The beliefs or views of that registered student, employee or person so invited; or
- The policies or objectives of that body;
    - except insofar as the expression of such belief, views, policies or objectives shall be unlawful and where it is reasonably anticipated that the unlawful expression of such beliefs, views, policies or objectives might occur on the relevant occasion.

However, this commitment to freedom of speech within the law is not absolute and there may be circumstances in which freedom of speech might properly be restricted.

While permission will not be withheld unreasonably, the College may decline, impose restrictions on or cancel an event:

- Where there may be a risk of threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour intending or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress, or cause a breach of the peace[1]; or incitement to racial or religious hatred[2]; or incitement to terrorism[3]
- To safeguard the safety, health and welfare of its registered students, employees and other persons lawfully upon the premises or engaged in

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[1] Public Order Act (1986)
[2] Race Relations Act (1976) incorporated in Public Order Act (1986) and Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006)
[3] Terrorism Act (2006)

activities associated with the College, including giving effect to the safeguards set out in the Equality Act 2010

- Where there may be a risk to the good name and reputation of the College
- In order to maintain the efficient conduct and administration of the College's business

Any such decision will be taken by the Principal in consultation with the Board of Governors or relevant external authorities such as the police, as appropriate.

Appendix B

Guidelines for staff as students

Adherence to these guidelines is the responsibility for all staff, including line managers of those staff who are both students and module leaders. The guidelines are designed where staff might be undertaking a formal qualification, it excludes mandatory training.

Across provision at South Devon College (incorporating UCSD), staff at times might be students on programmes. The College encourages this is part of culture of continuous professional development, however acknowledges that there is a potential for either actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

These guidelines are in place for the following variances:-

- academic staff deliver to Peers (a Peer is someone you have a direct professional relationship with, for example within the same curriculum area, a member of your staff or your line management)
- academic staff are in a position of responsibility relating to a programme they are currently studying themselves
- Students on programmes where there isn't a direct relationship beyond colleagues in the same institution.
- And more broadly, conflicts of interest

In any of the cases above, it is the responsibility of those involved to notify either the Assistant Principal – Systems, Information and Performance (for non-HE Qualifications, or the Head of Higher Education (for HE Programmes). This notification should be made using the form below.

In cases where an actual conflict or perceived conflict maybe present the person named above will call a Conflict of Interest Panel, which will consider the case. Typically the following will be considered:-

1. change of model delivery staff
2. anonymity in assessment
3. external moderation of assessment

Perceived or Actual Conflict of Interest Notification Form

Part A – completed by student/peer/colleague

Your name	
Student or academic	
Programme/Qualification related to the conflict of interest	
Further details	

Part B – Completed by the Conflict of Interest Panel (quorum of three members)

Panel Chair	
In attendance	
Summary of discussion	
Recommendation	
Monitoring method	
Method of communication, including to whom and when by	
Chair Signature	

Panel Membership:-

Matt Harbour
Dan Hallam
Alastair Wilson
Kelly Sooben
Holly Vaughan