Academic Policies and Procedures
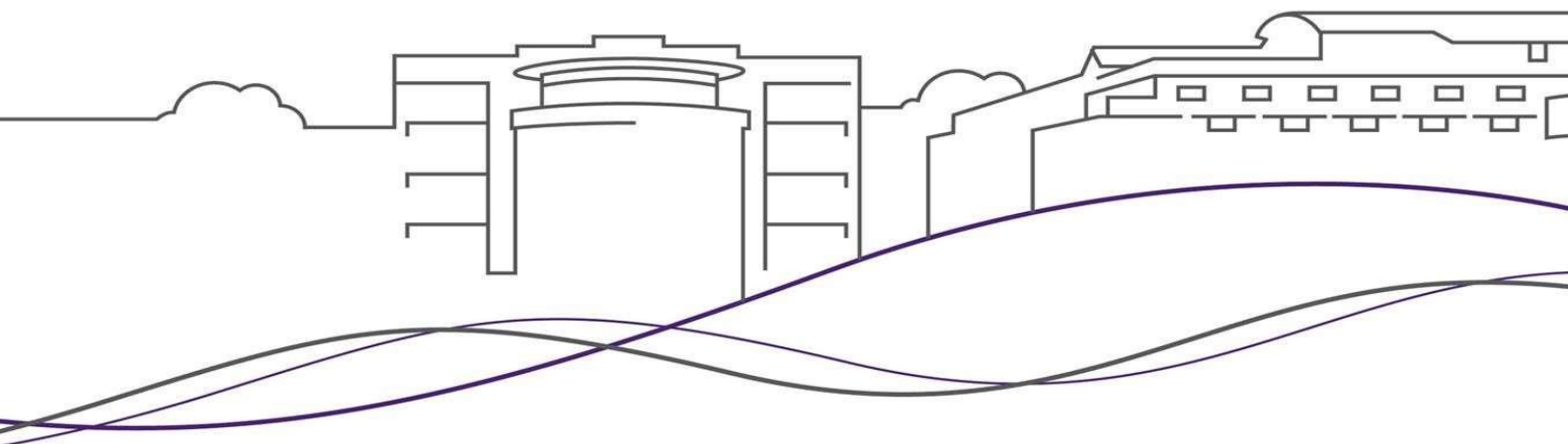
HIGHER EDUCATION

Inclusive Learning Practices Policy V5

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Inclusive Learning Practices Policy

Contents

1. Scope and Purpose

1.1. The South Devon College learning culture promotes five core values through teaching, learning and assessment; progress of learners, inclusion, aspiration, innovation and support for learners. The University Centre South Devon (UCSD) is therefore committed to an ethos of equality and inclusivity. We seek to enhance the student experience by creating a learning and teaching environment, and culture, that is dynamic, accessible and inclusive.

1.2. The Inclusive Learning Practices Policy seeks to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of learning and teaching for all students by mainstreaming a small number of adjustments.

1.3. "Adjustments" in this context describes types of academic support which are recommended for disabled students following a needs assessment. The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires education providers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which education providers provide for students.

1.4. "Mainstreaming" in this context means the systematic consideration of the effects of teaching, learning and assessment practice and policy at the point of planning, implementation and evaluation to ensure that teaching and learning is inclusive of and accessible to all students.

1.5. UCSD intends that all students should have equal access to their course of study.

1.6. UCSD teaching staff use the South Devon College teaching and learning framework to guide their practice as an evidence-informed teacher, creating ambitious and inclusive curricula, being a responsive teacher, to foster confident and employable learners.

1.7. This policy runs parallel to other relevant policies and procedures including: Student Development Policy; HE Teaching, Learning and Scholarship Policy; HE Assessment Practice Policy; HE Study and Wellbeing Review Policy; HE Fitness to Practice and Cause for Concern Procedure; Guidance for Supporting Students Requiring Reasonable Adjustment; HE Supporting Pregnant Students and Students with Very Young Children Policy; and UCSD Strategy for Enhancing Student Employability. It also compliments the South Devon College Accessibility Statement.

2.   Key Responsibilities

2.1.   The policy applies to all students of the University Centre and all staff who teach and support students. Unless there is a justified pedagogic reason for not doing so, the policy applies to all courses. A justified pedagogic reason must be made clear to students in advance in the course handbook. For example, for some subjects it may not be possible to put some material on the Virtual learning Environment (VLE) because it is confidential or sensitive (i.e. information relating to patients in medicine). In other subjects it may be necessary that students prioritise reading lists for themselves – in such cases this should be reflected and clearly stated in the learning outcomes of the course and should be assessed, otherwise it is not justified.

2.2.   The Dean of Higher Education is responsible for the overall management and implementation of these processes. The Dean of Higher Education may delegate this responsibility as appropriate to the department level Higher Education Coordinators (HECs), the HE Student Development & Tutorial Manager and/or HE Wellbeing Coordinator (or designated substitutes).

2.3.   Higher Education Coordinators (or a designated substitute) are responsible for ensuring that new HE Programme Leads and/or personal tutors have received adequate training and support to enable them to fulfil their Inclusive Learning Practices Policy responsibilities. The HE Student Development & Tutorial Manager is responsible for ensuring members of the HE Student Support Hub have adequate training and support to enable them to fulfil their Inclusive Learning Practices Policy responsibilities, and ensuring adequate resources are available to enable teaching and support staff to deliver inclusive practice.

2.4.   Students are responsible for informing UCSD about their learning, physical or mental health needs that impact on their ability to study and/or fulfil their programme placement requirements. Once one staff member knows about a student's impairment or condition then the whole organisation can be 'deemed to know' and legally we would have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for that student. However, in general circumstances*, a disabled person has the right to request that the existence or nature of their impairment or condition be treated as confidential.

*Confidentiality may not be guaranteed in very exceptional circumstances relating to Health and Safety or serious concerns about risk to self or others.

2.5.   If a student makes a declaration of an impairment of condition, they should be encouraged to engage with the Support & Wellbeing team to discuss how

they might be best supported during their studies and placement.

2.6. In an emergency situation where it is believed that a student's health or wellbeing condition presents an immediate risk to themselves or others the HE Study and Wellbeing Review Policy will not be invoked. In this situation the appropriate Emergency Services should be contacted and the Dean of Higher Education should be notified as soon as possible. (See appendix for information about dealing with emergencies).

3.   Embedding inclusive learning practices

3.1   UCSD has approved the policy on Inclusive Practice to provide greater clarity and emphasis to its commitment to an inclusive approach, as already set out in the HE Teaching Learning and Scholarship Policy and the HE Assessment Practice Policy. This Policy aims to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of UCSD's learning and teaching practices by embedding key adjustments, which will:

a) benefit all learners
b) reduce the need for adjustments to teaching materials for individuals
c) help to enable all learners to participate fully in their learning.

3.2 The expectation is that all academic programmes work towards including:

a) key resources provided to students at least 48 hours in advance of a taught session
b) accessible presentations and handouts
c) inclusive assessment practices
d) all schedule teaching is recorded within the course and/or module's Teams channel where practicable.

4. Curriculum and programme design

4.1   All learning outcomes must follow inclusivity guidelines.

4.1.1 Every assessable learning outcome must create an output that is measurable, so that students can be tested on the extent to which they are meeting the outcome.

4.1.2 Wherever possible, assessable learning outcomes should allow students to demonstrate their ability to meet the outcomes in a variety of

different ways, as appropriate.

4.1.3 The creation of inclusive learning outcomes automatically gives more scope to be more creative with assessments, and to test students' learning in various different ways

4.2 All programmes must use inclusive assessment practices that meet legal requirements and follow UCSD guidelines.

4.2.1 An inclusive assessment regime allows an entire cohort of diverse students to demonstrate their ability to meet the learning outcomes of their programme. A student's background, race, religion, gender, sexuality, age, marital status or disability should not impact on their opportunity to learn and to evidence that learning.

4.2.2 When developing a programme or a module, academic staff should anticipate potential problems when planning assessments. Inclusive assessments prevent these problems arising or at least keep them to a minimum.

4.3 Programme Quality Handbooks shall be made available to new students at least 4 weeks before the start of the programme. This means providing an outline of the course in terms of the indicative content, nature of assessments and indicative pre-entry reading. It should be stressed that this is an outline and further course details, including module guides and module-level reading lists, will be provided at the start of the course in the course on the VLE. The provision of this information will facilitate course choices and provide students with an early opportunity to engage with the course requirements and familiarise themselves with the reading.

5. Preparing learning materials

5.1 Course content must be presented in an accessible manner on the relevant virtual learning environment (VLE) and in the classroom.

5.1.1 Paper copies of resources handed out in class can present a barrier for some students. **All learning materials, such as lesson PowerPoints or outlines must be uploaded to the VLE at least 48 hours before the relevant schedule learning activity.** The key purpose is to inform students of what they will be taught so that they can prepare in advance in their own time and think critically about the subject material prior to class. It also provides time for students to access the

materials using assistive technologies, e.g. screen-readers, where required.

5.1.2 Teaching staff will not be expected to produce Powerpoint slides if these are not normally used. In other cases an outline of the lecture will be required. This may take the form of a bullet-pointed list of the key themes/content of the lecture/class: it is not required that detailed notes are provided.

5.1.3 Judgement will need to be exercised in such cases where confidential or 'spoiler' information is contained within materials so as not to compromise confidentiality or impinge on the pedagogical experience. In such cases students should be informed of the presence of such information and may only be provided with partial PowerPoint slides in advance of the class; the full materials to be made available following the class.

5.2 All learning materials, including documents, presentations and multimedia, must be produced following appropriate guidance to maximise their accessibility.

5.2.1 All presentations should be easy to read (with a font large enough to read by all when displayed on the screen) and with numbering to aid access for students. There is an Accessibility Checker built into PowerPoint.

5.2.2 The 'Styles' feature of MS Word can be used to structure documents, making it easier for students to navigate and use other assistive software. Handouts should be in 12-point font as a minimum size (ideally 14 point).

5.2.3 Alternative approaches to learning materials can include pod- or screencasts as well as other forms of multimedia.

5.2.4 Pod- and screen-casts should, ideally, be accompanied by a transcript, unless (in the case of a screen-cast) it is obvious from the image on the screen what is being explained verbally.

5.3 Reading lists must be provided on South Devon College's online reading list system, Heritage, which is designed to be accessibility compliant, and should be made available in advance of the module beginning. Reading lists shall indicate priority and/or relevance, so that students can prioritise their own reading. It is not necessary for the whole reading list to be ordered. Neither is it expected that students should read only from the reading list provided;

they will be expected, through their own research, to identify further readings.

6. Scheduled teaching and learning activities

6.1   Teaching and learning methods used on all programmes, including each module, must enhance student engagement and inclusivity, and will be monitored through standard Quality Assurance (QA) processes, e.g. Early Module Reviews, Programme Committee Meetings.

6.2   Where technical words/terms and/or formulae are used in class, these should be made available at least 48 hours in advance of the class that they are being used in, via the VLE.

6.3   All scheduled teaching activities should be recorded within the course and/or module's Teams channel, where practicable, so that students can revisit lessons and recap their learning. This also enables students who have been unable to attend the lesson to catch up on missed learning.

6.4   Students shall be permitted to overtly audio record lectures, tutorials and supervision sessions using their own equipment for their own personal learning. The overt recording is only used by the individual student for the purposes of personal study (it shall be a disciplinary offence to use the material for any other purpose, or to distribute the material). The recording is done in an unobtrusive manner by the student using their own equipment.

6.5   Covert recordings of lessons and discussions without the prior explicit consent of all those concerned will be deemed to constitute misconduct under the terms of the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure. Video recording shall not be permitted without the explicit permission of the member of staff involved.

6.6   All Intellectual Property Rights in the recording remain with UCSD and the lecturer. Teaching staff have the right to insist that recording stops in certain circumstances (for example to protect confidentiality where sensitive or personal information is being discussed).

7. Student empowerment

7.1   All relevant information materials concerning the programme of study (e.g. Programme Quality Handbook and Module Guides) should be accessible to students in advance to help them better engage with the learning and to highlight any specific challenges linked to their disability.

7.2   A variety of approaches must be used to engage student feedback and to incorporate the student voice into programme design and development.

8. Supporting individual students

3.1.   "Adjustments" describes types of academic support which are recommended for disabled students following a needs assessment. The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires education providers to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services which education providers provide for students.

8.2   The process to apply for a needs assessment and support, and how that support is co-ordinator and monitored is set out in the [UCSD Guidance for Supporting Students Requiring Reasonable Adjustments](#).

8.3   Personal tutors have responsibility for liaising with disabled students to monitor their participation and engagement in learning, including additional support provided by external mentors funded by the Disabled Students Allowance or apprentices Additional Learner Support.

9. Monitoring and evaluating

9.1   Fulfilment of the requirements of this policy will be monitored and evaluated through UCSD's quality assurance processes, including Programme Committee Meetings and the UCSD Teaching, Learning, Assessment and External Examiners Committee

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10. Support and resources

9.1   Guidance and training, including relevant web resources, will be provided for staff to help enable the implementation of this approach and this will be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

9.2   There is a variety of useful resources already available to staff, while further training and support materials, including case studies and communities of learning sessions, are in development.