

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2023/24+

1. Aim, scope and purpose of the policy

The aim of this Policy is to formalise the mechanisms already in place that contribute to the effective capture and dissemination of the student voice of higher education learners studying at the South Thames Colleges Group, on courses including Higher National Certificates and Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees and Teaching Awards at levels 4 and 5. The prime objective is to ensure that students are provided with opportunities for engagement in all aspects of their learning experience and that their opinions are valued.

2. Policy Statement

This Policy sets out the College Group's commitment for a student-centred approach in the provision of its Higher Education. The College values students as partners in all areas of their learning experience and has regard for the revised UK Quality Code which states: *The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.*

3. Student Voice Mechanisms

3.1. Student Governor

The Governing Body elects one Student Governor who will serve on the College Governing Body. Nominations are secured from all parts of the College Group with elections normally held early in the Autumn term. The Student Services Teams facilitate these elections.

3.2. HE Student Representatives

All courses will elect a student representative at the start of the academic year. Student representatives will be invited to attend meetings as described in 3.3 and 3.6 to represent their peers and provide the collective student voice.

3.3. Programme Boards or Committees /Boards of Study/ Staff Student Consultative Committees

For university validated provision it is often a requirement for curriculum teams to hold Programme Boards two or three times per year. This does vary depending on the university; however, the approach is similar. A meeting will be convened by the programme team with a selection of student representatives, appropriate College staff as well as a representative from the appropriate university. The meeting will be structured in line with the university process and students will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their programme as well as any other matters.

For non-university provision, Curriculum Managers/Heads of Section will hold Staff Student Consultative Committees (SSCC) for their courses which will follow a similar process to that described above. Student representatives will be invited to attend to provide feedback on all aspects of their experience.

3.4. Student Surveys

The National Student Survey (NSS) takes place between January and April of each year, this is aimed at all students in their final year of study on a course that is two years or longer in duration.

The College usually carries out an internal survey for HE students who are not in scope for the NSS using the same questions used in the NSS for standardisation purposes. The College aims to achieve HE satisfaction ratings of 85% or better – the results are widely publicised.

3.5. Module/Unit and Programme Feedback

Students may also be asked to complete module/unit surveys by programme teams. These are used to capture detailed analysis of modules to inform our planning of these in future years.

3.6. School Focus Groups

On occasion it may be necessary to hold Focus Groups across Schools. This may be because of an issue that is affecting more than one course/programme within the same school. These will be led by the Head/Deputy Head of each School. Focus Groups may also be arranged by the Group Manager for Higher Education and Quality Assurance to ensure that students are receiving a high-quality experience.

3.7. Praise and Complaints

The opportunity for HE students to provide either praise or make a complaint is provided through a variety of routes, including an online facility. Please see the Feedback and Complaints Policy published on the Group website.

4. Summary

The Student Voice will be collated from the outlined mechanisms and reported to the Higher Education Academic Board and the HE Governance Committee throughout the academic year.

5. Access to the Policy

This Policy relates to all Higher Education across the College Group and will be published on the Group website. Implementation of this Policy will be monitored through the College Management Team.

6. Policy Review

The policy is subject to continuous review but will be formally reviewed again in July 2026.

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