



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Higher Education Students as Partners Policy

**If you would like this document in an alternate format
Please contact the Human Resources Department**

Prepared by:	Jo Kear
Job Title/Role:	Director of Higher Education
Ref. No.: Q/P 229	Date of this version: 02/09/2024 Review date: 01/09/2025 (Subject to any legislative changes) Upload to College website? Upload to e-Campus?
Approved by:	SGS Further Education Corporation
Date:	04/07/2024

MANDATORY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENING



I have read the guidance document: Completing a Policy Impact Assessment?	✓
If this policy raises equality, diversity or inclusion concerns, the Inclusion Committee has been consulted?	✓
If this policy raises environmental or sustainability issues, the Estates Team have been consulted?	✓
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick to confirm that the initial impact screening has also been reviewed:	✓

Please list each College Strategic Priority that this policy is designed to address/implement:	
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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Characteristic	This policy seeks to:		
Age	No appreciable impact		
Disability	Commit to making reasonable adjustments to promote equality of access and opportunity for learners, employees and members of the public with disabilities and/or learning difficulties/disabilities.		
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact		
Gender	No appreciable impact		
Race or Ethnicity	Commits the college to positive action to promote equality and foster good relations between members of different racial and ethnic groups		
Orientation	No appreciable impact		
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact		
Economic disadvantage	No appreciable impact		
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact		
Marriage	No appreciable impact		
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact		
Carers & care leavers	No appreciable impact		
Vulnerable persons	Safeguarding children or vulnerable adults		
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:			
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:			
Is there any possibility that this policy could operate in a discriminatory way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	If you have ticked yes (red), which characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item.
If yes please confirm that the Policy has been sent for a full Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment, and note the date:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap to enter a date.	

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Which United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right does this policy most protect:	Art. 3 Best interests of the child Art. 12 Respect for personal views Art. 13 Freedom of expression
Which Human Right (HRA) does this policy most protect:	Art. 10 Freedom of expression Art. 9 Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING

Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will <u>not</u> result in the collection, storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	✓
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	<input type="checkbox"/>

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT		
Does this policy relate directly or indirectly to any legal, regulatory environmental or sustainability standard(s)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If so, please list them:		
Will any aspects of this policy result in:		
Reduced miles travelled or provide / improve / promote alternatives to car based transport (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling car sharing, the use of low emission vehicles, community transport, environmentally friendly fuels and/or technologies)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced waste, environmental hazards and/or toxic materials for example by reducing PVC, photocopier and printer use, air pollution, noise pollution, mining or deforestation? Or increase the amount of College waste that is recycled or composted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced water consumption?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced instances of single use plastic?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reduced use of natural resources such as raw materials and energy to promote a circular economy?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Improved resource efficiency of new or refurbished buildings (water, energy, density, use of existing buildings, designing for a longer lifespan)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will this policy improve green space or access to green space?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target an improved environment:		

Will any aspects of this policy result in:			
The promotion of healthy working lives (including health and safety at work, work-life/home-life balance and family friendly practices)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Greater employment opportunities for local people?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
The promotion of ethical purchasing of goods or services for example by increasing transparency of modern slavery in our supply chain?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Greater support for the local economy through the use of local suppliers, SMEs or engagement with third sector or community groups?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
The promotion of better health, increased community resilience, social cohesion, reduced social isolation or support for sustainable development?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mitigation of the likely effects of climate change (e.g. identifying proactive and community support for vulnerable groups; contingency planning for flood/snow, heatwaves and other weather extremes)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The promotion of better awareness of sustainability, healthy behaviours, mental wellbeing, living independently or self-management?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target improved sustainability:			
What is the *estimated* carbon impact of this policy (in terms of tCO2e)	Increased (+tCO2e) <input type="checkbox"/>	Decreased (-tCO2e) <input type="checkbox"/>	Net Zero CO2 <input type="checkbox"/>

Mandatory initial impact screening completed by:	Jo Kear
Date	12/06/2024

**Initial impact screening supported by
(Please list each individual)**

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1. Policy Intent

- 1.1 South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) is committed to involving its Higher Education (HE) students in its strategic decision-making and operational management.
- 1.2 This HE Students as Partners Policy is intended to facilitate student input, not only as customers of the College, but as co-producers of their educational experiences and outcomes, both individually and collectively, via the decision-making processes of the College.
- 1.3 All students and staff are entitled to learn, research and teach in a culture that values vigorous debate, including, or perhaps particularly, in relation to difficult or contentious or discomfiting topics. This Students as Partners Policy and the information contained here does not undermine or conflict with the SGS Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice. In the unlikely event of any case of conflict the SGS Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice will take precedence.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Student as Partners Policy is aimed to enable and capture the student voice from all current, HE students to help inform and drive forward improvements to the student experience.

3. HE Student-Led Involvement

- 3.1 Training for all student roles will be organised by the Head of HE Student Experience within the first six weeks of term. Further training can be requested.

Students can request extra support to allow them to perform their roles. This support could range from administrative support to additional training to help ensure a diverse body can be represented. Students should email highereducation@sgscol.ac.uk to arrange extra support on an individual basis.

3.2 HE Class Representatives

Class Representatives are selected by their peers within each study programme or student group to serve as a liaison between the student body and the college administration. These representatives attend Departmental meetings, HE Class Representative Meetings (also known as 'Voice of the Student'), and HE Course Enhancement Meetings. While these positions are voluntary and do not offer financial compensation, they play a vital role in the college's quality and improvement processes.

Responsibilities of Class Representatives:

- **Presenting Student Views:** They are responsible for gathering and presenting the views and concerns of their cohort at Course Enhancement Meetings, which are held biannually in November and March.
- **Supporting ACEM:** Their input is a key component of the Annual Course Enhancement and Monitoring (ACEM) process, which relies on student feedback to drive programme enhancements.
- **Participating in Meetings:** Class Representatives are invited to the initial segment of each Course Enhancement Meeting, where they can contribute directly to the agenda. This part of the meeting is chaired by the Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment, who collects student feedback.
- **Annual Campus Meeting:** They also participate in an annual campus-wide 'HE Class Representative Meeting,' chaired by the Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment. This meeting includes senior college staff such as the Director of Higher Education, the Assistant Principal for the campus, the Library Manager, Estates and Facilities Managers, and the Catering Manager.

How the Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment will support Class Representatives:

- **Record Keeping:** The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment, maintains a record of all meetings.
- **Feedback Dissemination:** They ensure that feedback is communicated to the student body via Class Representatives and the college's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), such as Microsoft Teams, within five working days of the meeting.
- **'You Said, We Did' Graphic:** Feedback is shared in the form of a graphic that illustrates the college's response to student input.
- **Governor invitations:** The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment will ensure Governors have the dates of meetings in advance to give an opportunity for them to attend, providing scope for higher-level oversight and involvement.

Impact Evaluation:

- **ACEM Reflection:** Issues raised during meetings and the responses provided are reflected upon in each area's ACEM documentation.
- **HE Annual Report:** The HE Annual Report comprehensively evaluates the impact of student feedback over the academic year, ensuring that student voices lead to tangible improvements.

These roles are designed to ensure that student feedback is systematically collected, considered, and acted upon, thereby enhancing the quality of education and student experience at the College. The Class Representatives act as a bridge, enabling a two-way communication channel that helps the College understand and address students' needs effectively.

3.3 HE Student Ambassadors

HE Student Ambassadors play a pivotal role at the College, primarily focusing on:

- **Facilitating communication** between students and the institution.
- **Participating in the HE Student Committee** to discuss higher education topics and review documents, ensuring student perspectives are integrated at all levels.
- **Monitoring and providing feedback** on the College's adherence to the OfS Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28 (APP) through involvement in termly APG meetings.
- **Representing the College** at external and internal events.
- This **paid position** requires a formal application to the HE Coordinator, with training provided in early October. Support is available throughout the year as needed. The College may cap the number of Ambassadors per subject to maintain equal representation, with 10-15 Ambassadors each academic year

3.4 HE Peer Assisted Learning Scheme Champions (PALS)

As part of the HE Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) the College employs Champions to enhance HE students' academic skills through individual sessions or multi-week programs. These paid positions require training and are open to Level 5/6 HE students or recent graduates.

PALS Champions support various initiatives, including the SGS Student Buddy Scheme and the SGS Empower(ED) Programme. **Two** positions are offered annually, with ongoing support for post holders who will report directly to the Subject Area Lead/ Programme Lead and the Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment. Applications are accepted from eligible SGS students and recent graduates. Full details of this new scheme and how to apply will be given at Enrolment and Induction.

3.5 HE Scholars

As defined in our Higher Education Fee and Bursary Policy 2024-25, the College offers various scholarships, with a limit of two per category each year, except for full Sports scholarships which are limited to two active scholarships at any time and are honored for the student's programme duration.

Scholarship applications are assessed by a panel including the Director of Higher Education and other heads. Scholars will work directly with the Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment and the HE Central Team, as well as their Subject Area Leads/ Programme Leads. Those in receipt of the following scholarships will be expected to advocate for peers, maintain 80% attendance, and participate in three college events yearly:

- HE 24+ Scholarship.
- HE REACH Scholarship.
- HE Sanctuary Scholarship.
- HE Sports Scholarship.

Applications are through the College's [Bursaries and Scholarships page](#).

3.6 HE Student Groups

SGS College fosters a supportive student community through various groups that encourage peer support, discussion, and advocacy. These student-led groups contribute to the SGS Inclusion Committee and receive a small funding allowance to organise casual meetups for students to connect and share experiences. Each group will work directly with the Head of HE Student Experience who will be responsible for helping set up, providing advocacy training, support with any issues arising and monitor the funding allowance and spend.

- **HE Mature Student Group:** For those 21+, returning to study, part-time students, or those with dependents.
- **HE Students with Disability Group:** For students with any disability, providing a space to discuss challenges.
- **HE REACH Group:** For ethnic minority students, focusing on empowerment and enhancing the university experience.
- Each group supports its members and hosts events, with funding available for group activities.
- A member from each group attends the termly SGS Inclusion Committee, contributing to discussion and reporting any key issues that the group would like raised.

Full details about these groups will be shared during Enrolment and Induction.

3.7 HE Student Surveys and feedback mechanisms

In addition to the HE student roles and groups above, the College uses a variety of surveys and feedback mechanisms to gather specific student feedback. These include:

- **Start and End of the Year surveys.** Degree/Higher National students are surveyed anonymously at these two key points of their courses.
- **Module evaluations.** Degree/Higher National students are given the opportunity to feedback anonymously at the mid and end point of each module of study. Feedback forms an important part of the ACEM process and leads to course improvement.
- **Short, Very Short and Professional programmes** will be surveyed a minimum of once per academic year.
- **National Student Survey (NSS).** Eligible students are encouraged to participate in the NSS. Results of this survey are shared on the College VLE (MS Teams) and at Course Enhancement Meetings to bring about improvements.
- **Instant feedback.** We encourage students to share their ideas on how we can improve either via the HE Student Teams site, by emailing highereducation@sgscol.ac.uk or by visiting the Higher Education Central Office at WISE campus.
- **Graduate Outcomes.** Fifteen months after graduation you will be contacted by HESA to complete this survey.

The College offers a flexible and dynamic curriculum within a vibrant learning community and as such nothing in this document is intended to frustrate the involvement of students or prevent their engagement. In furtherance of this plan the Director of Higher Education can request an ad hoc survey.

4. Policy Implementation

- 4.1 It is widely accepted that the views of students, individually and collectively, are pivotal to informing quality systems with the purpose of improving the student educational experience both for current and future cohorts.
- 4.2 The College created a Head of Higher Education Student Recruitment and Experience to facilitate both student and College led involvement; this role will also collate evidence of involvement for the Corporation via the HE Annual Report.
- 4.3 The SGS HE Students as Partners Policy also seeks to clarify and confirm that all members of staff have a duty to be responsive to the views of our students.

5. Enforcement

- 5.1 All HE staff will promote, accommodate and support the process of student meetings, whilst ensuring Freedom of Speech is maintained. Failure to do so, or evidence of influencing the student voice, will result in disciplinary action. This Policy does not undermine or conflict with the SGS Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice. In the unlikely event of any case of conflict the SGS Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice will take precedence.
- 5.2 This Policy makes the Corporation's desire to respond to the Student Voice incumbent upon each member of corporate and curriculum staff;
- 5.3 The Director of Higher Education, working with the Head of Curriculum, Standards and Development, Head of Student Experience and Recruitment, Learning Support, the Quality Office, and College Management (departmental) will be responsible for delivering this Policy;
- 5.4 The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment is responsible for ensuring that Student Representatives are in place and that the schedule of activities is delivered as required;
- 5.5 The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment will produce and publish an annual calendar of events and will liaise with Subject Area Leads, Programme Leads, Assistant Principals, the Director of Higher Education and the Head of Student Recruitment and Experience to secure the delivery of this plan;
- 5.6 The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment will regularly review the schemes listed in this document, to ensure that student participation is maintained, that a diverse range of students are included, and that information is reported back to fellow students within the given deadlines.
- 5.7 The Head of HE Student Experience and Recruitment will work with the HE Curriculum, Standards and Quality team to produce, as required by the Compliments and Complaints Policy, a summary report of all complaints on a termly basis for review by the Senior Management Team and the College Corporation.
- 5.8 All complaints and academic appeals will be recorded and used for analysis and management reporting. The SGS Further Education Corporation will receive reports, at least annually, and the College, via the Deputy Principal, will make an annual return, as to the volume and outcomes of complaints to (1) the Office of the Independent Adjudicator; and (2) to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (FE) and the Office for Students (HE) upon request.

6. Related Policies, Procedures, Charters, Plans, Guidance and Legislation

- [SGS Access and Participation Plan 2024-25 to 2027-28](#)
- [SGS Access and Participation Plan Summary 2024-25 to 2027-28](#)

- [SGS Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure](#)
- [SGS Corporate and Social Responsibility Statement](#)
- [SGS HE Assessment Policy 2024-25](#)
- [SGS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy](#)
- [HE Fee and Bursary Policy 2024-25](#)
- SGS Freedom of Speech and Expression Code of Practice
- SGS Higher Education Calendar
- SGS Higher Education and L4+ Student Code of Conduct 2024-25
- SGS Higher Education Strategy 2023-28

7. Impact

- 7.1 The evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the Students as Partners Policy will form an integral part of our HE Annual Review process. This will include outcome measures and process measures.
- 7.2 All HE Programme Leads will use internal and external survey results to assist in programme evaluation via the ACEM process.
- 7.3 The College will measure outcomes and the wider impact of the feedback and actions arising from HE Student Representative involvement. This will be reviewed in the Higher Education Business Planning Group Meetings as a standing agenda item. Progress and themes will be reported to the Governors in an annual report.
- 7.4 Impact Measures:
- (a) The 'Student Voice' feedback will be produced to measure the positive impact of the student's role as co-producers of their own educational experience and outcomes. HE students will be full participants in the management and development of HE education at SGS.
 - (b) We will endeavour to ensure full and effective HE student participation with educational and programme enhancement through this plan.
 - (c) We will measure the effect of Student Involvement on our Strategic Priorities and Key Performance Indicators.