

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY

1. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

This Policy recognises the fact that 100% of learners will study the programme on-line. As a result, the majority of concerns that would appear in a Policy such as this are not applicable. We would normally be concerned to ensure that in the College learners' study in a safe and non-threatening environment. The main concern though is with on-line behaviour and conduct.

Some aspects of the Policy reflect generic points such as:

- communicate in a way that does not offend others, for example, by not using abusive, threatening and foul language;
- ensure learners do not engage in any form of on-line harassment, bullying or discriminatory behaviour;
- ensure learners complete all the work set and meet deadlines for submitting assignments;
- conventional norms of behaviour apply to on-line learning. The College is committed to achieving an on-line educational and working environment which provides equality of opportunity, and freedom from discrimination;
- learners who engage in inappropriate activity will find themselves subject to College disciplinary procedures. The College reserves its right to take legal action against individuals who cause it to be involved in legal proceedings as a result of their violation of licensing agreements and/or other contraventions of this Policy.

Unacceptable use of the on-line learning network may be summarised as:

- the retention or propagation of material that is offensive, obscene or indecent, except in the course of recognised research or teaching;
- intellectual property rights infringement, including copyright, trademark, patent, design and moral rights, including uses internal to the College;
- causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to others;

- defamation (genuine scholarly criticism is permitted);
- unsolicited advertising, often referred to as 'spamming';
- actions or inactions which intentionally, or unintentionally, aid the distribution of computer viruses or other malicious software;
- attempts to access, or actions intended to facilitate access, to computers for which the individual is not authorised;
- the retention or propagation of material or websites whose purpose is to promote terrorism, or which is directly linked to a proscribed terrorist organisation, except in the course of recognised research or teaching that is permitted under law.

2. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

We will make learners aware of any issues or concerns we may have concerning your behaviour. We will work with learners on an action plan to help you improve performance. If, after all reasonable efforts and attempts to resolve the issue have been made, we will then follow the disciplinary procedure.

All students are entitled to a hearing and to go through each stage of the disciplinary procedure. However, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the offence, a written warning or hearing at the Disciplinary Panel may be the first course of action, even if it is the first time such behaviour has been exhibited.

- any form of harassment, bullying or anti-discrimination (including emails, phone and text messages) against both students and staff;
- plagiarism and cheating;
- impersonating another student or another student impersonating you (e.g. in exams or coursework).

This is not a definitive list. If it is proven that learners are involved in any of the above, the disciplinary procedure will be immediately activated and may lead to permanent exclusion from the College.

3. STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY

3.1 Policy Aims

- to ensure that staff of Athena Global Education (AGE) take a positive approach to enforcement and maintenance of the Student Code of Conduct;
- to provide clear guidance to management, staff, students and employers on the disciplinary procedures that should be followed when the Student Code of Conduct rules have been broken.

3.2 Policy Considerations

The implementation of this policy considers current legislation and the age and circumstances of the students.

4. COMMUNICATION

The College is committed to providing a safe and non-threatening environment and students are given clear information as part of the enrolment and induction process. This policy and the Student Code of Conduct are published and available on the College website and student intranet.

5. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

It is not intended that the disciplinary procedure will be activated at the first demonstration of inappropriate behaviour, other than in cases of serious misconduct in breach of the Student Code of Conduct. All staff involved will work with the student in an effort to bring about an improvement in behaviour. If these informal efforts fail after a reasonable amount of time and repeated attempts, then the disciplinary stages outlined below will be followed:

6. THE FOUR STAGES OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Final written warning
4. Disciplinary Panel (which may lead to permanent exclusion from the College)

A Disciplinary Meeting is held by a senior member of staff who is deemed to be the most appropriate person to deal with the hearing. The student is informed of the actions being taken at the disciplinary meeting: for example, if the disciplinary proceedings are progressed it may involve a verbal warning, first written warning or final written warning. When a student is issued

with a verbal or written warning, other than when a student is excluded, this results in an action plan in order to encourage the student to improve performance or behaviour.

The Disciplinary Panel is convened with senior staff and an impartial member of staff not directly involved with the student. The outcome of the panel may be to exclude the student.

The student will be advised of the date, time and location of the Disciplinary Meeting by email. However, a meeting may be arranged immediately if deemed more appropriate. If the student fails to attend the meeting the next stage of the Disciplinary Policy will be applied.

6.1 Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

- to be issued to the student by a senior member of staff in the presence of an impartial witness i.e. another member of staff;
- student is made fully aware that this is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and is given the opportunity to discuss their behaviour;
- a time limit is given to the student to improve performance or behaviour;
- the student is issued with a SMART action plan which is monitored and reviewed;
- the warning is recorded with a copy of the action plan in the student's file.

Students will be given reasonable time – normally a semester - to improve performance before consideration is given to moving to Stage 2.

6.2 Stage 2 – First Written Warning

A written warning is issued only after reasonable time has been allowed for the student to improve behaviour or performance. A written warning can also be issued in the first instance where unacceptable behaviour warrants Stage 2 action:

- the letter to the student contains details of the disciplinary meeting to confirm the warning and advise that an action plan will follow. The letter to be issued to the student by the Welfare Officer or their representative;
- student is made fully aware that this is the second stage of the disciplinary procedure and is given the opportunity to discuss their behaviour;
- a time limit is given to the student to improve their performance or behaviour;
- copy of written warning given to student;

- the student is issued with a SMART action plan which is monitored and reviewed;
- The letter, record of the warning, and copy of the action plan is held on the student's file.

6.3 Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

A final written warning is issued, usually following a first written warning, where, after reasonable time has been allowed for the student to improve behaviour or performance there has been no significant change. A final written warning can also be issued in the first instance where unacceptable behaviour warrants Stage 3 action.

The procedures for Stage 3 are the same as in the first written warning stage, with the addition that the student is informed that failure to improve performance or behaviour will result in a hearing held by the Disciplinary Panel, which may lead to the student being excluded from the College.

6.4 Stage 4 - Serious Misconduct

In an incident of serious misconduct where the safety and wellbeing of others is considered to be a risk, urgent and immediate action will be taken which may result in the student being removed from the College. The student will be given verbal notice of suspension. The Attendance Monitoring Administrator is informed about the suspension and must suspend the student's status and inform any relevant parties of the suspension.

Stages 1, 2 and 3 are overridden and Stage 4 is activated. A letter will be sent to the student within 3 working days informing them of the reasons for the suspension.

A second letter is sent to the student within 5 working days informing them of the details for the Disciplinary Panel.

7. DISCIPLINARY PANEL

The Disciplinary Panel is normally chaired by a senior member of staff

- The student will be advised in writing in not less than 5 working days that they must attend the Disciplinary Panel Hearing. Copies of any evidence and documents accumulated from outcomes of previous stages will be included with the letter together with information informing a student of their rights.

- All correspondence will be sent by email.
- The outcome of the Disciplinary Panel will be sent to the student not later than 2 working days from the date of the hearing.

8. DISCIPLINARY PANEL OUTCOMES AND DECISIONS

8.1 Decision to Readmit Student

If, as a result of the panel for serious misconduct, the decision is made to allow the student to continue studies at the College, the relevant teaching staff will be informed of the panel's decision and the student will be issued with a course timetable, detailing the date and time to next attend class.

The student will agree to undertake certain conditions set out in a written improvement plan. Progress and achievement is monitored and reviewed at an agreed date. The Welfare Officer and Programme Leader are required to monitor and review the improvement action plan and report any concerns to the Academic Director.

8.2 Decision to Exclude Student

If the judgment of the panel is to exclude the student, the student should be informed in writing no later than 2 working days. The letter must be sent by email.

8.3 Appeals

The student will have the right to appeal to senior managers.

9 RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE (REVISED) UK QUALITY CODE

9.1 Expectations for Standards: Common Practices

- The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.
- The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

9.2 Expectations for Quality: Core Practices

- The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.
- The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.