



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Policy owner:	VICE PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM (PEOPLE)
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the ways in which students are actively involved in all quality improvement processes at United Colleges Group. This includes a variety of channels and forums which enable students to feedback, contribute and engage in processes, policies and activity that form the quality of the student experience.

It is widely accepted that the views of students, individually and collectively, should inform quality and enhancement systems with the purpose of improving the student educational experience both for current and future cohorts. Student involvement in quality can have a positive influence on the delivery and development of any aspect of the student educational experience. UCG is committed to ensuring that all students are empowered to co-create their own learning experience both in formal and informal learning.

Aspects of the educational journey into which students can offer insight to United Colleges Group include:

- application and admission;
- induction and transition into college life and higher education;
- programme and curriculum design, delivery and organisation;
- curriculum content;
- teaching delivery;
- learning opportunities;
- learning resources;
- student support and guidance;
- assessment.

2. Scope

This policy has been devised to ensure it meets sector leading practice in further education colleges and the requirements of UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Quality.

3. Policy

Student Involvement in Quality

All students, full time and part time, at United Colleges Group have the opportunity to be involved in quality processes in a manner and at a level appropriate to them.

United Colleges Group is committed to carrying out the following:

- enable active student participation in quality systems, including using individual and collective feedback from students;
- implement open and transparent mechanisms, agreed with students, for the nomination and election of United Colleges Group Student Representatives;
- provide induction and on-going support for students in their quality assurance roles;

- Monitor, review and enhance the effectiveness of their policies and processes for engaging students in quality processes.

Student Involvement in Learning and Teaching

Student engagement in learning and teaching refers to students' active involvement in making improvements to the learning environment and enhancing the learning experience. This may be through involvement with students' individual studies, and/or the structures and processes that review and improve learning and teaching.

United Colleges Group recognises that student engagement in learning and teaching is important for the following reasons:

- Active participation encourages our students to take more responsibility for, and have ownership of, their learning, and this improves their academic and college experience;
- Student engagement in learning and teaching recognises the different goals, approaches and motivations of each individual student as well as the collective student voice;
- Active engagement of our students is the main channel through which we are able to get feedback from our students, helping us to develop and improve all aspects of college life;
- Partnership and collaboration between our students and staff helps create mutually beneficial learning communities, improving communication and ensuring students are listened to;
- Student engagement in learning and teaching enables students to develop confidence by putting forward ideas and solutions for discussion;
- Student engagement in learning and teaching enables skills development for students, which improves their employability.

Developing the Student Voice

It is the aim and ambition of United Colleges Group for students to develop their voice via a mode of available channels made available to them. This will enable and empower them to take on more decision-making roles and become co-creators in their own learning. To do this, students need to be equipped with the necessary student engagement infrastructure to move from being *informed* to being *empowered*. This involves a process of strategic actions on behalf of senior managers to facilitate this level of engagement and autonomy for students. There are a number of ways United Colleges Group enables students to be informed, be consulted, be involved and be collaborated with, ultimately with the overall goal of engaging students to the point where they are empowered:

- Inform – presentations, assemblies, notice boards
- Consult – survey responses, focus groups
- Involve – Student Council, Student Governors, Staff appointments
- Collaborate – students on management committees: students attend meetings and contribute to institution-wide management decisions
- Empower - decision-making delegated to students, students organise consultations of their peers and meet to decide on the best way forward, peer support - students help one another in their education, which includes buddying systems and peer assessment. It also includes peer mediation,

where students take a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution.

The many features of student engagement are outlined below in a series of “Learning Principles”. These Learning Principles demonstrate the practical ways in which student engagement in learning and teaching can be understood at United Colleges Group and how we ensure accessibility and fair representation of all students and all cohorts.

Learning Principles

- We are aware that it may be more difficult for some students to engage, so we are committed to making sure all students have an opportunity to contribute - we make sure we listen to all voices.
- So that students become involved in decision-making processes, we make sure students have enough background information to become involved and make contributions. We encourage students to ask “why?” and make suggestions that we listen and respond to.
- By giving students regular, constructive feedback, students are able to review their own performance and progress. With staff, they develop their own learning goals and have a clear pathway to success.
- We encourage students to learn and develop their skills in lessons and outside of them, to build confidence, improve communication skills and to become a valuable member of the College community.
- Students are able to identify and articulate the skills they gain from these opportunities. By becoming a valued member of the College community and developing relationships with staff and other students, employability skills are developed as well as the professionalism of students.
- We want as many students as possible to contribute and get involved, so we make sure we publicise opportunities and ensure they can access them at times and in ways that suit all students.
- We train students so they can carry out formal roles – this includes an induction and ongoing support. There is also the opportunity to take up informal roles, such as being a member of the Students’ Council, for example. In this role students can speak on behalf of their Faculty, Campus or entire College.
- As student engagement is such an important part of College life for students, staff also get involved in engagement activities and have training to make sure activities are suitable and accessible to all students.
- We recognise and appreciate student involvement and will make sure that students are recognised and rewarded for their contributions.
- So that we can continue to make improvements and improve the learning environment for all students, we will continue to review the effectiveness of student engagement and the impact it has on learning and teaching.

Framework for Student Engagement

The Teaching, Learning & Skills Committee will oversee the College's student engagement strategy and ensure it continues to be relevant to students and the College Group. The aim of which is to ensure that our engagement with students enables student empowerment in their time at United Colleges Group.

This currently includes:

- **Student Engagement with Institutional Committees** – these include the College Governing body and the Higher Education Oversight Committee, where students contribute valuable opinions and suggestions to Governors and senior managers, based on their student experience and learning
- **Student Engagement at Qualification Programme Level** – one student from each class group is elected by fellow classmates to represent them as a Student Representative. They will carry out duties as follows:
 - Find out the opinions of other students in their class and then feed this back in Class Representative meetings with staff members.
 - Make sure all opinions, concerns and questions are raised in Class Representative meetings on behalf of fellow students.
 - Engage with other students and make time to speak to them.
 - Meet with curriculum managers, tutors and support staff to share views.
 - Provide two-way feedback between curriculum managers and classmates.
 - Work with Student Support team members to produce a Calendar of Events and deliver a range of extra-curricular activities.
 - Contribute to the annual review of courses, curriculum and assessment.
- **Student Engagement at unit and portfolio review level** - all students have the opportunity and are encouraged to complete the Student Unit Evaluation questionnaire which plays an important part in the annual course review process. The questionnaire offers students the opportunity to review learning, teaching, assessment, resources and the overall learning experience. This is an important process that is used by Heads of Faculty to review the quality of the learning experience and make improvements where needed.
- **Student Support Team Management** - Student Support Managers (with the Student Support Teams) will provide on-going training to the Student Representatives and act as a key liaison point between Student Representatives and senior management and teaching staff so that Student Representatives are fully supported.

Development of further Student Engagement opportunities 2020-22

To further enrich the experience of students and ensure they collaborate in all aspects of improvement in the College, a programme of Student Engagement activities and opportunities will be developed and rolled out from 2020 to 2022. These will enable

students to achieve greater control over their own learning experience and shape all aspects of College policy and the direction of travel for student engagement.

Activities we will be developing:

Activity	What does this mean for students?
Developing student employability skills by facilitating partnership and mentoring with support service areas in the College.	It means students will have the opportunity to work-shadow staff in different College teams such as Finance, HR, Marketing and Computer Services. They will be mentored and supported by staff in those areas so they can complete a short programme of work experience.
Enhance community engagement through volunteering opportunities, charity initiatives and civic action.	It means students will become actively involved with organisations such as Young Brent Foundation and Citizens UK. They will become involved in local, regional and national civic action projects (such as the living wage campaign or local safety campaigns) and have the opportunity to be coached and mentored by professionals in industry.
Co-develop bespoke opportunities for students to design a digital event.	It means students will take part in Slenky's "Take Your Shot" digital event and co-create digital content and marketing. This offers a real-life opportunity for students to work with professionals and use their digital skills to put on a large-scale media event with music, video and multimedia.
Making sure all working practices put "students first".	It means students will have the opportunity to join all College groups and committees, will be able to contribute and feedback on all College policies and eventually form a partnership agreement with senior managers so priorities for the College can be agreed.

Monitoring and Review

The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy on a regular basis, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations and in line with models of good practice.