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Student Recruitment Policy

1. Introduction

This policy details South Bank Colleges' (SBC) approach to and arrangements for the admission of students on to further education courses and programmes, and apprenticeships.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all colleges within SBC: Lambeth Gateway Colleges (Clapham and Brixton Campuses) and London South Bank Technical College (LSBTC, Nine Elms).

3. Policy statement

SBC is committed to providing its local community with a wide range of learning opportunities at different levels to facilitate access and progression.

It is our policy to operate an admissions service that guides prospective students on to appropriate programmes of study and courses from which they are likely to benefit, and which will enable them to succeed and progress.

4. Policy aims

It is the aim of SBC to ensure the admissions procedures are designed to:

- Provide impartial information, advice, and guidance (IAG), as well as course advice, to help prospective students make realistic and informed decisions about their choice of learning opportunities
- Make available clear, accessible, and accurate information for each course or programme, which includes entry criteria, qualification aims, costs, study requirements, progression routes and assessment methods
- Manage applications and enrolments in a timely and efficient manner, in accordance with college ambitions
- Ensure that the admissions procedures actively support all applicants regardless of age, disability, gender (legal sex) and gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment
- Make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to learning programmes for people with disabilities
  Offer an inclusive and accessible admissions and enrolment service to all prospective students
- Provide information and advice on college facilities and support services
- Offer advice and guidance on the various funding options available and support applicants through the process of understanding and applying for funding that is appropriate to their personal circumstances
- Undertake best endeavours to maintain a safe college environment for all students, staff, and visitors
- Ensure applicants are notified of the reason where admission to their chosen course is declined
- Ensure applicants are offered alternative courses should their initial choice not be suitable
- Provide applicants with information on alternative opportunities, including those offered by other providers, where we are unable to meet their needs
- Treat applicants with courtesy and respect at all times
- Provide information, advice and guidance services which continue to meet the standards of the Matrix quality mark.

5. Responsibilities

The Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment has overall responsibility for the Student Recruitment Policy. It is implemented by the SBC Student Recruitment Team under the leadership of the Lead Student Recruitment Coordinator and Student Recruitment Coordinators, and by the Apprenticeship Team under the leadership of the Group Director of Apprenticeships.

Interviews for full-time and substantive / specified part-time courses and apprenticeships are the responsibility of the relevant Curriculum Director / Curriculum Head.

Supporting applicants with additional learning support needs is the responsibility of the Student Engagement Directorate. Curriculum areas are responsible for referring apprentices with additional learning support needs to the Additional Learning Support team.

Summary of roles and responsibilities within the recruitment journey

Overall responsibility for the Recruitment Policy				
Curriculum Directors – working with their respective Curriculum Heads Responsible for: Providing course information for the website, 1 month prior to course 'go live date' Checking course scope and entry requirements are up to date on the website (providing instructions/ updates to Marketing as required) Providing list of SBC Interviewers and Interview Schedule preferences (stipulating methods, dates, times and duration) to Student Recruitment at least 6 weeks in advance of interview dates	**Lead Student Recruitment Coordinator / Student Recruitment Coordinator – working with Student Recruitment Team** Responsible for: Reviewing applications and accepting into ProSolution within 24 hours of receipt Providing IAG and course advice to support pipeline conversion at stages 1-2 (Application received – Invite to interview) Issuing email confirmation of application and invitation for	**Director of Student Engagement – working with ALS Manager, Director of Gateway and Funding Coordinator** Responsible for: Confirming prospective student EHCP is valid and completing a review to ensure that SBC can meet the applicant's needs Reviewing all declared ALS needs and supporting students with ALS reviews as part of the application process – before interview.	**Group Director of Apprenticeships – working with Apprenticeship Team** Responsible for: Undertaking initial interviews with apprenticeship applicants Recording the outcome of the interview and then following the enrolment process as outlined in the pre-entry and entry stages of the Apprenticeship Student Journey observing the defined stages as outlined in the Apprenticeship Provider and Employer Journey	**Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment – working with Marketing Team** Responsible for: Updating the course collateral published on the website and any supporting materials Updating the course entry requirements and integrating within the applicant journey Providing all communication materials (e.g., email copy etc) for prospective students Liaison with MIS to ensure all ProSolution functionality,

Confirming where interviews are not required and instructions/ requirements for conditional/ unconditional places (and entry qualifications) Updating outcomes from interviews within 24 hours Updating verbal offers from interviews with conditions within 24 hours Confirming dates of induction weeks and any requirements Completing internal progression tasks to move current students through the stages to enrolment	interview/ assessment within 72 hours Issuing offer emails to prospective students detailing conditions/ requirement for the offer Responding to requests from prospective students to reschedule their interview Moving applicants through stages 1-5 (Application received – Offer Accepted) and increasing conversion from prospect to offer accept. Monitoring 'Did not attend' status and cancelling applications after 2 missed interviews (with no contact) Monitoring completion of outcomes and providing reports to curriculum for timely updating	Confirming the support needs will be assessed through ProSolution in order for Student Recruitment to schedule an interview or issue an offer		reporting and updates deliver against the recruitment policy

6. General principles

6.1 Information, advice and guidance

SBC will ensure that prospective students receive information, advice and guidance from the Student Recruitment Team, Apprenticeship team, Student Services and/or Course Tutors to help them decide on the course of study or apprenticeship programme that best meets their needs and aspirations.

SBC is committed to providing the highest quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG). Staff within student facing, formal IAG offering roles, hold, or are working towards, professional IAG qualifications.

SBCs' customer service provision has been accredited the Matrix standard in recognition of our commitment to providing high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance.

6.2 Entry criteria and condition of entry

Information about each course and apprenticeship, along with its entry requirements, can be found on the SBC website and in supporting collateral (where available). Updates relating to courses needs to be provided by the individual curriculum areas to the marketing team so that information is up-to-date and accurate at all times. It is the responsibility of the Directors – Career Pathways and Gateway, and Curriculum Heads to make sure that their curriculum offer and application/entry requirements are correct on the website. Some curriculum areas have subject specific requirements such as a DBS, portfolio of work, dexterity tests, etc. Specific requirements will be determined by those curriculum areas and provided to marketing for inclusion on the SBC website. Specific requirements will also be included in communications to prospective students so that they understand what is expected of them and can prepare for interview appropriately.

Existing college students wishing to apply for the next level full-time course can do so under the SBC Internal Student Progression Policy.

The minimum age for entry on to our main programme courses is 16 years old (as of 31st August of the year the course starts), unless referred to Gateway the Local Authority under the 14-16 provision.

Full-time applicants under the age of 19 who have not achieved a grade 9-4 in their GCSE English and maths examinations will be required to retake their GCSEs. This is a mandatory requirement and a condition of study.

Apprenticeship applicants who have not achieved a grade 9-4 in their GCSE English and maths examinations prior to starting their apprenticeship will be required to achieve Functional Skills Level 2 exams in both subjects. This is a mandatory requirement and a condition of their apprenticeship programme, and they will be supported to achieve this. In some cases, this will be completed prior to the commencement of the apprenticeship programme.

6.3 Making an application

Applicants can apply online via the SBC website. Alternatively, applicants can complete an application in person or over the telephone, where details will then be entered into ProSolution. Applicants will be able to monitor the progression of their application via ProPortal.

Applications made online will be acknowledged by return. We will communicate primarily by email using the email address used at application. Personal details will be able to be updated through ProPortal once an applicant has registered. Applicants will create an account prior to interview, where they will be able to view and manage their journey. We will also use text messaging and other platforms to remind applicants about important dates and events and to specifically communicate with 16-18s regarding key milestones in their enrolment journey.

If applicants are aged 14-16, they must be referred by the local authority.

If applicants are aged under 19, we will also communicate with the parent/carer regarding the application where appropriate, using the information provided in the emergency contact section of the application form.

If an applicant for a full-time programme declares on their application form that they have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), the application process is paused, and an email is sent advising that the application will progress to the next stage when the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Funding Team confirm that the EHCP is valid. Once this is confirmed the Inclusive Learning team complete a review of the EHCP to ensure that SBC can meet the applicant's needs. Once these steps are completed, confirming the support needs can be met, the application progresses to the next relevant stage. Where requested or applicable, we will also communicate with any designated carer regarding the application, using the information provided.

If an applicant declares on the application form that they have a learning difficulty or disability, the applicant will be contacted by the ALS team and may receive an invite to an ALS assessment. Assessments will either be face-to-face, by telephone or via video through Microsoft Teams. This allows the ALS team to assess the support required and establish if the college is able to meet the applicant's needs. Where requested or applicable, we will also communicate with any designated carer regarding the application, using the information provided.

If an applicant is 19+ and in receipt of benefits, they may be eligible for free courses. **For Job Centre Plus (JCP) Claimants, applications can be made by self-referral or through Job Centre Plus Coaches.**

6.4 Selection process

For the majority of full-time programmes, substantial part-time courses and apprenticeships, applicants will be invited to attend an interview. Interviews will either be face-to-face, by telephone or via video through Microsoft Teams. The method will depend on the options supplied by the SBC interviewer and the preference of the student, where options are given.

SBC interviewers can stipulate their interview options (methods, dates, times and duration) by liaising with the Student Recruitment Team to agree an interview schedule at least 6 weeks in advance of the interview date. If schedules change due to limitations in staff availability, it is the responsibility of the curriculum areas to make alternative provision and to inform the admissions team within 24 hours of the scheduled interview time.

Course interviews are generally arranged for the non-teaching times during the week and as such there is often inflexibility around an alternative day of the week or time of day.

Candidates receive an interview appointment time which is not an exclusive time; it represents the actual interview session time, and interviews are conducted on a first come first served basis.

If a prospective student is unable to attend the designated time, they should contact SBC Student Recruitment Team to make alternative arrangements. This change will be updated in the SBC interviewer diary and logged within the prospective student record within ProSolution. A new confirmation of appointment will be issued.

If a student attending an in-person interview or assessment has a disability or long-term medical condition that requires assistance to evacuate during an emergency, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) must be completed where the assessment or interview takes place on the first floor or higher.

If a prospective student does not attend an interview without prior agreement, the SBC interviewer must mark the event as 'Did not attend' on ProSolution. This will then trigger a new interview invitation to be issued by the SBC Admissions Team. If prospective student does not attend 2 consecutive interviews without prior agreement, their application will be cancelled.

Applicants will receive an automatic email communication acknowledging their application submission. The SBC Student Recruitment Team aim to schedule all applicants for an interview as soon as the next time slot is available as per the Interview Schedule provided by curriculum Directors and Curriculum Heads. Applicants will usually receive an invitation to the interview/meeting within 72 hours of application. The interview/meeting usually takes place within four weeks of application.

The interview provides an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions and obtain more detailed information about the course and college they are applying to. It also helps staff assess the suitability of the applicant and at what level they should start at. Sometimes applicants will need to take part in practical skills tests as part of the guidance interview, for example auditions, dexterity tests, BKSB assessments and presenting portfolio of works. The format varies according to the course applied for and will be clearly detailed in the invitation communication. BKSB assessments can also be taken prior to interview, and this will be communicated through email to the student.

If an applicant has declared a learning difficulty, disability or support need, the Additional Learning Support team may assess the applicant prior to interview or before any course decision is made.

If an applicant has declared an EHCP, the application process is paused, and an email is sent advising that the application will progress to the next stage when the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Funding Team confirm that the EHCP is valid. Once this is confirmed the Inclusive Learning team complete a review of the EHCP to ensure that SBC can meet the applicant's needs. Once these steps are completed, confirming the support needs can be met, the application is then processed and progressed to the next relevant stage.

For full-time programmes where an interview isn't required, applicants will be offered a conditional, or unconditional place based on meeting the entry qualifications for the programme by the Curriculum Director or Curriculum Head. A full list of courses this relates to will be agreed each academic year and will take into account findings from the review of the applicant journey and the achievement of KPIs from the previous year. This will be provided to the SBC Student Recruitment and Marketing Team 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the new academic recruitment period.

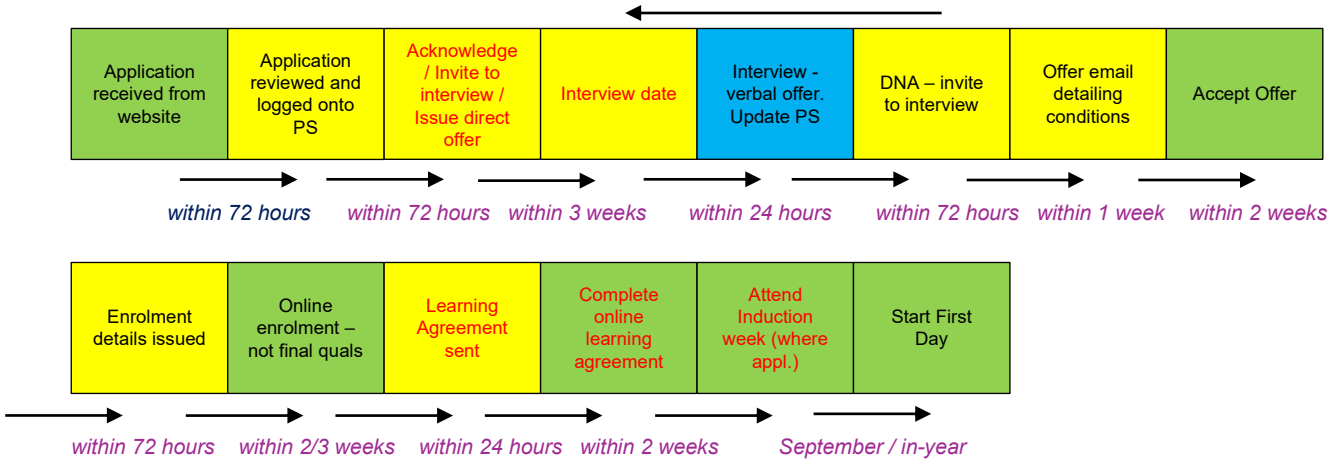
The student journey will involve 6 key stages:

1. Applied
2. Invited to Interview
3. Attended
4. Offered
5. Offer Accepted
6. Enrolled

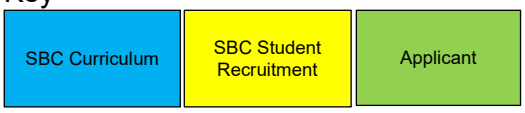
Application and enrolments can be accessed and reviewed in real-time via ProSolution. Results and reviews, versus targets, by department, will be discussed at the College Executive Board (CEB) meetings to ensure that the process is delivering an excellent experience for prospective students throughout the journey.

The recruitment processes outlined in this policy relates to stages 1-5.

The student journey will be monitored using the timeline relevant to each defined stakeholder Group, please see example timeline below:



Key



From application received date
From date of prior stage

6.5 Offering a place on a course

Where applicants attend an interview for a full-time programme or part-time course, a verbal offer will usually be made on the day, by the SBC Interviewer. The outcome of the interview, together with any conditions, must be updated onto ProSolution by the SBC Interviewer within 24 hours of the event. From this, a formal offer communication will be issued to the prospective student (either conditional - supported by requirements, or unconditional), via email, within 1 week of the SBC Interviewer updating the outcome.

If during the interview the SBC Interviewer believes that the prospective student would be better suited to an alternative course or level, they will discuss the requirements and recommendations

and either refer for another interview or make an offer based on the new course details. The outcome of the interview, together with any conditions or referral requirements, must be updated onto ProSolution by the SBC Interviewer within 24 hours of the event. From this, a new interview appointment OR formal offer communication will be issued (either conditional - supported by requirements, or unconditional), via email, within 1 week of the SBC Interviewer updating the outcome.

Where an interview isn't required for a full-time programme or part-time course, a formal, conditional offer will usually be made within one week of receiving the application.

Applicants will receive an email inviting them to go to the applicant portal to view a copy of their formal offer letter, which they will need to accept or decline within two weeks. A course offer may be conditional, which means a place has been offered provided that the applicant can meet certain conditions. Conditions will normally relate to qualifications that the applicant is required to pass (including specific grades required). Any conditions relating to the offer will be detailed in the applicant's formal offer communication.

If it is not possible to offer an applicant a place on their chosen programme, course or apprenticeship, the applicant will be offered another course, careers IAG interview and/or referred to another provider where practicable.

6.6 Enrolling at SBC

From May, full-time applicants will receive information about their enrolment and other information they might need, such as fees payable.

Applicants on full-time courses will be invited to enrol from June through to August in readiness for a traditional September start course. They will then be invited to attend an induction day in September where they will also receive their timetable prior to their first day. Enrolments for part-time and in-year courses will be determined by start date.

Applicants accepted on to part-time courses that start the following academic year can enrol at any time from June onwards, and where there is availability.

During enrolment, students will be assessed for funding, fees, residency eligibility and are required to verify the accuracy of the information on their learning agreement, thoroughly read through the student confirmation, privacy notices and student declaration and sign and date the document.

As part of the enrolment process SBC students will be provided with:

- A list of required supporting information (dependant on individual circumstances and course)
- Advice and guidance regarding funding availability
- Information about travel options
- Bursary Scheme information
- Details about free meals, where appropriate
- Information about help with Childcare costs, where appropriate
- A timetable of study
- Information about student induction requirements and a formal start date
- A security pass/ID and relevant student lanyard

The option of enrolment online is applicable in certain circumstances, and this information will be communicated to candidates at the relevant stage.

6.7 Preparing to start College

In addition, all new full-time under 19 students are invited to attend a Welcome Event in June/July. The day is designed to introduce them to the College, the course and their fellow students, and ease the transition to post-16 learning. Where appropriate their parents/guardians will also be invited to this day.

6.8 Course closure

In the event that a course is oversubscribed and a limit on numbers has been approved by the College Executive Board (CEB), places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and a waiting list will be maintained. Should more places become available, we will notify students on the waiting list.

In the unlikely event a course is not viable, for example a course with low numbers where the delivery would potentially have an adverse effect on student experience or where there has a been a significant change to government funding, SBC reserves the right to withdraw the course (including after an offer has been made or accepted). In such cases, applicants will be notified as soon as possible and be offered advice and guidance on the availability of alternative courses, both at SBC and with other suitable alternative providers.

6.9 Disclosing a criminal conviction

We have a duty of care under our Safeguarding Procedures and Prevent strategy to make every effort to ensure that applicants who might pose a risk to other SBC users are not admitted on to our courses.

Applicants are asked, during the application and enrolment process to declare any unspent criminal convictions. They are also assured that this declaration will not necessarily be a bar to them joining SBC. Convictions which would give rise to particular concern are those for offences against a person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, convictions involving unlawful supplying or possession of controlled drugs or substances, and theft. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and reformed under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012) do not need to be disclosed. However, applicants for courses involving working with children or vulnerable adults are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, this is a specific requirement of certain courses at SBC.

Applicants with unspent criminal convictions will need to attend a meeting with Safeguarding Officer to undertake a risk assessment. Depending on the nature of the conviction, the risk assessment may then be reviewed by a panel, and the outcome communicated to the applicant.

6.10 Applicants who have been subject to SBCs' disciplinary procedure

Where an applicant has been through SBCs' disciplinary process, it is recorded in the student record system in order that the relevant Curriculum Head / Course Leader is aware and can follow up accordingly.

6.11 Applicants with additional learning support needs

SBC welcomes applications from people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Where a full-time applicant is identified as declaring a disability or difficulty which may impact on his/her learning, they will be followed up by SBCs' Additional Learning Support department.

Apprentices will be contacted by the Additional Learning Support department where a referral has been made by the curriculum area.

The Additional Learning Support department will provide:

- Support for applicants at guidance interviews as required by the applicant
- Support to ensure that applicants are able to access SBC support services.

SBC will work closely with Local Education Authorities in order to meet legal requirements under the Children & Families Act 2014 in respect of:

- Duty to admit students if the institution is named in an EHCP plan and able to meet need
- Duty to co-operate with the local authority to identify and meet the needs of young people with SEN. This is a reciprocal duty, meaning that the local authority must also co-operate with colleges to ensure young people's needs are met.

6.12 Non-EEA students (or EEA students that have not been resident in the EEA for three years or more)

SBC does not currently hold a Tier 4 Border Agency Licence. Applicants will be asked to provide supporting evidence regarding proof of residency which allows them to be eligible for funding.

6.13 Right to refuse admission

Under certain circumstances SBC may reserve the right to refuse an application or enrolment or withdraw an offer. Applicants who fall into this category will be given full consideration before any such refusal or withdrawal.

SBC reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant:

- Who has disclosed a criminal conviction which is either not spent or can never become spent and which SBC believes represents an unacceptable risk to students and/or staff
- Who has previously been excluded from one of SBCs' colleges or another educational institution. Before any such decision is made, reasonable effort will be made to obtain references from previous educational institution(s) and, where provided, references will support any decision
- Who has previously attended this or another education institution and not completed courses, including all external assessments, without good reason
- Who has previously been subject to SBCs' disciplinary procedure and has not followed the recommendations following the outcome of any such disciplinary
- Who is identified as being a threat or danger to themselves or others in the SBC environment in relation to SBCs' duty of care to staff and students
- Where SBC has been notified by the police that the applicant presents an unacceptable risk
- Has outstanding debts with SBC
- Has provided false or misleading information on an application or enrolment form.

The above list is indicative and is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. SBC reserves the right to make the final decision on whether to accept an application or enrolment to SBC. Any such decision will be made by a member of the College Executive Board.

7. Collecting information about applicants

Details on the information we collect about applicants can be found in our Data Protection Policy which sets out what we do with applicants' information and what we do to keep it secure. It also explains where and how we collect applicants' personal information, as well as their rights over the personal information we hold about them. The SBC Data Protection Policy can be on our website.

8. Appeals and complaints

If an applicant feels that a process has not been followed, or the decision reached by SBC is unfair or incorrect, they have the right to appeal or complain.

The SBC Complaints and Suggestions Policy is designed to ensure that your complaint is dealt with promptly and effectively. A copy of this policy can be obtained either from the policies section of our website https://www.southbankcolleges.ac.uk/documents/policies/290-sbc-complaints-policy-2024-2026/file or by emailing feedback@southbankcolleges.ac.uk or by writing to the Quality Department: Quality and Systems Officer, South Bank Colleges, 45 Clapham Common South Side, London, SW4 9BL.

For all correspondence for an appeal or complaint associated with a college student application or enrolment process, this should be stipulated in the heading or subject line.
Should an applicant or candidate decide to raise a complaint through Feedback, it would be as a review so that is the final stage for appeal, provided they have already raised concerns directly with the Student Recruitment team and they didn't reach a satisfactory resolution.

After exhausting SBCs' internal complaints procedure, if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome you can complain to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (the government agency responsible for overseeing the performance of further education colleges). Further details on how to contact them can be found in the Policy.

Complaints relating to admissions and enrolment at South Bank Colleges must be submitted within six months of the date of the initial interaction or incident. This time limit ensures that concerns can be investigated thoroughly and that all relevant evidence and information can be considered effectively. Compliance with this requirement supports the integrity of our processes and helps to ensure that findings are robust and properly substantiated.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the admissions policy is monitored through:

- Assessment under the Matrix quality standard
- Customer feedback
- Service standards detailed in the admissions processes
- Analysis of performance recorded on the admissions system
- Observation of admissions interviews and related activity
- College self-assessment process
- Equality impact analysis
- Internal / External Audit

10. Supporting policies

The following College policies are relevant to the application of this policy:

Document	Owner
SBC Internal Student Progression Policy	xxxx
SBC Customer Care Charter	xxxx
LSBU Apprenticeship Policy	xxxx
SBC Dealing with Disclosure of Unspent Convictions Policy	xxxx
SBC Equality & Diversity Policy	xxxx
SBC Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan Policy	Health and Safety Advisor
SBC Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy	Director Student Engagement
SBC Safeguarding Procedures and Prevention Strategy	Director Student Engagement
SBC Data Protection Policy	Data Protection Officer
SBC Complaint and Suggestion Policy	Director Student Engagement

EDI Considerations **E & D Policy Disclaimer**	This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.
Sustainability Considerations	TBC
Health and Safety Considerations	TBC
Financial Considerations	TBC
Strategic Ambition	Access to Opportunity