



Student Engagement: policy and procedures

Purpose

This policy explains how the AECC University College enables all students to have the opportunity to engage with and participate actively in our quality assurance and enhancement activities and provide feedback on their learning experience from induction to graduation. It sets out the importance with which the University College views such student input, the various mechanisms through which such input is encouraged, and ways in which we respond to and uses this input to enhance the learning experience, to our mutual advantage.

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1. Background and general principles

- 1.1 The AECC University College is a unique, close knit community where staff and students work together in partnership to maintain a collegiate, open and safe environment for all aspects of learning and development. We recognise that the student perspective is essential for us to improve the relevance, structure and delivery of our programmes and enhance the learning opportunities we offer. We actively encourage student participation and engagement across all aspects of University College life, through both formal and informal means, and takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. Students offer valuable and fresh insights into University College life and its organisation, as well as an impressive range of skills, and we welcome, and will facilitate, their active role in guiding how the University College and its programmes develop.
- 1.2 In the context of this policy 'student engagement' is defined as *'the active participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, in partnership with staff, resulting in the improvement of the learning experiences provided by the University College'*.
- 1.3 The AECC University College seeks to ensure that every student has the opportunity to engage with and participate actively in our quality assurance and enhancement activities and to provide feedback on their own learning experience and personal development at unit and programme level.
- 1.4 All AECC University College academic staff operate an open door policy and students are encouraged and expected to raise any issues, pastoral or academic, with any member of staff at any time. This can be done in person or by electronic means. We will ensure that tutors have access to support and guidance in order to help students engage with their studies and University College life.
- 1.5 The University College encourages students who wish to do so to take an active part in Student

Union (SU) work and stand for nomination/election as SU Officers or Student Representatives at programme level. SU Officers and Student Representatives are the formal link between the student body and the University College and work together with management and staff to enhance the student experience.

2. The Student Charter

2.1 The Student Charter sets out the ethos of the University College, what is expected of an individual student and what students can expect of the institution. The Student Charter was produced by the SU, academic staff and senior management. It is reviewed annually by these parties and discussed through SSLSC, and Academic Policy and Audit Committee before formal approval by Academic Board. It is available on the [University College website](#), on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and on the Staff Information Portal.

3. Feedback and Communication

3.1 Communication is a key factor in successful student engagement. Communication is achieved via the following channels:

- SU Officers
- Academic student reps
- Student representatives on committees
- Student: Staff Liaison Sub-Committee (SSLSC)
- Student mentor meetings at induction and in the early years for undergraduate programmes
- Academic staff – particularly programme and unit leaders
- Programmes Office Administrators (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- Open door policy amongst staff
- Email communication about day to day University College issues
- College announcements on the VLE
- Principal's Q & A

3.2 We recognise that students need to know that their opinions and concerns are taken in to consideration and the feedback they give is acted upon. This is done through the VLE, SSLSC, regular updates from Programmes Offices and through direct feedback from tutors and programme leaders. Students should be involved throughout the whole feedback process and be part of developing the solutions and implementing them.

3.3 For undergraduate and full-time MSc programmes 'Student voice' meetings are held for each year group, facilitated by the Quality and Enhancement Manager. These are meetings for students to discuss matters relating to the programme and their educational experience broadly defined, without any staff directly associated with the programme present. The feedback from these meetings is forwarded to the year tutor or Programme Leader as appropriate, and any issues or concerns are dealt with at this level when possible. Concerns that cannot be dealt with at this level will be referred to the PSG or ADQC as appropriate. For students on part-time MSc programmes a similar interaction is facilitated by virtual means.

4. Student Feedback through Surveys

4.1 The University College issues a number of standardised internal feedback surveys to seek information about student satisfaction and students' perceptions of the quality of their learning opportunities. This feedback is used to ensure that the University College maintains consistent standards, and enhances the student experience and quality of learning opportunities. Survey results are analysed and action plans are developed to address issues raised or to report back to students where actions are not possible at that time. The output from and responses to the

surveys feed into annual reports on continuous monitoring, and the agreed actions are monitored through the Continuous Action Plans for each programme.

- 4.2 Final year undergraduate (including MChiro (Hons)) students take part in the National Student Survey (NSS). The results of the survey are considered by the relevant PSG and reported to ADQC in the autumn term to inform the production of action plans and monitoring reports.
- 4.3 A library survey is carried out biennially and all students are invited to participate. Library staff prepare a full response which is made available to all students to inform them of the actions being taken as a result of the feedback received.
- 4.4 Further information about the arrangements for these surveys is available in the Student Feedback Policy and Procedures document, available on the SIP and the VLE.

5. Collating student feedback

An annual report reflecting on student feedback received at the programme and institutional levels and on responses developed will be prepared by the Quality and Enhancement Manager in consultation with others, to identify any overarching themes and opportunities for institutional action/enhancements. The report will be presented to the Autumn meeting of ADQC and thus to Academic Board in November.

6. The Student Union (SU)

- 6.1 The SU is a voluntary organisation run by students, for all students within the University College. The University College promotes the activities of the SU by employing an SU Manager to provide continuity over the years as SU officers change, and by engaging collaboratively with the SU on matters of student education and student welfare.
- 6.2 The SU objectives are focused on the advancement of the education of students at the University College. To this end, the SU engages in:
 - promoting the interests and welfare of Students at the University College during the course of their study and representing, supporting and advising Members;
 - being the representative channel between Students and the University College and any other external bodies;
 - providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its Members.
- 6.3 The SU is an essential organisation to bridge links between the student body and the institution. Their function is to engage in curriculum development, quality assurance and in enhancing the wider student experience by offering independent guidance. The University College is committed to forging a partnership with the SU in order to offer them the support, guidance and resources to help them achieve their objective. This will ensure they make the most useful contributions possible and reflect the diversity of the student body.
- 6.4 The SU has eight officers, with defined roles, who work as a team to support students. Elections for these posts are organised annually by the SU.

Executive Officers	
President	Oversees the running of the SU, chairs SU meetings and acts as student governor on the Board of Governors.
Vice-President	Deputises in the absence of the President. Responsible for the acquisition of branded University College clothing. Accommodation and landlord issues/advice.

Executive Officers	
Treasurer	Sets and maintains budgets for SU expenditure. Maintains community business networking.
Academic Affairs Officer	Assists students with all academic needs, including exam concerns, mitigating circumstances and general concerns. Co-manages the year representatives.
Sports Officer	Oversees the maintenance of the gym and sports clubs and manages the gym committee.
Social Officer	Responsible for the organisation of all social events including freshers' week and Christmas Revue. Co-manages the year representatives.
Press and Communication Officer	Advertises all SU events; responsible for student publications.
International Officer	Responsible for the needs and wellbeing of International students.

Student representatives serve on the SU committee, as set out below:

Year representatives – 10 representatives (2 per year) chiropractic programmes, 1 Access course, 1 Exercise Science at present, 2 representatives for the MSc Advanced Professional Practice and 2 representatives for the MSc Ultrasound (per programme, not per year).

The SU Manager ensures that the SU are acting in accordance with the Education Act and in the best interests of the student body and the reputation of the University College.

- 6.5 The collective duties of the SU officers are set out in the SU bye-laws. The SU holds fortnightly meetings to consider any issues that student reps have brought to them, organise social events and deal with any other matters submitted as agenda items. The SU Manager and Executive SU officers meet termly with the Principal and the Executive Director of Administration to share information and discuss any concerns.
- 6.6 The University College and SU support a range of clubs and societies, including national clubs and a range of sports clubs, to enrich the student experience, encourage students' integration into University College and professional life.

7. Student Representation System

- 7.1 There is student representation on the Board of Governors and all academic committees. This ensures that student views are heard at the highest level and gives the student body a voice in the development, review and monitoring of our academic programmes, policies and procedures.
- 7.2 Student representation is coordinated through the SU and Programmes Offices. Student involvement at this level is vital to ensuring student engagement and enhancement of the student experience.
- 7.3 Student Year Representatives are elected annually within the first four weeks of the academic term. The SU Academic Officer, the Social Officer and the SU President coordinate the election process.
- 7.4 The Postgraduate Programmes Office contacts all MSc Advanced Professional Practice and MSc Ultrasound students annually to invite student representatives to come forward. These Representatives represent students across the whole programme, and not by year of study.

Training

- 7.5 The SU manager provides new SU Officers with an induction pack containing essential information and guidance at the beginning of their term of office. The induction pack contains the SU Constitution, bye-laws, meeting schedule, an introduction to a year in office as well as

information on higher education at the University College.

- 7.6 To make sure that SU officers perform their roles as effectively as possible the SU encourages them to attend training courses offered by the National Union of Students (NUS) to aid the development of student officers, and to learn about the many opportunities and resources available by engaging with the larger NUS community.
- 7.7 The SU Manager oversees and provides training to Year Representatives at the beginning and during their term of office. This training involves tasks designed to improve communication, delegation and public speaking as well as to help integrate the representatives into the SU committee.

8. Student Participation in Quality and Enhancement Activities

- 8.1 All students have access to the names of the External Examiners for their programme, for information. However students must not contact External Examiner(s) directly. If a student has any queries about the assessment and examination process for the programme, or about their individual performance they should raise these with the relevant Year representative, the SU Academic Officer or with an appropriate member of academic staff. Some students may be invited to meet with External Examiners so that External Examiners have the opportunity to get direct feedback from students on how they are experiencing their programmes.
- 8.2 External Examiners' annual reports and programme responses are made available to all students on that programme, via the VLE. Students are encouraged to read these and feed back any comments through their student representatives, who can then raise these with staff and at relevant academic committees as appropriate. Student representatives on these committees will have the opportunity to consider External Examiners' reports as part of our quality assurance processes.
- 8.3 There are opportunities for students to participate in the thematic audits undertaken through the Academic Policy and Audit Committee, for example, by giving feedback to the audit team; such feedback will be sought virtually if necessary to facilitate this input.
- 8.4 The University College seeks student input as part of the process of developing new programmes, periodically reviewing existing programmes (normally on a five-yearly basis) and as part of professional body re-accreditation. For programme reviews and professional body re-accreditation groups of students will usually be invited to meet with the review panel; such meetings may take place virtually if necessary. For programmes validated as AECC University College awards there will normally be student membership of all Evaluation Panels for new programme approval and periodic programme review.

Engagement activities specifically focussed on students on first qualification chiropractic programmes

- 8.5 Student volunteers act as mentors for undergraduate students in the level below. This facilitates interaction between students in different stages of a programme and helps students integrate into University College life particularly in the early years. The University College encourages and supports the use of student demonstrators in undergraduate small group and laboratory work thus actively involving students in the learning process of junior colleagues.
- 8.6 The University College supports programme-specific initiatives that focus on students engaging with the local community. Students are extensively used as ambassadors for the institution on Open Day events and recruitment drives nationally and internationally. Students may represent the University College in educational outreach events in the local community, often linked to programme specific disciplines such as community outreach initiatives promoting healthy life style

choices or attending local sports events as a member of the first aid team. The approach and message of these events is the result of a collaborative process between students and academic tutors.

9. Review of Effectiveness

- 9.1 We welcome suggestions for new or improved ways in which we could foster active student participation in our quality systems; if any student has suggestions, or has a concern that systems are not working effectively, they should let the SU Academic Officer, the relevant Programme Leader or the Quality and Enhancement Manager know, as soon as possible.
- 9.2 Key Performance Indicators for the effectiveness of student engagement arrangements have been agreed through the SSLSC, These are monitored annually through SSLSC and ADQC.
- 9.3 This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with the schedule below, initially through discussion at SSLSC.

Version:	3.1
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator / Author	Quality and Enhancement Manager
Owner	VP Undergraduate Studies and Quality Student Union Manager Quality and Enhancement Manager
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