

**EAST 15 ACTING SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**  
**PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT**  
**For students in all stages of study from 2016-17 onwards**

The Professional Code of Conduct (PCC) is applied to all modules and all programmes of study at East 15 Acting School at both Loughton and Southend campuses.

The PCC sets out clear expectations in relation to attendance, engagement, professional behaviour, and conduct. The PCC also seeks to ensure that the academic progress and learning experience of the generality of students is not impeded by their peers.

To this end, the PCC provides a framework for supporting progress and positive outcomes through managing the following:

- Punctuality
- Full Attendance (see further guidance below)
- Preparation for classwork and rehearsals including learning of roles
- Co-operation, team-working, professional behaviour as an essential part of the learning and rehearsal process

Failure to adhere to the PCC in a module may result in an overall fail mark being awarded for the module. As a result, this is likely to have implications on a student's ability to progress to the next academic stage or graduate.

## **PART A: Attendance and Punctuality**

### **Principles**

1. Full attendance is the expectation of both the industry and the School. East 15 Acting School deems that 'satisfactory' attendance means attending all scheduled classes and prescribed activities<sup>1</sup>.
2. Non-attendance makes attainment of the following types of assessment criteria impossible:
  - a) Ability to work as part of a team
  - b) Contribution to group work or performance
  - c) Positive contribution to discussions
3. Where absence from classes and activities makes it impossible to meet the learning outcomes of the module, a fail grade is applied.
4. Punctuality is also essential, due to the collaborative nature of performance within strict time deadlines. All members of a group are disadvantaged by loss of time and repetition of material necessitated by poor punctuality.

### **Policy**

5. To ensure that a student meets the Principles of the Professional Code of Conduct (PCC), students must not exceed three unauthorised absences in a module in any one term.
6. A student who has accrued four or more unauthorised absences recorded against one module in any one term will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module.
7. Where all sessions in one school day relate to only one module, a student absent on that day would accrue one absence mark only.
8. Students must adhere to the agreed absence reporting procedure (set out below).
9. In instances of unavoidable unplanned absence or illness, students will be marked absent regardless of whether or not they have notified the School.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prescribed activities may include (but are not limited to) educational visits and offsite activities, assessments, assessed performances and/or any other mandatory activities pertinent to a course of study.

10. Students who arrive after a class/rehearsal/technical construction session has started will be marked as absent and may not be permitted to participate in the class. This decision is at the discretion of the course tutor/activity leader. If not permitted to participate, students may be required to observe the class, subject to health and safety considerations.

## Procedure

11. Students are required to report known absence in advance, in accordance with the absence reporting procedure. The retrospective reporting of absence will not normally be authorised. See Part D, paragraph 3 for information about Extenuating Circumstances.
12. It is the responsibility of the class tutor/director to monitor class attendance and record absences.
13. Action that will be taken by the School in accordance with the absence notification procedure:

<b>Absence is authorised in accordance with absence reporting/ monitoring procedure</b>	<p>No further action will be taken.</p> <p>Absence is recorded for information.</p> <p>Where there are concerns relating to absences across modules (i.e. the student's overall attendance is decreasing), or there are concerns around progress, a referral may be made to Student Support.</p>
<b>1 unauthorised absence</b>	<p>An email is sent to the student advising of the absence.</p> <p>Absence advice will be copied to the relevant Head of Course.</p>
<b>2 unauthorised absences</b>	<p>A second email will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged between the student and the Head of Course to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require.</p>
<b>3 unauthorised absences</b>	<p>A third email will be issued and a meeting arranged with the Director / Deputy Director of the School. Further support will be offered to the student.</p> <p>For Tier 4 students, a copy will be sent to the International Services Team for information.</p>
<b>4 unauthorised absences</b>	<p>A final email will be issued to the student confirming they have failed the PCC due to absence and they will receive a fail mark for the module.</p> <p>The case will then be referred to the Student Progress Team, who may refer it to the Dean in some cases, and the International Services Team (if applicable). The case may then be referred to the Board of Examiners.</p> <p>The Board of Examiners will receive a report on any unauthorised absences under the PCC and will determine whether to award a fail mark for the module.</p> <p>If necessary, an interim Board of Examiners will be convened in Terms 1 or 2 to consider the progress of students who have failed the PCC. Please see next paragraph.</p>

## Actions taken by the Board of Examiners

14. Where a student has failed a module due to exceeding the maximum number of absences permitted under the PCC the Board can consider the following actions:
- a) where a student has substantiated extenuating circumstances which directly relate to the absences, the Board can treat the absences as authorised. Where this results in

a total number of unauthorised absences being between one and three, the Board may permit the student to continue with the stage of study.

- b) where the Board judges that a student has no substantiated extenuating circumstances relating to the absences, the student must repeat the stage, normally on a full-time basis (Boards cannot offer more than three opportunities to undertake the assessment for a module).
- c) where the Board judges that a student has no substantiated extenuating circumstances relating to the absences, and the student has already had the maximum number of attempts at the module or cannot complete their studies within the maximum period, the student will be required to withdraw.

## **PART B: Preparation for Classwork, Co-operation and Team-working**

### **Principles**

1. Preparation for classwork requires students to demonstrate that they:
  - a) have read the required material;
  - b) have thought about how to apply the material to the work in class;
  - c) have worked, without supervisory input, with fellow collaborators (e.g. through rehearsal of a scene) to present the work in class.
2. Co-operation and team-working requires students to demonstrate effective collaboration by:
  - a) sharing creative processes in class with fellow students;
  - b) sharing preparation of scenes via rehearsal working with actors and presenting the work in class;
  - c) participating in group research of projects designated by tutors and presenting the work in class.
3. In general, preparation, co-operation and team-working are evidenced by the quality of collaboratively-based work presented in class/prescribed activity. One individual project that is deemed unsatisfactory on these grounds would not itself be a reason for failure. The assessment team take a view of accumulated evidence of the ability of a student to work as a member of the team.

### **Policy**

4. To ensure that a student meets the Principles of the PCC, all requirements need to be met.
  5. Where a student has failed to demonstrate their ability to prepare for class work or work co-operatively in a module in any one term, they will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module and will be referred to the Dean under the Progress Procedures, which can be accessed on the University's website - <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/policies/taught-progress-current.pdf>. The Dean may then refer the student to a Progress Committee who will make one of the following decisions:
    - (i) that the student be permitted to proceed, with or without specific conditions
    - (ii) that the student be permitted to proceed with a suspended withdrawal, with the withdrawal taking effect if the student's engagement continues to be unsatisfactory within a specified period
    - (iii) that the student be required to withdraw permanently.
- b. In certain circumstances the Progress Committee may deem it appropriate to:
    - (i) permit the student to repeat an appropriate period of study, including all or part of a period of study abroad
    - (ii) permit the student to transfer to another appropriate degree course
    - (iii) require the student to intermit for a period of time before proceeding
  - c. Progress Committee may also attach such conditions as seem likely to assist the future progress of the student.

## Procedure

6. If a Head of Course/Tutor believes student progress is being hindered by poor preparation for classwork, co-operation, team-working, the following process will be initiated:

<p><b>Initial concerns: Progress concerns are raised informally</b></p>	<p>Course Tutors/Activity Leaders/Heads of Department/Heads of Course informally raise concerns with the student, highlighting the nature, extent and potential impact of the concerns, and recommend remedial action.</p> <p>At this stage the student may wish to seek advice from Student Support.</p> <p>The student must take remedial action.</p>
<p><b>Continuing concerns: Progress concerns are raised formally</b></p>	<p>If the Head of Course believes a student may be in danger of failing the Professional Code of Conduct in respect of preparation, co-operation and team-working, they will inform the Academic Administrator.</p> <p>The Head of Course will complete an Interim Report.</p> <p>The report will detail the areas in which the student may be failing, actions the student must take to improve and a timescale during which the student is expected to show sufficient improvement. The report will be issued to the student by the Academic Administrator and Head of Course.</p> <p>In some cases a meeting may be arranged with the student to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require in order to make the necessary improvements.</p>
<p><b>Serious concerns: Formal warning issued</b></p>	<p>If the student makes no effort to improve within the given time, a formal warning letter will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged with the Head of Course to discuss the matter.</p>
<p><b>Continuing serious concerns: Referral to Deputy Dean</b></p>	<p>If the student continues to ignore the warnings, does not seek help or makes no improvement and so continues to breach the PCC, the student will be referred to the Dean who may refer the student's case to a Progress Committee.</p>

## PART C: Professional Behaviour and Conduct

### Principles

1. Students are expected to listen to and act on advice from staff and maintain professional behaviour and conduct. The following behaviours shall be treated as breach of the Professional Code of Conduct (PCC):
  - a. exhibiting threatening, intimidating or violent behaviour;
  - b. exhibiting indecent or abusive language or behaviour;
  - c. exhibiting disorderly behaviour;
  - d. behaving in a manner that amounts to harassment as defined by the University's 'Guidelines for Dealing with Harassment and Bullying' - <http://www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment/harassment-guidelines-feb16.pdf>;
  - e. behaviour that is discourteous, disrespectful or uncooperative towards a member of the University;
  - f. behaving in a manner which obstructs, frustrates or disrupts any lecture, class or other instruction, or any performance, or any examinations, authorised to be held, given or undertaken within the University.
  - g. any other behaviour that is deemed to contravene the general principles of the Professional Code of Conduct

2. The School take a view of the accumulated evidence of the ability of a student to work in a professional manner.
3. The PCC is not intended to replace the Student Code of Conduct; both procedures may be considered at the same time / in parallel and investigations may be carried out collaboratively by the School and the Proctor.

## Policy

4. Where a student has failed to demonstrate their ability to maintain professional behaviour and conduct in a module in any one term, they will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module and will be referred to the Dean under the Progress Procedures, which can be accessed on the University's website - <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/policies/taught-progress-current.pdf>. The Dean may then refer the student to a Progress Committee who will make one of the following decisions:
  - (i) that the student be permitted to proceed, with or without specific conditions
  - (ii) that the student be permitted to proceed with a suspended withdrawal, with the withdrawal taking effect if the student's engagement continues to be unsatisfactory within a specified period
  - (iii) that the student be required to withdraw permanently.
  - b. In certain circumstances the Progress Committee may deem it appropriate to:
    - (i) permit the student to repeat an appropriate period of study, including all or part of a period of study abroad
    - (ii) permit the student to transfer to another appropriate degree course
    - (iii) require the student to intermit for a period of time before proceeding
  - c. Progress Committee may also attach such conditions as seem likely to assist the future progress of the student.

## Procedure

5. If a Head of Course/Tutor is concerned about a student's behaviour and/or conduct within a module, the following process will be initiated:

<p><b>Initial concerns: Progress concerns are raised informally</b></p>	<p>Course Tutors/Activity Leaders/Heads of Department/Heads of Course informally raise concerns with the student, highlighting the nature, extent and potential impact of the concerns, and recommend remedial action.</p> <p>At this stage the student may wish to seek advice from Student Support.</p> <p>The student must take remedial action.</p>
<p><b>Continuing concerns: Progress concerns are raised formally</b></p>	<p>If the Head of Course believes a student may be in danger of failing the Professional Code of Conduct in respect of professional behaviour, they will inform the Academic Administrator.</p> <p>The Head of Course will complete an Interim Report.</p> <p>The report will detail the areas in which the student may be failing, actions the student must take to improve and a timescale during which the student is expected to show sufficient improvement. The report will be issued to the student by the Academic Administrator and Head of Course.</p> <p>In some cases a meeting may be arranged with the student to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require in order to make the necessary improvements.</p>

<b>Serious concerns: Formal warning issued</b>	If the student makes no effort to improve within the given time, a formal warning letter will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged with the Head of Course to discuss the matter.
<b>Continuing serious concerns: Referral to Deputy Dean</b>	If the student continues to ignore the warnings, does not seek help or makes no improvement and so continues to breach the PCC, the student will be referred to the Dean who may refer the student's case to a Progress Committee.

## **PART D: Provision, Extenuating Circumstances, Appeals, Guidance and Support**

### **Provision of the PCC according to Academic Stage**

1. For undergraduate students in their first year of study (including those on the Certificate of Higher Education in Theatre Arts):
  - a. In the first four (full) weeks of the first year, the PCC will be used solely for the purpose of providing formative feedback and guidelines to steer appropriate professional standards. During this time, all issues and concerns (with the exception of misconduct) should be dealt with informally. During this time the Head of Year will issue a written Progress Report detailing where the student is failing, what action the student must take to improve, and the deadline for action to be taken (normally the end of the first four full weeks of term one of the first year).
  - b. After the first four (full) weeks of the first year, students must comply with all aspects of the PCC and formal action will be taken by the University as per the policy guidelines during the remainder of the first year and in every term thereafter in the second and final years.
2. Postgraduate students on one-year or two-year courses must comply with all aspects of the PCC from the start of term one and for all subsequent terms. Formal action will be taken by the University as per the policy guidelines.

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

3. This is the procedure students should use to inform the Board of Examiners of any circumstances that are outside of their control and have affected their academic performance. This procedure can also be used to if there is an explanation for any unauthorised absences. All Extenuating Circumstances forms must be submitted by the deadline specified by East 15. Students should note that the East 15 deadline may differ from the general University deadline that is published on the website. Students are strongly advised to submit documentation/medical evidence to support any claim of extenuating circumstances. Guidance on submitting extenuating circumstances and deadlines can be found on the University's website: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx>
4. The University of Essex has a Late Submission of Coursework procedure which can be accessed via the University's website (<http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/late-submission.aspx>). East 15 has an Extenuating Lateness Committee consisting of the Director / Deputy Director and the relevant Heads of Course/Skills. It will consider claims of extenuating circumstances related to the request to submit written coursework after the deadline.

### **Appeals**

5. The normal right of a student to appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners shall apply. Details can be found on the University's website - <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/default.aspx>

6. Students have the right to appeal against the decision of the Dean or a Progress Committee. More information can be read in the Progress and Appeals Procedure available online - <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/taught-progress-appeals.aspx#appeals>.

### **Guidance and support**

7. The PCC can be downloaded from the East 15 website: <http://www.east15.ac.uk/>
8. Full details of the East 15 absence notification procedure is forwarded to all students at the start of the academic year via University of Essex email accounts and can also be found on the main East 15 website.
9. The Student Code of Conduct can be found on the University of Essex website and contains 'Student Conduct Regulations' and 'Student Conduct Procedures'.
10. Students requiring support in relation to understanding and/or meeting the requirements of the PCC should seek immediate guidance from Student Support.
11. Hard copies of all documentation relating to the PCC can also be obtained from the East 15 Administration Team.

East 15 Acting School  
Approved by Senate July 2016