AFE CENTRAL QUALITY POLICIES

Responsible for Implementation: Head of Quality and Compliance
Latest Review Date: October 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

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About Us

Access Further Education Limited ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Limited. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Further Education ('AFE'), National College for Creative Industries ('NCCI'), and Access Sport.

Register & Absence Management (website)

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how registers are taken, how absence is managed in the moment, and how it is followed up through the right channels. Accurate, timely registers trigger automated contact with absent learners and give campuses the data they need to intervene early.

2. Scope

It applies to all staff who take registers and to the campus leaders who oversee register completion and absence follow-up.

3. Responsibility

ho	esponsible for
Staff taking registers	Calling, saving, updating and submitting registers on time, and leading the Return to Study conversation when a learner comes back from absence.
Campus leaders	Checking the Daily Absence Report twice a day, making sure every unnotified absence is contacted and logged, and monitoring register completion through Register Compliance. [Confirm which campus role carries out the daily review and contact.]

4. Procedure

4.1 The register lifecycle

- Start of lesson: call the register verbally. Every learner must be individually accounted for. Do not rely on a head count or a visual scan of the room.
- First 15 minutes: save the register within 15 minutes of the lesson starting. Saving triggers automated absence texts to learners who have not arrived.
- During the lesson: never turn latecomers away. Let them in and update the register to show their late arrival.
- End of day: submit the completed register. Ideally do this at the end of each session; the minimum deadline is the end of the working day.

4.2 Automated texts

Guru automatically texts a learner 30 minutes after the session starts, on the first session of absence. It does not wait for repeated absences to build up, so the register must be saved within 15 minutes.

4.3 Daily review and follow-up

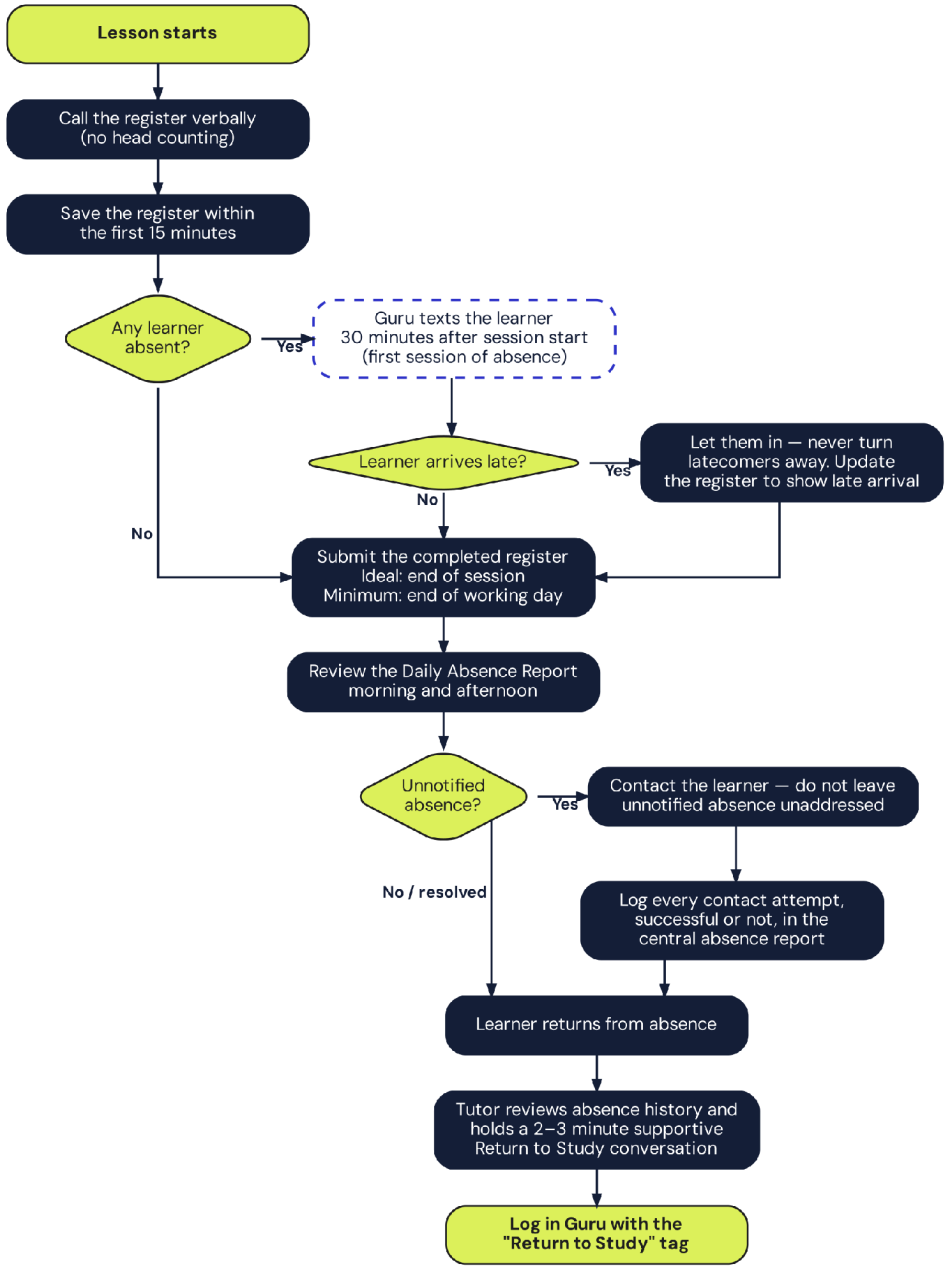
- Twice-daily review: check the Daily Absence Report each morning and again each afternoon.
- Contact unnotified absence: reach out to every learner with an unconfirmed absence.
- Do not leave any unaddressed at the end of the day.
- Log interactions: record every contact attempt, successful or not, in the central absence report.

4.4 Return to Study

When a learner returns from absence, the tutor reviews their recent absence history and holds a brief 2–3 minute Return to Study conversation. This is a supportive check-in, not a disciplinary one. Log it in Guru using the "Return to Study" tag.

5. **Process Flowchart**

The end-to-end process, from the start of a lesson to the learner's return. The dashed box is an automated Guru action.



6. **Guru Reports**

aily Absence Report: [cloud.guru.ac — absence report]
egister Compliance: [cloud.guru.ac — register compliance]

AFE Distance Learning Guide & Policy * NEEDS UPDATING

Distance learning must only be used in exceptional circumstances upon approval by the Head of MIS and/or Head of Quality and Compliance, once approved, a request must be made on Guru using the authorised absence process.

Background

Increased emphasis and attention has been placed on learner retention and with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) now funding 16 – 18 learners based upon retention, much greater importance is placed on the need to reduce learner withdrawals.

From a learner experience point of view the best solution to learners' studies is for them to attend college. However if this is not possible due to extenuating circumstances then other strategies should be explored in order to keep a learner on board and engaged with their qualification.

Approval of New and/or Extended Distance Learning Programmes

One major risk is the funding eligibility of learners engaged in Distance Learning programmes. The ESFA funds Study Programmes on the basis of planned learning hours, not qualification outcomes, and therefore a sustainable distance learning programme needs to be able to evidence not just the assessment achievement but also the hours delivered in securing it.
No learner can embark on a distance learning programme without this change to the mode of study being explicitly approved in writing by both the Executive Head of Curriculum Operations and the Director of Information, Systems and Planning. When considering a distance learning programme for a learner, the Centre Manager / Head of Centre and Learner Services Manager must support any request being made for approval. It should be recognised at the outset that supporting a learner through a compliance distance learning programme represents a significant undertaking and managers are responsible for ensuring that their teams have the capacity to meet the obligations that it places on them.

Formal approval, as above, must also be sought and granted for any extension in duration, or expansion in scope, of a distance learning programme.

Management of learners

One such strategy is distance learning. The key feature of distance learning is that the learner will largely work on their own, with or without face-to-face contact with their tutors or indeed other students, for all or part of their course. However distance learning presents potential risks to learners and to Access Further Education because part or all of their learning takes place away from our centres.

The aim of these guidelines is to help manage the risks and put in a process that is seen as good practice across all of our centres, in managing and progressing such learners. It also provides us with widening participation opportunities in line with our strategic plan, but this must not in any way prejudice our academic standards and quality of provision.

For learners to progress under a distance learning option, they will need access to:

- A scheme of work showing a clear schedule for delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work
- Description of component units, the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods used.
- Appropriate learning resources and teaching materials as well as other support materials, reading references and websites etc for independent research.
- A designated support person (tutor or tutors) to whom they can report to for the studies and assessment.
- Access to e-learning materials which are fit for purpose in order to support all distance learning students.
- Access to the local centre (if required) at a time suitable to the learner.

- Ensure that the delivery of all study materials direct to learners, remotely through for example e-learning methods or correspondence is both secure and reliable, and that there is a means of confirming its safe receipt.

All distance learners should receive a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations placed upon them for their studies and the extent of AFE support that is available and in place.

Learners should have access to:

- A schedule of learner support which is available to them based upon timetabled activities, for example tutorial sessions which can be delivered either via skype or google hang-outs.
- Clear and up-to-date information which is available to them locally and remotely for their programme of study.
- From the outset, learners will have access to an identified contact, either local or remote through email, telephone, fax or post who can give them constructive feedback on academic performance and guidance on their perceived progression.
- Where appropriate, regular opportunities for discussions about the programme in order to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating their participation in the learner voice and quality assurance.
- Appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience either through e-tracker or other appropriate formats.

Access Further Education (AFE) and their centres should be able to ensure that all learners on distance learning programmes can be confident that:

- Teaching staff who provide support to distance learners have appropriate skills and receive appropriate training and development.
- All resources offered to distance learning students are relevant and fit for purpose, and that all communication channels and especially those involving the use of technology are robust and accessible.
- All formative and summative assessment is both timely and constructive and guidance is given in how to improve.
- All electronic assignment submission is safe and secure.

Evidencing distance learning activity

For those learners who are approved to study part or all of their course via distance learning it is essential that all contact, and communication is recorded for auditing purposes, and the following procedures need to be adhered to:

- Those learners transferring from a full-time, classroom based course to a distance learning pathway should have the letter D recorded in the register for all timetabled session activity which can be evidenced as having taken placed remotely (see Guidance).
- A channel of communication needs to be opened up to record and evidence contact time between the learner and the tutor (or other member of staff) assigned. Guru contact logs and learner interaction records must be used for this purpose. .
- All actions, targets and feedback to be recorded on the e-ILP which is currently for all AFE learners.
- All planned distance learner activity must be recorded in order to qualify for recognition as planned learning.

Summary

Wherever possible all AFE learners should attend college, this is the best way for learners to engage and progress with their qualification, however it is clear that in extenuating circumstances, for some learners this may no longer be appropriate, and therefore distance learning offers the best and only solution to keep them in education. For example:

- The latter months of pregnancy
- Learners who become full time carers
- Learners who experience health problems during their studies with us
- Learners who fall into financial hardship during their studies and are unable to access bursaries in order to support their education

- Other such relevant circumstances.

The following general principles should be adhered to in all but exceptional circumstances when considering Distance Learning approval:

- The reason for which Distance Learning is being undertaken has to credibly prevent the learner from attending their sessions, while at the same time not unduly negatively affecting the student's ability to learn, make progress and - ultimately - achieve;
- All distance learning programmes should be as minimal as possible, both in duration and scope. A partial distance learning programme will always be preferable to a full-time distance learning programme; likewise, a defined temporary period of distance learning is preferable to an indefinite arrangement;
- Periods of non-attendance of fewer than 2 weeks' duration should be handled through the authorised absence process rather than a formal distance learning programme;
- Periods of between 2 and 6 weeks' distance learning must be supported by a fully compliant distance learning programme;
- Periods of longer than 6 weeks will only be considered on an exceptional basis, but centres an apply for an extension to an existing programme where appropriate;
- Any learner whose performance on their course prior to the request for distance learner, especially in terms of assessment progress and completion, was below expectations is highly unlikely to be approved for distance learning;
- In order to be approved, their must be evidence that the learner has the capability, and the self-management capacity, to successfully make progress and/or achieve in their course through distance learning;
- No indefinite distance learning requests will be approved before the commencement of the Easter term break;
- All but specific and/or part-time requests for short-term periods of distance learning are highly unlikely to be approved during Term 1.

In all situations we need to ensure that all such learners are well supported with appropriate resources and accessible communication channels. It is also an essential part of our funding that all contact and activity is recorded for auditing purposes.

LEARNER BEHAVIOUR & SUPPORT POLICY

POLICY

Responsible for Implementation: Head of Safeguarding
Latest Review Date: April 2026
Next Review Date: August 2027
Authorised By: The Safeguarding Committee
Version: 1. 1

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About Us

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dBs Institute (DBS Music UK Holdings and its subsidiaries), whilst a separate legal entity, shares common Directorships with the College.

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1. Purpose

At The College, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every learner can succeed.

This policy outlines how we:

- Promote positive behaviour
- Support learners to overcome barriers
- Respond where expectations are not met
- Maintain safety for all learners and staff

Our approach is **support-first, restorative, and student-centred**. Formal disciplinary action is only used where support has not been effective or where safety is at risk.

2. Our Principles

We believe:

- Behaviour is a form of communication
- All learners can improve with the right support
- Early intervention prevents escalation
- Safety and dignity are non-negotiable

We prioritise:

- Support before sanction
- Understanding before judgement
- Restoration over punishment

3. Learner Expectations

Learners are expected to:

- Contribute to a safe and respectful environment
- Engage in learning and development
- Treat others with respect
- Take responsibility for attendance, behaviour, and progress

4. Areas Where Support May Be Required

- Behaviour and Conduct
    - Where behaviour impacts safety, wellbeing, or learning.
- Attendance and Engagement
    - Target: 90%+ attendance. Barriers are explored and supported.
- Progress and Performance
    - Learners will receive SMART targets and structured support. Formal processes are only used where engagement does not improve.

5. Behaviour Support Process

The College operates a staged support-first approach, which may escalate to formal disciplinary action where required.

A staged, supportive process:

- Stage 1 – Support Conversation
    - Early intervention meeting with learner
    - Barriers identified and SMART targets agreed
    - Recorded on central learner management system (Guru)
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 2 – Structured Support Plan
    - Formal meeting with learner (and parent/carer where appropriate)
    - Clear expectations and support measures agreed
    - SMART targets recorded
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 3 – Intensive Support Plan
    - Final stage of structured support
    - Increased monitoring and intervention
    - Clear improvement expectations
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 4 – Programme Review
    - May result in suspension or withdrawal
    - Used where support has not resulted in sufficient improvement or where safety is at risk

Relationship to Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Where improvement is not achieved through support stages, learners may progress into the Formal Disciplinary Procedure. Stages broadly align as follows:

Support Stage	Disciplinary Stage
Stage 1	Verbal Warning
Stage 2	Written Warning
Stage 3	Final Written Warning
Stage 4	Withdrawal / Suspension

6. Formal Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary procedure is fair, transparent, and applied consistently. Formal action is normally progressive, unless serious misconduct requires escalation.

Disciplinary Report Form

6.1 General Principles

- Learners will be informed of concerns and given opportunity to respond
- Meetings will normally take place within 5 working days
- Learners may be accompanied by a parent/carer or support person
- All actions and outcomes are recorded on Guru
- SMART targets and improvement plans will be agreed

6.2 Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

Actions:

- Meeting held with learner
- Issues discussed and explained clearly
- SMART targets agreed and recorded
- Parent/carer informed in writing
- Review meeting scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- If improved → warning closed
- If not improved → escalation to Stage 2

6.3 Stage 2 – Written Warning

Actions:

- Formal meeting with learner (and parent/carer if appropriate)
- Written warning issued
- SMART action plan agreed and recorded
- Review scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Improvement → warning monitored/closed
- No improvement → escalation to Stage 3

6.4 Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

Actions:

- Formal meeting with Centre Manager or delegate
- Final written warning issued
- Clear expectation that further failure may lead to withdrawal
- SMART targets agreed and recorded
- Review scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Improvement → monitored
- No improvement → escalation to Stage 4

6.5 Stage 4 – Withdrawal or Suspension

Actions:

- Decision communicated formally
- Learner may be removed from site where necessary
- Parent/carer notified in writing
- Learner ID and college property may be withdrawn
- External reporting completed via MIS
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Withdrawal from programme or suspension pending further decision

6.6 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional cases, managers may:

- Extend a review period
- Reissue targets without escalation

This will only occur once and must be clearly evidenced.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Demonstrated significant improvement
- Mitigating personal circumstances
- Active engagement with support

6.7 Serious Misconduct

In cases of serious misconduct, the College reserves the right to:

- Bypass stages of this procedure

- Proceed directly to suspension or withdrawal

6.8 Right to Appeal

Learners may appeal any formal disciplinary decision.

- Appeals must be submitted within 5 working days
- Appeals will be reviewed within 10 working days

7. Suspension (Supportive Intervention)

Suspension may be used to:

- Protect safety
- Allow investigation
- Provide time for reflection and reset

Types include:

- Protective suspension
- Internal suspension
- Short-term external suspension

All suspensions include:

- Clear written reasons
- Defined duration
- Conditions for return
- Reintegration planning where appropriate

8. Restrictive Interventions and Safety

8.1 Our Approach

We aim to eliminate the need for restrictive interventions through:

- Early support
- De-escalation strategies
- Positive relationships

Restrictive interventions are only ever a last resort.

8.2 Definition

Restrictive intervention refers to any action that restricts movement.
Reasonable force is defined as:

- The minimum force necessary for the shortest time required to prevent harm.

These are not disciplinary actions.

8.3 When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Only where necessary to:

- Prevent harm to self or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent serious disruption

All actions must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary.

8.4 Prohibited Practices

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Use of force as punishment
- Any restriction of breathing or circulation
- Excessive or prolonged restraint
- Intimidation or threats

8.5 Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- For safety purposes
- Where there is risk of harm
- Under continuous supervision
- For the shortest possible time

8.6 Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving restraint or seclusion must be recorded the same day where possible and include:

- Individuals involved
- Time, date, location, and duration
- Reason for intervention
- Actions taken
- Injuries or follow-up actions

Parents/carers must be informed promptly.

8.7 Post-Incident Support

Following any incident:

- A restorative debrief will take place
- Wellbeing support will be offered

- Plans will be reviewed to prevent recurrence

8.8 SEND and Individual Needs

We recognise that learners with SEND may require:

- Tailored approaches
- Adjusted expectations
- Additional support strategies

We will work collaboratively with learners, families, and professionals.

9. Monitoring and Review

Behaviour support and disciplinary outcomes are reviewed at least twice per term.

This ensures:

- Early identification of patterns
- Continuous improvement
- Reduced need for escalation

10. Appeals

Appeals is the first instance should be sent to directly to Head of Centre or Site Lead: Appeals will

- Be acknowledged within 5 working days
- Be reviewed within 10 working days
- Be conducted by a manager not previously involved in the case

If the outcome of the appeal is contested the appeal will need to be escalated formally through the complaints, concerns and complaints process, cc.admin@accesstomusic.ac.uk

11. Final Statement

At The College, our goal is always to:

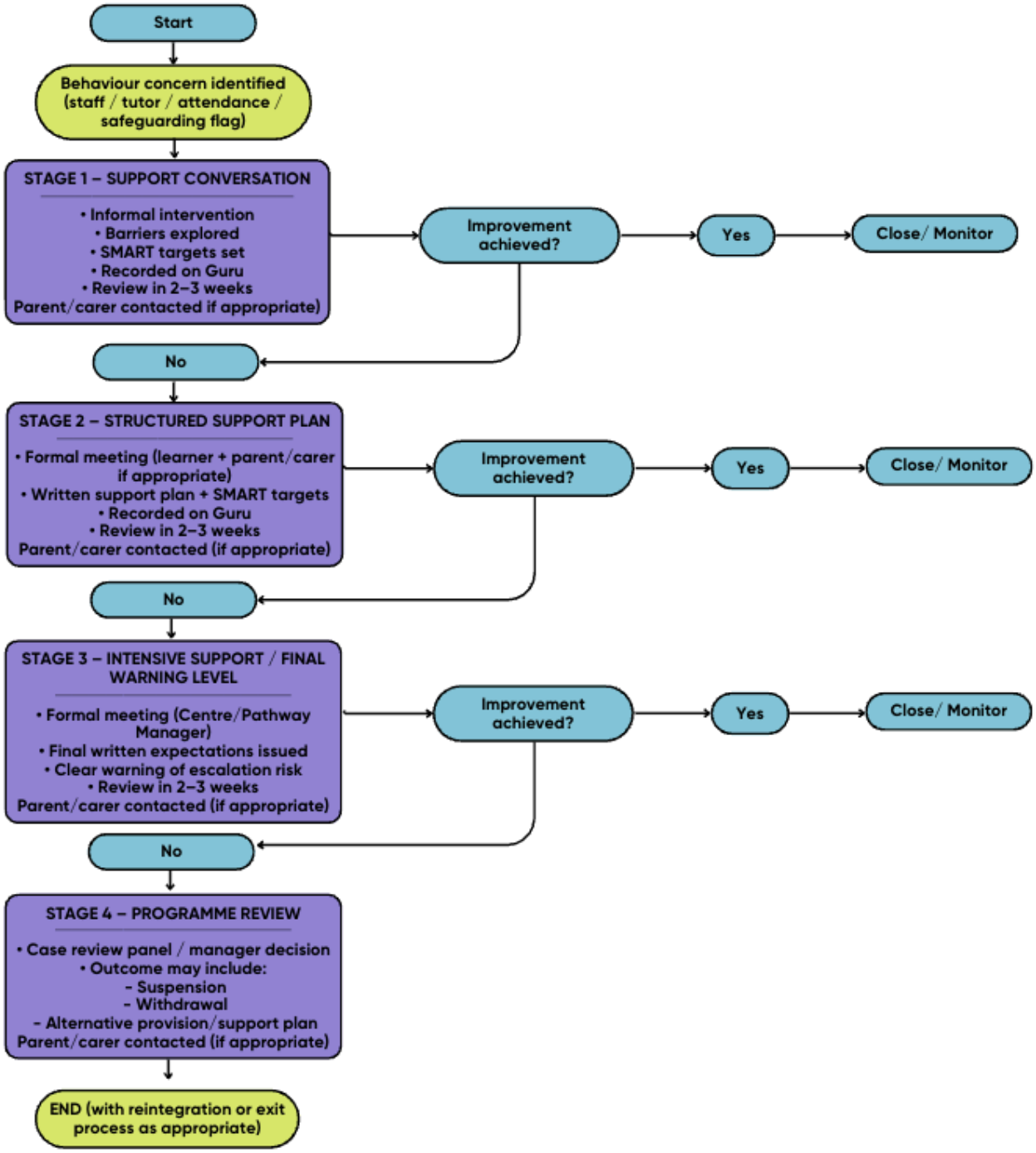
- Keep learners engaged in education
- Support personal and academic success
- Promote positive behaviour and growth

Formal disciplinary action is only used where:

- Support has not been effective, or
- Safety is at risk

12. Appendices

12.1 Flow chart



KEY RULES FOR STAFF

- Always record on **Guru**
- Always set **SMART targets**
- Always schedule **2–3 week review**
- Parents/carers involved where appropriate
- Serious misconduct may **bypass stages**

12.2 Student Facing Simplified Version

Our Behaviour and Support Process

At college, we want to help you succeed. If there are concerns about your behaviour, attendance, or progress, we will always try to support you first.

Step 1: Support Conversation

- We talk with you about what's going on.
- We agree on clear targets to help you improve.
- We will check in again in a few weeks.

Step 2: Structured Support Plan

- If things don't improve, we will meet with you formally.
- You may bring a parent/carer if you want.
- We agree on a written plan with clear expectations.

Step 3: Final Warning Support Plan

- If there is still no improvement, you will have a final formal meeting.
- This is your final chance to make changes with extra support in place.

Step 4: Programme Review

If there is still no improvement, we will review your place on the course. This may result in:

- Suspension
- Withdrawal from the course
- Or another outcome to support next steps

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

- We always try to support you first
- You will always be told what needs to improve
- You will always get a chance to improve
- Parents/carers may be involved
- Serious issues may move faster through the process **Plagiarism & AI Policy**

Context

Before looking at how to avoid plagiarism, here is an explanation of what plagiarism is:

• To take and use, the thoughts, writings, inventions etc of another person or that of an **artificial intelligence** application, as one's own, or:

• To pass off the thoughts, writings, inventions of another person or an **artificial intelligence** application as one's own.

The only way to avoid plagiarism is to ensure learners acknowledge the sources of their information, in accordance with your course requirements.

There are many ways in which plagiarism can take place:

• Rewriting something – even in your own words
• Copying and pasting from a website
• Copying text from a newspaper, magazine, journal or other printed materials
• Copying and pasting from an **artificial intelligence** application such as ChatGPT
• Substituting the occasional word or phrase to disguise the original source
• Using another learner's work, even with their permission (collusion)
• Using a translation of a printed text in another language

All of the examples above constitute plagiarism, unless learners have acknowledged the source through a correctly referenced bibliography or source. Source material can be used in a submission, but the author deserves credit for their work. To achieve good and robust grades, learners need to demonstrate a good balance between referenced source material and independent views, thoughts and research. Learners should not over rely on source material as this can lead to resubmissions and disciplinary measures.

Plagiarism Policy

The plagiarism policy is an attempt by our organisation to identify the problem and give staff and learners guidelines on how to deal with the issue. It also sets out for staff and learners clear procedures on the issue.

AFE will make sure that:

1. All teaching staff carefully read the policy, guidance and warnings on plagiarism.

2. All staff carrying out internal or external assessed work must make learners aware of the guidelines on plagiarism. They must explain how to cite any work that is not their own and include all resources used in a bibliography.

3. All tutors and teachers before any assessment period must make learners aware of the College

plagiarism policy.

4. Teaching staff that suspect any learner's work, which is not examination based and is plagiarised should deal with the issue.

If teaching staff suspect plagiarism with examination work then the Curriculum and Quality Manager and Examinations Officer should be alerted immediately to the issue. The Curriculum and Quality Manager will deal with it depending on the severity of the plagiarism, in accordance with the Learner Malpractice policy guide.

5. All learners must receive guidance on how to cite any work that is not their own. They must be aware that all resources used must be included in a bibliography. It is vital that all Internet sites are also clearly shown.

It is important to make sure learners:

• Always cite the sources of ideas and all resources used in a bibliography.

• Do not reproduce verbatim or near verbatim extracts from other resources, e.g. textbooks, the internet.

• Note that quotations shorter than two lines (approx) or 20 words (approx) may be included in inverted commas in the normal run of text (source clearly shown in the bibliography).

• Realise that longer quotations should be indented and could be shown in a different font.

• Try to avoid quotations longer than 200 words.

• Try to avoid the overuse of quotations in their work.

• Use appendices for substantial elaborations, e.g. copies of questionnaires, documents, and newspaper reports.

• When including charts, graphs and tables put them in the main text, making sure they are numbered and referenced.

• Use the Harvard system when referencing, which is a simple name date system. Care should be taken with the references; the important point to remind learners is to be consistent.

Examples:

Kelly, A (2003) Decision-making using game theory, Cambridge University Press. Ratcliffe, M (2008) Management Made Simple, Pitman Books - Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, pp 171-85.

• Generally and where appropriate, the anonymity of those who participated in research should be preserved, e.g. in questionnaires and experiments

Penalties for Malpractice:

What happens if you hand in work that is not your own?

It should go without saying that the work that you submit must be your own. Staff and awarding bodies are interested in what the learner has learnt and not what someone else has learnt. Awarding organisations apply penalties from a defined range that reflects the circumstances of each particular

case. Each individual case of plagiarism needs to be viewed on its merits to assess the level, depth and intention of the action and may result in disciplinary action, see AFE's disciplinary procedure and formal warnings to the learners. There are 3 areas to pay particular attention to:

1. Plagiarism

'The failure to acknowledge sources properly'

There is always a temptation to copy text that is found, word for word, and not give any reference as to where the text was found and who wrote it. This is, in effect, plagiarism and is not permitted at any time.

2. Collusion

'Agreement with others who are trying to deceive or cheat'

For many of the units of study you will be working together with your colleagues. In some cases you will be using the same resources. However, the assignment must be a reflection of your own individual findings. It is important to submit the evidence of your own work. Don't let others get the credit for your work.

3. Copying from another candidate

There may be the temptation to copy from other learners' work, especially if you have not planned your time and are close to a submission deadline. The advice is plan your time well and do not copy other learners' work.

For further guidance on the penalties involved, please refer to the Learner Malpractice document, which covers the wider issues of cheating and malpractice.

Access Further Education Student Appeal Policy and Procedures

1.Introduction.

This procedure is designed to provide information to students and staff on academic appeals. It recognises that students seeking qualifications that are either internally or externally assessed have a right to seek a review of decisions that affect them. It is designed to link with students' rights as outlined in Access Further Education's (AFE's) Equal Opportunities and Fair Assessment Policies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners studying with Access Further Education including those AFE learners taught under agreements with sub contract partners. Breaches of this policy will be managed through the Access Further Education (AFE) Disciplinary policy and procedure. This policy underpins AFE's core values and will be used objectively and free from discrimination in accordance with AFE's Equality and Diversity policy.

3**. Access Further Education operates a general appeals policy which:**

- Aims to provide recourse to arbitration for learners on all courses which include a component of internal and/or external assessment
- Is in accordance with the published requirements set out by accredited awarding bodies
- Includes a procedure for appeals against assessment decisions, whether internal or external

3.1 Whilst many of the following principles and practices are common to all AFE courses, there is a significant difference between these procedures and those of the validated university courses and professional awards with whom AFE has established partnership work. These include Nottingham and Trent University. For HE students AFE adheres to the Appeals Policy requirements of the respective HE partner university.

3.2 For all validated university courses and professional awards, course teams must make learners aware of, and follow, the appropriate Appeals Policy for the respective institution.

4. Right to Appeal

4.1 It is an awarding body requirement, as a condition of centre approval, that a learner/candidate may appeal against assessment outcomes.

4.2 AFE will allow the learner/candidate to be supported in the presentation of his/her case by a parent/guardian/carer or other appropriate adult. In support of any appeal, a learner /candidate should be allowed access to an audit trail of his/her marks, any correspondence relating to his/her internally assessed work and any relevant awarding body procedures for the conduct of internal assessment.

4.3 The right of appeal incorporates the right to an independent hearing, notice of which should be reasonable and in any case no less than two weeks before the date of the hearing.

5. Grounds for Appeal

5.1 A learner/candidate would have grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision in the following situations. This list is selective and not exhaustive

- There is an error in the grade awarded
- The work is not assessed accurately and in accordance with the set criteria or the criteria is ambiguous
- The approved and verified assignment brief was not followed
- The final grade of the work does not match the criteria set for grade boundaries or the grade boundaries are not sufficiently defined
- The internal verification procedure outcomes contradicts the assessment grades awarded
- There is evidence of preferential treatment towards other learners/candidates
- The conduct of the assessment did not conform to published awarding organisation requirements
- Valid, agreed, extenuating circumstances were not taken into account at the time of the assessment such as ALS and SEN
- Agreed deadlines were not observed by staff
- The current Assessment Plan and associated deadlines was not adhered to

6**. Responsibilities of AFE**

6.1 It is the responsibility of AFE as an assessment centre, to make all learners aware of the relevant appeals procedure and give him/her access to a copy of this procedure. (This can be found in the student area on Access Further Education online). Before a formal appeal is made, the relevant informal appeals mechanism should be exhausted. The formal appeal is the final stage in the process of considering and resolving disputes, and is used only in exceptional circumstances.

6.2 The Head of Curriculum and Quality is responsible for managing the formal appeals process. If deemed necessary, a formal appeals panel is set up comprising of at least 3 people- where at least one is a senior member of staff (nominee) and one other is independent of the assessment process, for example the AFE Exams Officer, Curriculum Manager or manager of a service department. The nominee is responsible for disseminating the relevant information to the learner/candidate and parent/guardian/carer if appropriate about the appeals procedure and for informing the Head of Quality and Learners Services about the outcome of such an appeal.

6.3 Written records of all appeals are maintained by AFE. These should include a description of the appeal, the outcome of the appeal and the reason for the outcome. The learner/candidate, parent/guardian/carer if relevant and the Head of Quality and Learner Services receive a copy of the appeals documentation. AFE will consider and resolve appeals to meet awarding body deadlines for

qualification accreditation, where possible. It is the responsibility of AFE to inform the awarding body of an appeal outcome which has implications for the conduct of examinations or issue of the results.

Stage 1- Candidate (Informal process)

The candidate must contact the tutor / assessor and ask for clarification on the assessment decision, final mark / grade given. The student/candidate will be given the opportunity to explain the reasoning for the required clarification.



Tutor/Assessor refers to feedback sheets/s and explains reasons for the decision to the student.

Student accepts mark

Student rejects mark

Stage 2 – Informal

Within one week, learner puts in writing to Assessor their grounds for appeal, to the Curriculum and Quality Manager. The candidate must complete the **'Assessment Appeals Form'** and hand it to the assessor and/or Internal Verifier

Curriculum and Quality Manager/ Lead IV nominates a second marker to endorse/reject assessment decision

Student accepts mark

Student rejects mark and is referred the .

to the formal appeals process

Stage 3 – Formal Process

Senior member of staff assigned to manage the appeals process

If deemed necessary formal appeal panel set up. Independent hearing may follow.

Outcome communicated to all relevant parties

7. External Appeals

7.1 Should a learner wish to appeal against a decision that has formed part of an external moderation procedure operated by the awarding body, s/he should proceed through the awarding body's appeals procedure. The starting place for any such appeal is through the AFE Examinations Office.

7.2 To appeal against the results of external examinations, which might include a request for a remark or access to a script for example, awarding body procedures should be followed. Copies of these are available from the AFE Examinations Office to whom all appeals are made in the first instance. In cases of enquiries about results, where AFE has not initiated the request for such an enquiry, the learner/candidate will normally have to pay a fee for such services in line with Awarding Body requirements. Where the learner/candidate wishes to challenge a decision not to hold an enquiry or consequent appeal, a similar procedure to that mentioned above will be carried out.

AFE Assessment Appeals Form

Stage 2

This form should be completed by the student and returned within one week from the date of feedback provided by the tutor or assessor if the student is not satisfied with the outcome following Stage 1 of the appeal process. The completed Assessment Appeals Form to be sent to the tutor/assessor outlining the grounds for appeal and associated reasoning and copy sent to the Head of Quality and Compliance.

Name of appellant		**Candidate name** *if different to appellant*	
Course Title		Sub Subject/Unit Title	
AFE Centre		Tutor/Assessor Name	
Please state the grounds for your appeal below: *Continue overlea if necessary*			
Appeal against internally assessed marks **appellant declaration** By signing here, I am confirming I understand the purpose of the appeal Signature:		Date of signature:	

Complaints, Comments & Compliments Policy

At Access Further Education (AFE) including Access Creative College (ACC), Access Industry, and Access Sport College—we are committed to providing the best possible experience for all our learners and apprentices.

We know that sometimes things don't go as planned. When that happens, we want to hear from you so we can fix the issue quickly, make things right, and improve for the future.

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1. Quick & Local Resolution (Step 1)

Most concerns can be sorted out quickly without needing a formal process. Before escalating, we encourage you to raise any issues locally first:

1. Speak with your Tutor or Assessor: They know you best and can often resolve day-to-day concerns immediately.
2. Contact your Centre Team: If you need further help, speak with your local Head of Centre or Area Manager.

Our local site teams will document your concerns and work hard to fix the problem right where it happens.

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2. Making a Formal Complaint (Step 2)

If your issue cannot be resolved at your local centre, or if the matter is severe, you can submit a formal complaint.

How to Submit

Submit your feedback using our online form:

- Online Form: **Submit a Formal Complaint / Feedback via Google Form** *(Use this official College feedback link)*

  Note: If you email a staff member or senior manager directly, your complaint will still be entered into this central system to ensure it is logged, tracked, and handled fairly.

What Happens Next?

Immediate Acknowledgment: As soon as you submit the form, our central system automatically logs your complaint and sends a confirmation email to let you know we have received it.

1. Investigation Assignment: Your complaint is assigned to the appropriate Lead Complaint Handler (Head of Centre/Area Manager) and supported by the relevant Head of Department depending on the issue:
    - Safeguarding & Student Behaviour: Head of Safeguarding
    - Support & Accommodations (ALS/EHCP): Head of Learner Support
    - Bursaries & Free School Meals: Head of MIS
    - Admissions & Enrolment: Head of Admissions
    - Grades, Exams & Teaching: Curriculum & Compliance Team
    - Careers & Next Steps: Head of Careers
2. Investigation & Communication: The investigating manager will contact you via email or phone to outline the investigation timeline. They will gather evidence, speak to relevant staff or learners, and work on a solution.
3. Independent Quality Check: Before any final decision is sent, the Head of Compliance acts as an independent arbiter to check that the investigation was fair, thorough, and compliant with college policies.
4. Final Response (Within 15 Working Days): You will receive a full formal response email within 15 working days explaining the findings and actions taken. *(If an investigation requires extra time—such as during college holidays or staff sickness—we will send you an interim update with a new completion date).*

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3. How to Appeal

If you receive your final response and feel the matter was not properly handled or resolved, you have the right to request an appeal.

1. Submit Your Appeal: Email ccc.admin@accesstomusic.ac.uk within 15 working days of receiving your final outcome email.
2. State Your Reasons: You must clearly explain why you disagree with the outcome and provide any new evidence supporting your appeal.
3. Panel Review: The Head of Compliance and a panel from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will review the original investigation files to ensure the process was fair, objective, and complete. (This is a documentation review and does not typically involve an in-person meeting unless key information was originally missed).
4. Final Decision (Within 15 Working Days): You will receive the Appeals Panel's final, binding decision within 15 working days. This concludes the College's internal complaints process.

Higher Education (HE) Students

If you are studying a Higher Education course validated by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) or Falmouth University, and your complaint remains unresolved after completing AFE's internal process, you may escalate your complaint directly to your validating university under their official procedures.

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4. Privacy, Information & Data Requests

- Confidentiality: All formal investigations involving personal or sensitive data are handled strictly under Data Protection Act and GDPR guidelines. Information is shared only with staff members directly involved in resolving the issue.
- Data Subject Access Requests (DSAR): If you wish to make a formal request for personal data or records, these are handled separately from complaints. Please email your request directly to dataprotection@accesstomusic.ac.uk.

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5. Sharing Compliments & Positive Feedback

We love hearing about what's working well! If a tutor, staff member, or team has gone above and beyond, please let us know:

- Email: Send your compliments to ccc.admin@accesstomusic.ac.uk.
- We log all positive feedback and share it directly with the staff members involved and their managers to celebrate great work across our campuses.

AFE Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

1. Introduction & Scope

This policy examines the different methods where Awarding Organisations can use prior learning on regulated qualification frameworks and other recognised frameworks. This policy applies to all Awarding Organisations where qualifications accept the use of Recognised Prior Learning, including those on the Regulated Qualifications Framework, Where the use of RPL is permitted, this will be stated within the qualification specification.

2. Policy Statement

This policy seeks to enable Learners to avoid duplication of learning and assessment for the purposes of awarding credit. There are three ways that this can be managed:

- Exemption
- Equivalency
- Recognition of prior learning.

3. The RPL Process

Stage 1 – Awareness, Information and Guidance Ahead of enrolling a potential learner, the possibility that they may be able to claim credit for some of their previous learning should be raised with them by the assessor and raised with the CQM. If the learner is interested in this, they will need to know the: 1. Process of claiming achievement by using RPL 2. Sources of support and guidance available to them 3. Timelines, appeals processes and any fees involved.

Stage 2 – Pre –assessment, gathering evidence and giving information At this stage the learner will carry out the process of collecting evidence against the requirements of the relevant unit(s) as agreed with the assessor and CQM. In some cases the development of an assessment plan and tracking document or similar may be required, to support the learner through the process. The evidence gathered will need to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for.

Stage 3 – Assessment/documentation of evidence Assessment as part of RPL is a structured process for gathering and reviewing evidence and making judgments about a learner's prior learning and experience in relation to unit standards. The assessor may be looking at work experience records, validated by managers; previous portfolios of evidence put together by the learner or essays and reports validated as being the learner's own unaided work. Assessment must be valid, current and reliable to ensure the integrity of the award of credit and, as above, the evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for. The assessment process will be subject to the College's quality assurance procedures, for example internal standardisation and internal verification as well as the awarding organisation's quality assurance procedures. Evidenced gathered through RPL should be clearly referenced and signposted to aid internal assessment and internal and external verification.

Stage 4 – Claiming Certification Once the internal and external quality assurance procedures have been successfully completed, certification claims can be made. Assessment and internal verification records, along with any additional RPL records completed, should be retained for the standard three year period following certification. The assessor must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria being claimed for each unit are achieved and that the records of assessment are maintained in the usual way.

Stage 5 – Appeal As with any assessment decision on procedural grounds, if a learner wishes to appeal against a decision made about their assessment they need to follow the College's policy and procedures and then the awarding organisation's Enquiries and Appeals procedures.

4. Application of RPL

Equivalency is the transfer of credit from a unit, or units, from within the QCF. To be counted as an equivalency, a unit must have the same credit value or greater and be at the same level or higher than the unit, or units to be claimed. Equivalencies are not recognised by the award of credit and appear on certificates without a credit value. Acceptable exemptions and equivalencies will be included in the rules of combination of a qualification.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the recognition of non-certificated learning towards a full not partial unit or qualification. The RPL process must be negotiated with the centre and must be claimed as part of the course. The centre is responsible for assessment and claiming credit. There is no difference between achievement of the required standards by RPL and achievement through a formal programme of study; therefore, RPL appears on certificates as credit-bearing.

There are three ways of recognising prior learning which may be open to the Learner:

Route 1 – Submit a portfolio of evidence based on previous relevant knowledge, skills and competencies which must be assessed against the assessment criteria of the unit/s for which RPL is being sought to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved.

Route 2 – Undertake the same assessments as Learners following a formal course of learning and assessment that lead to award of the unit or qualification. The assessment may be undertaken without attending teaching sessions.

Route 3 – Assessment through a summative assessment against a unit or full qualification.

It is important to note that RPL is an alternative route to achievement and is not an easy option or shortcut. However, career breaks will be considered and Learners will be supported to return to college. Evidence must be produced for RPL which is subject to the same assessment and quality assurance requirements as applied to evidence produced as part of a course.

5. Currency

Prior learning and achievement must be current to be used by the Learner, which will normally be within the last three years. For exemptions and equivalencies, this means three years start from the date of the original award to the point at which the Learner registers with the centre on the course for which the claim will be made. Credit awarded as part of exemption, equivalency or RPL cannot be carried forward beyond three years from the original award.

1. Restrictions on Recognition

Restrictions will vary according to the Awarding Organisation RPL policy and processes. The awarding organisations aim to ensure that certificates are meaningful and valuable for Learners and other stakeholders. To support this aim, the following guidelines will be applied to the rules of combination for a qualification to restrict recognition of prior learning and achievement.

1. Learner Details.	
Learner Name	
Name on Certificate	
Unique Learner Number	8908413048
Old Qualification Title	RSL Level 3 Extended Diploma for Music Practitioners (Technology)
New Qualification	RSL Creative Music Industry - Subsidiary Diploma (Technology)

2. Reasons for RPL
All learners enrolled on the extended MUSPRA are being transferred over to the CMI subsidiary diploma to ensure parity of experience for all L3 learners and to update learners on to the more current and superior CMI qualification

How much work is intended to be RPL on to the new qualification? Please indicate unit numbers and learning outcomes and assessment criteria completed.	
RPL work from the older qualification	**New qualification equivalency**
MUSPRA Units	Creative Music Industry Units

How much work is still needed to allow the learner to complete the qualification? Please indicate unit numbers, learning outcomes and assessment criteria completed.

Centre Declaration:	
I confirm that the above information is correct as of the date submitted to RSL. I understand that the application may not be accepted if sufficient evidence is not provided or if the application is made too late in the academic year.	
Signature	
Printed Name	
Job Title	
Date	

Progression Policy 26/27 Access Creative College (AFE)

INTERNAL PROGRESSION POLICY

Contents

1. Progression Policy
2. Transferring between courses, AOs and pathways
3. Progress from level 2 to level 3
4. Progress from L31 to L32
5. Progress from level 3 to level 4 (If applicable)
6. Next Steps - Internal Progression Flowchart

Internal Progression Policy 25/26 Access Further Education (Access Creative College and Access Sport)

Introduction

AFE has a mission to deliver high quality learning across all of its centres in order to create inspirational opportunities for its students and the communities it serves. Our mission involves a commitment to lifelong learning, widening access and meeting the needs of diverse student groups. This diversity brings with it significant challenges relating to student progression and retention. Our students enter the organisation from diverse social and educational backgrounds. Our students frequently experience constraints in particular in terms of finance, which are best addressed through the support and pastoral care that AFE offers. We recognise the specific challenges faced by students with potential from disadvantaged backgrounds. We participate in and lead initiatives to widen access and our mission is to support all of our students to achieve success and to enhance student success for all.

Proposed standards

All students on taught programmes will be required to complete their course within the published length of the programme in order for a timely achievement. There will be a window of time outside of this period, where students who are behind with their coursework and assessment, can still complete. However this will be governed by the funding rules of the day and in agreement with the campus leadership team.

Induction period

The campus leadership team will check that satisfactory academic progress is being made within the first six weeks of any taught course. The first time a student fails to meet the satisfactory progress standards, due to:

- Lack of academic ability
- Poor skills
- Poor attitude to their studies
- Untimely submission of course work and assessment
- Poor attendance

Such students need to be notified that they are at risk of being removed from the course altogether or transferred to a more appropriate level of course (whichever is appropriate at this stage) All students need to work towards meeting the required academic standard by the end of the induction period.

Internal Progression policy

This progression policy outlines the minimum academic requirements to progress between levels of AFE's course provision. It is very important that the internal progression policy mirrors as closely as possible the entry requirements for new students at the relevant level. This is especially important when we look at the requirements for English and maths as it is possible that there may be significant disparities between new starts and internal progression, particularly in academic abilities. The fundamental progression requirements are as follows are listed in the tables below.

*** Please note** the tables below are to be used as a guide. A combination of factors should be taken into account when looking at when making a decision that might affect a student's progression opportunities. For example a student might have high attendance but have very poor behaviour and attitudes which might lead to a progression interview.

*Legitimate Progression Between Courses and Pathways

In some scenarios progressing learners want to move between pathways or courses and this is fine when moving between levels for example level 2 Games and level 3 music performance.
*However, **we should not** generally support/encourage learners to move between pathways at the **same level** or moving to a **lower level**, for example when:

- Transferring at level 3 results in a change of qualification, pathway and awarding organisation e.g. moving from an RSL subsidiary diploma to an extended diploma with Pearson *This would not be possible due the requirement for mandatory year 1 units and incompatible RPL options
- Transferring at level 3 results in a change of qualification and awarding organisation e.g. moving from an RSL subsidiary diploma to a new subsidiary diploma with Pearson * This would only be possible with an educationally sound and justified reason for the transfer
- Repeating a qualification in the same subject sector area (SSA) e.g. a learner completing 2 year extended diploma in Games followed by a second 2 year extended diploma in Music
- Repeating a 2 year qualification in the different subject sector area (SSA) e.g. a learner completing 2 year extended diploma in Sport followed by a second 2 year extended diploma in Media * This would only be possible with an educationally sound and justified reason for the transfer.
- Transferring to a lower level of qualification in the same subject sector area (SSA) e.g. moving to from L4 (AD4) in music to level 3 in music or games * This would only be possible with an educationally sound and justified reason for the transfer.
- Transferring to a lower level of qualification in a different subject sector area (SSA) e.g. moving to from L4 (AD4) in music to level 3 in music or games * This would only be possible with an educationally sound and justified reason for the transfer.

***IAG and Approval** in all of the above scenarios it is vitally important that we get formal approval from both the Head of Funding and Compliance (for rules surrounding

funding) and the regional Head of Quality for the educational justification for these transfers. With this in mind it is critical that we carefully manage the expectations of our learners and their parents/guardians when looking at such transfers, explaining that any proposed transfer is subject to approval.

Progress from level 2 to level 3

Level 2 - L31 Factors Affecting Progression				Progression Action
Attendance	Conduct	Maths/English	Core Aim Grade	
85% or above (90% plus is our expectation)	No significant or repeated conduct issues	Satisfactory improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Merit or Above	Sign Off via Next Steps Review **Where students have had performance issues a student contract will be issued as part of the progression agreement.**
below 85%	Significant or repeated conduct issues	Little or no improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Pass	Interview with campus leadership (**progression only allowed with good reason, and or mitigation)**
			Unclassified	**Non progression**

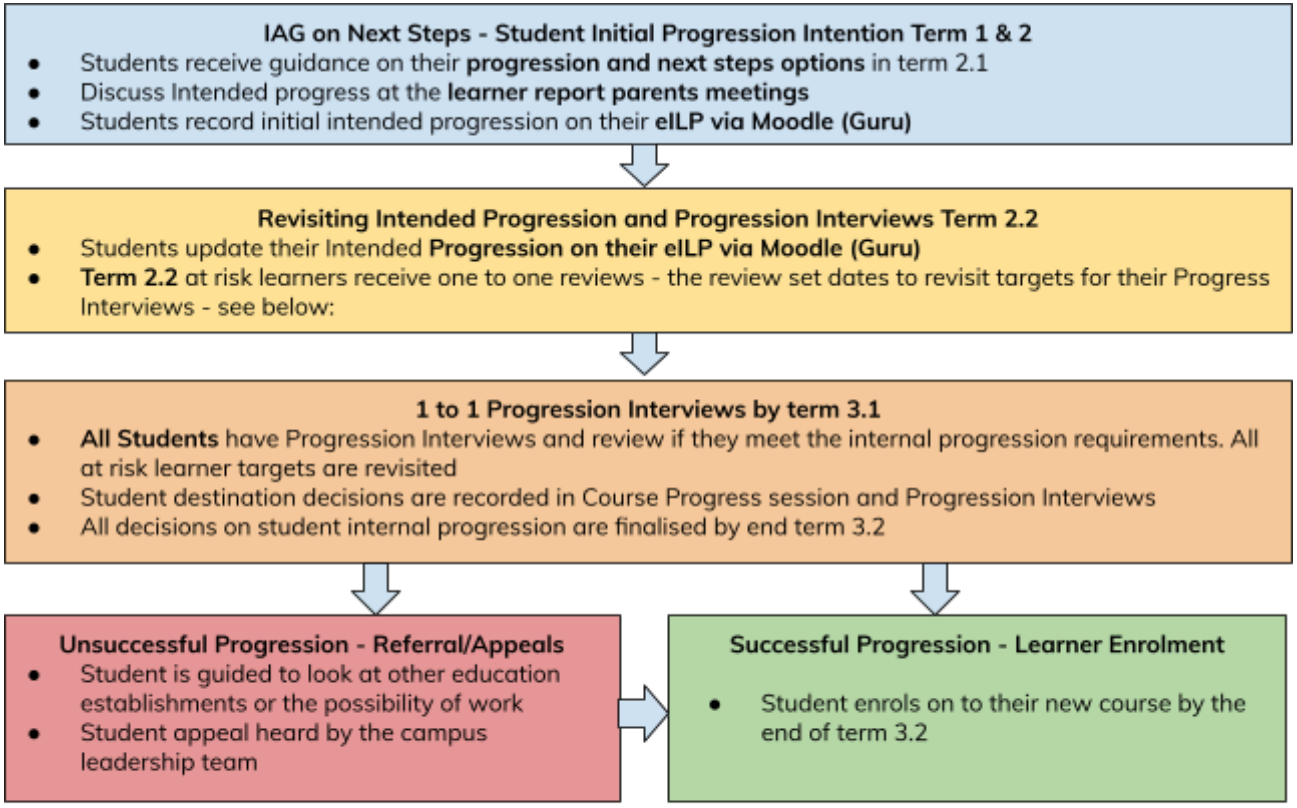
Progress from L31 to L32

Level L31 - L32 Factors Affecting Progression				Progression Action
Attendance	Conduct	Maths/English	Core Aim Grade	
85% or above (90% plus is our expectation)	No significant or repeated conduct issues	Satisfactory or above improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Pass or Above	Sign Off via Next Steps Review **Where students have had performance issues a student contract will be issued as part of the progression agreement.**
below 85%	Significant or repeated conduct issues	Little or no improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Pass	Interview with campus leadership (**progression only allowed with good reason, and or mitigation)**
			Unclassified	**Non progression**

Progress from level 3 to level 4 (If applicable)

Level 3 - L4 Factors Affecting Progression				Progression Action
Attendance	Conduct	Maths/English	Core Aim Grade	
85% or above (90% plus is our expectation)	No significant or repeated conduct issues	Satisfactory improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Merit or Above	Sign Off via Next Steps Review **Where students have had performance issues a student contract will be issued as part of the progression agreement.**
below 85%	Significant or repeated conduct issues	Little or no improvement in GCSE, showing engagement and commitment through attendance, mock/progress assessment and teacher statement.	Pass	Interview with campus leadership (**progression only allowed with good reason, and or mitigation)**
			Unclassified	**Non progression**

Next Steps - Internal Progression Flowchart 23/24



Higher Education Access and Participation Statement

POLICY STATEMENT

Access Further Education is committed to providing an environment for students that actively offers equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination and values the diversity of all students and prospective students.

The college seeks to broaden the pool of potential applicants by raising awareness and expectations in line with its commitments to widening participation. By combining knowledge of Higher Education and career routes, with insight into industry gained from our network of employers, we aim to challenge preconceptions, raise attainment and help people to develop the skills and knowledge to meet their aspirations.

Access Further Education values highly the diversity and range of experience that prospective students contribute to college life. Applications are welcome from all candidates irrespective of background. Recruitment and admissions processes aim to match the abilities, aptitude, and aspirations of the candidate to the programme of study and accepts a range of appropriate Level 3 qualifications. We also welcome applications from candidates who may have non standard qualifications but have acquired relevant technical/academic experience in the subject area of the qualification..

The college is committed to recruitment and admissions processes which are fair, explicit and implemented consistently across the higher education provision.

AFE ensures that students will not be excluded from entry to any course as a result of discrimination, which includes, but is not limited to: age, race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, health, disability, socioeconomic background, religion or belief. We will continue our work to improve the rates of access, success and progression amongst target groups where participation in higher education is low. Success in this work depends on continuation of our successful partnerships and collaboration with schools, colleges, local authorities, other HE institutions and charitable organisations.

AFE provides a network of opportunity and support for life. This level of support is particularly relevant for under-represented groups who need extra access and support.

Our Strategy

As a values-driven institution we strive to ensure that every individual matters and commit to closing the gaps in students' access and participation, with a key focus on the persistent gaps in student degree outcomes. Our strategic vision acknowledges our collective responsibility to ensure ‘quality education’ and ‘reduce inequality’. Access Further Education commits to monitoring and evaluating the impact of its widening participation activities on the access, success and progression of students from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education. This enables us to evidence our commitments to ensuring fairness of access and participation in higher education. While we continue to attract students from diverse backgrounds in line with national benchmarks, we recognise that there is room for improvement in increasing the diversity of our student body.

- We aim to target student recruitment activity at sixth forms and colleges with higher proportions of students from low-participation neighbourhoods, BAME backgrounds and female students.

We will continue to:

- Encourage applications from students from under-represented groups through our marketing and through our partnerships with relevant groups
- Design Programmes to facilitate flexible delivery. Offer many choices in required attendance days and times. This gives those in work the option to choose the best days for them to attend. Full time delivery is also planned so that students are not required to attend across a number of days. This again means that students are able to work and therefore maintain an income
- AFE offers a range of Access to Higher Education Qualifications to support those who are returning to education and need knowledge and skills to facilitate study at a higher level
- Taster sessions are offered to applicants throughout the year so that they get the opportunity to attend the college in advance of enrolment and discuss any potential concerns or support needs. Applicants are also able to experience the welcoming environment and small class sizes
- Personal tutors and support staff introduce the concept of Higher Education during FE presentations, college progression days and taster activities for all ages

Admissions

Access Further Education supports continuous development with regard to equality and diversity is reflected in our Admissions Procedures, where impartial advice and guidance is given to ensure all applicants are supported and placed on courses appropriate to their demonstrated ability to achieve. AFE provides courses from Level 2 through to Level 7 and places students according to their own progress. It means students can develop and learn at their own pace and not be pushed beyond their present situation. AFE ensures this is achievable by continuously reviewing and evaluating:

- Admissions Data
- Progression and Retention Data
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment
- Induction
- Student Support
- Staff development
- The process of Programme Development and Review

Student Support

AFE has a comprehensive Student Services department. From initial enquiry, prospective students are able to access support with:

- Accommodation
- Course Information and Enrolment
- Travel and Transport
- Health
- Welfare and Funding
- Careers
- Counselling
- Learning support
- Accessibility

Support for students comprising pastoral provision through tutorial programmes, additional learning support for students with LDD, ESOL and/or basic skills needs and central Student Services is a strong feature of Access Further Education.

Additional Learning Support Policy

The Additional Learning Support Policy communicates a framework of student support as a key theme to supporting individuals of all backgrounds, abilities and aspirations in order to fulfil their potential through learning, achievement and progression.

Success & Progression

We are proud of our progress in reducing gaps in continuation for students from under-represented backgrounds.

- We will seek to continue ensuring students from low participation backgrounds are as likely to continue their studies as their peers from high participation backgrounds.

We recognise that there are large gaps in degree outcomes for students from backgrounds traditionally under-represented in higher education and that this is a social injustice that needs to be addressed. We are particularly aware of the stark gap in outcomes for those from areas of deprivation; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, and acknowledge there is a new and growing attainment gap for the increasing number of students with mental health difficulties. Tackling these gaps will be an institutional priority.

- We will close the gap in degree outcomes for students from the most deprived backgrounds (as measured by English IMD), BAME students and those with a mental health difficulty to zero by 2030.

We will:

- Continue to work towards providing fully inclusive centres where all of our students are able to flourish; reviewing and developing our learning environment, learning curriculum and learning technology to be more inclusive and accessible.
- Develop initiatives that support under-represented students to engage in life at Access Further Education and develop ‘a sense of belonging’, thus increasing their potential to achieve and progress. Examples of these initiatives include (but are not limited to) Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) and other forms of peer mentoring/learning
- Improve and expand the provision of mental health support.
- Increase employability and progression opportunities for students from under-represented backgrounds with an emphasis on supporting students to access volunteering and work experience. This will include an increased focus on progression initiatives into higher levels of graduate employment through increased volunteering and work placement opportunities across the curriculum.
- Research and explore the differential outcomes of students from under-represented groups whilst studying to inform how we develop future widening participation initiatives to address this.

Employability is a key institutional priority for all our students; however we must ensure that as we seek to improve progression outcomes for all, we continue to narrow the gaps

in progression for students from backgrounds shown as less likely to progress into graduate employment or further study.

- We will seek to close gaps in progression to graduate level employment or further study between males and females, with a view to closing the gap in progression outcomes by 2025.

We are strongly committed to the value of student consultation and engagement in improving higher education for all students. We regularly consult with students to develop your approach. We consider our students as key partners in our activity to widen access and participation. Student engagement is a priority in the institutional strategy to ensure innovation in the educational experience and we consult with students on the development of all our strategic plans and policies.