

# Student Disciplinary Procedure

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The University is part of the local community and is also a community itself, made up of staff and students. The University owes a duty of care and responsibility to the members of its community, but at the same time can expect those same members to exhibit appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour.
2. The Student Disciplinary Procedure is specifically related to student behaviour that is seen as detrimental to the University, its reputation, or the lives of students and staff. The Student Disciplinary Procedure is not concerned with a student's academic performance or capability, which is the responsibility of Academic Board as exercised through the University's academic policies and regulations.
3. This procedure is not concerned with student academic misconduct, e.g. plagiarism, for which a separate Student Academic Misconduct Procedure applies.
4. Where student behaviour constitutes minor misconduct and does not warrant full investigation under this procedure, it is expected that the relevant School deal with this internally as appropriate. Additionally, it is noted that the Halls of Residence have their own internal Disciplinary Procedure, in line with their terms of residency.
5. Where a named role (e.g. Dean of School) is identified within this procedure, they may nominate a senior manager in the School or Service to act on their behalf.
6. In determining whether a disciplinary allegation is upheld or not, the standard of proof is on "the balance of probability" rather than "beyond all reasonable doubt".
7. The Student Disciplinary Procedures will be conducted in a timely manner to ensure fairness and consistency. If delays are likely to occur due to complexities in the case, any persons involved will be informed of the delay and progress being made.
8. Support from Student Experience is available for all students involved during any student disciplinary.

## CONDUCT COVERED BY THE STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

9. The University has a legitimate interest in any alleged act of misconduct by a student where it either:
  - i. is closely related to the work of the University;
  - ii. occurs on University property;
  - iii. involves other students or staff of the University;
  - iv. has a detrimental impact on other students or staff of the University, staff and officers of the Solent Students' Union, or members of the public working at or visiting the University or
  - v. brings the University's name into disrepute.

10. Misconduct not related to the work of the University, which did not take place on its property, or did not have a direct impact upon any staff or students of the University, will normally be deemed to be outside the jurisdiction of the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure. In these circumstances, the University will only consider disciplinary action should such misconduct involve the Police and/or incur a criminal conviction for the student(s) concerned.
11. Students sponsored by shipping companies on courses leading to qualifications as ships' officers are bound by the policies of their sponsors and the Warsash School of Maritime Science and Engineering Cadet Code of Conduct. Any acts of misconduct involving such students will be referred to the Dean, Maritime Science & Engineering, and dealt with under the Cadet Code of Conduct. The Dean shall inform the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager of any disciplinary matters that go beyond the Cadet Code of Conduct and warrant action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. These cases shall be deemed to constitute serious misconduct and will be dealt with as outlined in paragraph 34 onwards.
12. A student renders themselves liable to disciplinary action if, they:
  - i. commit an act of misconduct or serious misconduct, as defined below; or
  - ii. disregard or contravene any of the published rules of the University relating to behaviour, bullying and harassment, or equality, diversity and inclusivity.
13. The questioning and testing of received wisdom, putting forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions will not constitute circumstances for disciplinary action unless these ideas/opinions contravene the 'Equality in Employment', 'Behaviour at Work' and 'Dignity at Work' policies or other relevant policies.

## **WHAT CONSTITUTES MISCONDUCT?**

14. The University makes the following distinctions:
  - i. Misconduct is an act or failure to act by a student which is unlawful or otherwise judged to be inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour where that behaviour does or could negatively affect the University in any way, or any person or entity associated with the University.
  - ii. Serious misconduct is misconduct which appears in the reasonable opinion of the University to be significant due to its impact on the University, the person(s) or the property affected by the misconduct.
15. It is the determination of the Student Disciplinary Stage 1 Investigating manager whether the behaviour constitutes as misconduct or serious misconduct, taking advice where appropriate.
16. The following constitute misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
  - i. Inappropriate, abusive or threatening behaviour, including on social media;

- ii. Bullying, violence, harassment and hate crimes, this may include:
  - Behaviour that is unwelcome, uninvited and causes a detrimental effect
  - Verbal or physical aggression
  - Sending abusive or threatening messages
  - Using discriminatory language
- iii. Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- iv. Antisocial behaviour;
- v. Behaviour likely to bring the University into disrepute;
- vi. Inappropriate use of the University's networks, such as visiting inappropriate websites, uploading/downloading inappropriate content, or using the network for criminal activity including the propagation of computer viruses (see also IT Acceptable Use Policy);
- vii. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- viii. Destruction or damage to University property or that of another student;
- ix. Selling, distributing, possessing or using controlled substances or illegal drugs;
- x. Theft from the University or another student/s;
- xi. Fraud;
- xii. Failure to declare a criminal conviction other than a conviction for minor motoring offences carrying a fixed penalty. (It will be at the discretion of the Dean of School whether such matters need to be referred to a formal disciplinary panel. The Deputy Head of Student Support will act in an advisory capacity, as appropriate).

## WHEN IMMEDIATE ACTION IS REQUIRED

- 17. The University has a duty of care towards staff and students. Some disciplinary matters may need the University to take immediate action. These may include, but are not limited to:
  - i. Cases involving a threat of serious harm to a student and/or others;
  - ii. Cases when the student's mental health is at risk or where the student displays significant distress;
  - iii. Issues of a highly sensitive nature;
  - iv. Cases involving threat of serious disruption to other students or to the University's activities.
- 18. If the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager, in consultation with the Dean/Director/Head or Deputy Head of Student Experience (Wellbeing), decides that a student against whom an allegation of serious misconduct has been made, should not remain on University premises, the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager will advise the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor accordingly and recommend that the student be suspended or excluded from attendance at the University pending the determination of the case by the Disciplinary Panel (see Appendix A).

## MISCONDUCT THAT MAY ALSO BE A CRIMINAL OFFENCE

19. There are occasions when student behaviour has, or may become, a matter of criminal investigation, charge or conviction. The following principles apply where the alleged misconduct, informed by liaison with the Police, would also constitute an offence under the criminal law if proven in a court of law:
  - i. The Deputy Head of Student Experience will act as the point of contact with the Police and/or Probation Services as appropriate.
  - ii. The University reserves the right to suspend or exclude a student against whom a criminal allegation has been made (see paragraph 17 and 18).
  - iii. Where a student's actions are subject to a criminal investigation the University will normally suspend any disciplinary process pending the outcome of the police investigation and any court proceedings (see paragraph 31).
  - iv. When a student has been sentenced by a criminal court, the court's decision will be taken into consideration in determining any further disciplinary action by the University. In cases where the health and safety of the University staff, students or property are affected, this may lead to a disciplinary hearing.
  - v. When a student has been acquitted or found not guilty by a court of law, further University disciplinary action might still be taken where the alleged misconduct is in breach of the University's regulations and expected standards of behaviour.

## THE PROCESS

20. Any member of staff or student of the University, or Student Union may make an allegation of misconduct. Complaints of misconduct may also be made by outside bodies, or individuals. Any such allegations should be brought to the attention of the Dean of School/Director or Head of Service (hereafter referred to as the Dean/Director/Head), depending on the nature of the alleged misconduct.
21. The Dean/Director/Head will inform the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager of the alleged misconduct. If an allegation of misconduct is made directly to the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager, they should forward details of the allegation to the relevant Dean/Director/Head, depending on the nature of the alleged misconduct.
22. Where the Student Disciplinary procedure is initiated following a complaint from a student or member of staff, those person(s) who made the complaint will be informed once any stage of the procedure is completed. If the other student's behaviour is found to have had an adverse impact on the complainant then the University will offer a remedy for that impact. Where a complaint is received from a member of the public, the University would not normally inform them when any stage of the procedure is completed.
23. If the student complainant is dissatisfied with any outcome at any stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure, they can appeal to the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (as

outlined in Stage 3). Once all internal procedures have been completed, any student complainant will be issued with a 'completion of procedures' letter (see paragraph 59).

24. There are three Stages in the Student Disciplinary Procedure. A student will receive written notification of the outcome of his/her complaint at the end of each stage. This will include an indication of whether there is an opportunity for further consideration or appeal and, if so, how to proceed to the next stage.

## **STAGE 1: INITIAL INVESTIGATION**

25. The Dean/Director/Head (or their nominee) to whom an allegation of misconduct has been forwarded should complete an initial investigation of the allegation within ten working days of receiving details of the allegation. See Appendix C for full details of the conduct of an initial investigation.
26. The student who is the subject of the alleged misconduct will be advised in writing of the allegation and how this behaviour is considered to have breached the University's expected standards. The student will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation, and submit any appropriate evidence, within five working days of receipt of the allegation.
27. The Dean/Director/Head (or nominee) will normally meet with the student who is the subject of the alleged misconduct. The student may be accompanied by a friend<sup>1</sup> or Student Union representative.
28. The Dean/Director/Head (or nominee) may also meet, where appropriate, with any individual who has made the allegation of misconduct. The individual may be accompanied by a friend, colleague or Student Union representative.
29. Following an initial investigation, the Dean/Director/Head may decide that:
  - i. there is no evidence to warrant further action.
  - ii. there appears to be evidence to indicate misconduct and issue a written warning and/or impose appropriate sanctions.
  - iii. there appears to be evidence to indicate serious misconduct (go to paragraph 34, Stage 2: Student Disciplinary Panel).
  - iv. the matter should be referred to the Police or other civil authority.
30. Where the Dean/Director/Head (or nominee) considers that immediate action be taken following the stage 1, they may recommend that the student be suspended or excluded from attendance at the University pending the determination of the case by the Disciplinary Panel (see Appendix A).
31. Where, during the investigation, the University finds that the matter is already being investigated by the police, the University may suspend any disciplinary action until the completion of the police investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of friend excludes professional representation, unless the case is made that this would not be natural justice.

32. Where the allegation involves a staff member, the matter may be referred to the University's Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
33. The student subject to alleged misconduct will be advised in writing, normally within ten working days of the conclusion of the initial investigation, of the action to be taken. The student will also be advised of any right of appeal (see Stage 3).

## **STAGE 2: STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PANEL**

34. If, at the conclusion of the initial investigation, the Dean/Director/Head (or nominee) concludes that there appears to be evidence to indicate serious misconduct, s/he should refer the matter to the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager who will set a date for a Disciplinary Panel to meet to consider the allegation, normally within fifteen working days of receiving the report of the initial investigation.
35. A student who is the subject of an allegation of serious misconduct should receive a copy of the report of the initial investigation and of the Student Disciplinary Procedure. The student should be provided, at least ten working days before any disciplinary hearing, with a copy of the written evidence to be presented. The student subject to the serious misconduct panel should provide any supporting evidence or paperwork at least five working days before any disciplinary hearing and provide details of any witnesses they wish to call during the panel hearing.
36. The panel must be provided with all relevant paperwork for consideration 5 working days before the disciplinary hearing.
37. Where for good reason the student is unable to attend on the proposed hearing date, the University will arrange an alternate date.
38. A Disciplinary Panel shall consist of:
  - i. A Dean of School or Director/Head of Service (as Chair), independent from the School/Service to which the allegation relates.
  - ii. Two members of senior University staff (Academic or Support)
  - iii. A sabbatical officer of the Solent Students' Union
39. For full details of the conduct of the Disciplinary Hearing see Appendix D.
40. The members of the Disciplinary Panel shall have had no previous involvement in the matter and be independent from the School or Service connected to the alleged offence. A member of staff from the Policy, Governance and Information Service shall be in attendance to make a record of the hearing. The Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will also be in attendance to advise the Disciplinary Panel.
41. The student against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made shall have the right to be present at any meeting of the Disciplinary Panel except the final private



meeting of the Panel. Those conducting the Panel shall decide whether or not students who are the subject of disciplinary procedure and any relevant witnesses or alleged victims shall appear together or separately in any hearing.

42. The student accused of misconduct will not be able to ask questions of any witnesses directly, but may do so via the Chair of the Panel, who may at their discretion rephrase a question or decline to put it to the witness.
43. The student shall be entitled to be accompanied, or assisted, by a friend or colleague<sup>2</sup>, and should advise the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager prior to the disciplinary hearing of the name of the person who will be accompanying them.
44. A student cannot be represented by other persons at an inquiry panel meeting except in cases where a student is not capable of representing themselves (e.g. they are suffering from evidenced mental health issues).
45. If the student does not attend, the meeting will proceed in their absence.
46. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Disciplinary Panel shall meet in private to consider its findings. The Panel may either dismiss the case, or uphold the allegation of serious misconduct. The panel may also not uphold the allegation of 'serious misconduct', but agree that misconduct has occurred and recommend any relevant penalties (see paragraph 29).
47. A student's previous disciplinary record will not normally be relevant to whether they have committed an offence, but may be taken into account in determining any penalty. If the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager decides that any previous offence is relevant, they will consider at what stage this information should be shared with the panel to ensure it is not prejudicial to a fair outcome being reached.
48. The Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager, on behalf of the Panel, will prepare a report within five working days of the final meeting of the Panel, summarising the facts of the case and the Panel's decision, along with full notes of the hearing. If the allegation of serious misconduct is upheld, the Panel may recommend, any or all, of the following penalties:
  - i. No further action (allegation is upheld but no additional penalties are considered to be warranted).
  - ii. Require a formal apology to any student and/or member of staff directly affected by the misconduct of the student.
  - iii. Issue a written warning to the student.
  - iv. Impose restrictions on the student as determined by the Panel, for example access to certain parts of the campus, communication with specific staff or students etc. This period of restriction shall be determined by the Panel.

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<sup>2</sup> The definition of friend excludes professional representation, unless the case is made that this would not be natural justice.

- v. Order restitution by the student to a fellow student, member of staff, or the University itself, as appropriate, to compensate for any financial losses arising from the misconduct of the student.
  - vi. Suspend the student from attendance at the University. This period of suspension shall be determined by the Panel.
  - vii. A termination of studies, with or without an exit award.
49. In determining the penalty, the Panel will take into consideration any previous offences under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
50. The Panel may refer the student to student support for advice, guidance and support.
51. Any recommendations of suspension or expulsion must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor.
52. The Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager will be responsible for communicating the Panel's decision to the student, in writing, within ten working days of the date of the hearing. The letter should include details of the appeal process that is available and the timescale within which any appeal must be lodged.
53. Where the panel recommend the suspension or withdrawal of the student, this will be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of Academic Board, once all internal appeal procedures have been exhausted.

### **STAGE 3: APPEAL TO THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR**

54. A student shall have the right of appeal against the decision of the stage 1 investigation or of the Student Disciplinary Panel following a disciplinary hearing. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the disciplinary hearing and its decision shall not, in itself, constitute an acceptable ground for an appeal. The grounds for an appeal in relation to the decision of the panel are limited to the grounds below:
- i. Where it is alleged that the hearing was not conducted in accordance with the provisions outlined in this Procedure.
  - ii. Where the recommended penalty is considered to be disproportionate to the allegation(s) that have been upheld against the student.
  - iii. Where new evidence comes to light that was, for justifiable reasons, not able to be considered by the Disciplinary Panel.
55. If a student believes that they have grounds for an appeal as outlined above, they should submit a letter of appeal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor setting out which of the reasons above constitute his/her grounds for an appeal. The letter of appeal should be submitted within ten working days of notification of the decision of the Student Disciplinary Panel.
56. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will review all the case details and examine the findings of each stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
57. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will decide whether to uphold the appeal or not, and may make any of the following recommendations:

- i. The appeal is not upheld and any previous sanctions/and or penalties remain
  - ii. The appeal is partially upheld and new sanctions/and or penalties are given
  - iii. The appeal is upheld and any previous sanctions/and or penalties are removed
58. Where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor determines there has not been a fair hearing, they may decide to refer the case back to Stage 2 and another hearing will take place.
59. Any decision and outcome made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will be communicated to the student within 10 working days of receipt of their appeal.

## **END OF THE INTERNAL STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

60. The University will issue a 'completion of internal procedures' letter confirming that the student has exhausted the University's internal Student Disciplinary Procedure and advising that any further request for redress will need to be made to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) [contact details for the OIA will be enclosed with letter].

## **DELEGATION BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

61. The Vice-Chancellor may delegate their powers under this Procedure to another member of the Vice-Chancellor's Group.

## **SUPPORT CONTACT DETAILS**

For help and advice please contact:

Students' Union Academic Caseworker  
T: 023 8201 6432  
E: [su.advice@solent.ac.uk](mailto:su.advice@solent.ac.uk)

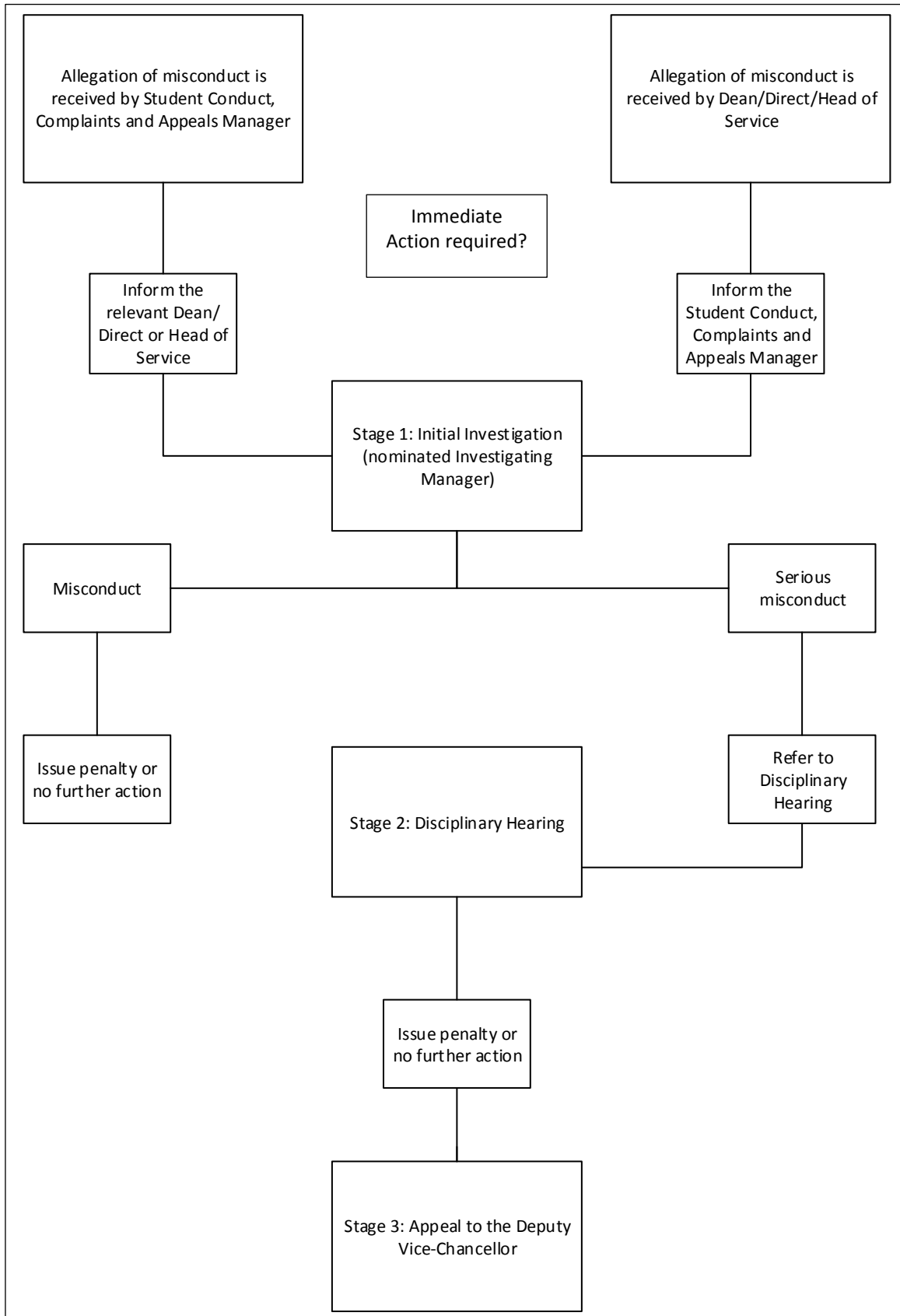
Student Hub  
T: 023 8201 5200  
E: [student.hub@solent.ac.uk](mailto:student.hub@solent.ac.uk)

Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Manager  
Policy, Governance and Information Service  
T: 023 8201 3808  
E: [appeals.complaints@solent.ac.uk](mailto:appeals.complaints@solent.ac.uk)

## Appendix A: SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION PENDING A DISCIPLINARY HEARING

1. A student against whom an allegation of misconduct has been made, may be suspended or excluded by the University Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice Chancellor (or nominee), pending a disciplinary hearing.
2. Suspension normally involves a total prohibition on attendance at, or access to, the University, and on any participation in University activities. However, it may be subject to qualification, such as permission to attend for the purpose of an examination. Suspension should be used only where exclusion from specified activities or facilities would be inadequate.
3. Exclusion involves selective restriction on attendance at, or access to, the University, or prohibition on exercising the functions, or duties, of any office or committee membership in the University, or the Students' Union of Solent University, the exact details of which are to be specified in writing to the student.
4. An order of suspension, or exclusion, may include a requirement that the student should have no contact of any kind with a named person, or persons. Suspension, or exclusion, pending a disciplinary hearing must not be used as a penalty. The power to suspend, or exclude, under this provision is to protect the members of the University community in general, or a particular member, or members, and the power shall be used only where the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) are of the opinion that it is urgent and necessary to take such action. Reasons for the decision shall be provided in writing recorded and made available to the student.
5. No student shall be suspended or excluded, pending a hearing, unless he or she has been given an opportunity to challenge the sanction in person to the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee). Where, for any reason, it appears that it is not possible for the student to attend in person, or the D/PVC is not available, s/he shall be entitled to make written response. In cases of great urgency, the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) shall be empowered to suspend a student with immediate effect.
6. A decision to suspend, or exclude, from academic activities associated with a student's course of study, shall be subject to review, at the request of the student, where it has continued for four weeks. Such a review will not involve a hearing or submissions made in person, but the student shall be entitled to submit written representations. The review will be conducted by the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).
7. When the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor has delegated power under this section, a full report shall be made to the Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor of any suspension or exclusion under this section.
8. The Deputy or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) shall review the suspension or exclusion every four weeks in the light of any developments and of any representations made by the student or anyone else on his or her behalf.

## Appendix B: Flow chart of Procedure



## Appendix C: Conduct of the Stage 1 investigation

1. Where the allegation of misconduct is made via a complaint, the Investigating Manager shall normally invite the complainant to a meeting in order to gather information about the alleged misconduct. The complainant shall be given at least five working days' notice of the meeting; complainants have the right to be accompanied. The complainant may identify witnesses to be interviewed as part of the investigation.
2. The Investigating Manager shall normally invite the student alleged to have committed the act of misconduct to a meeting in order to gather information about the alleged misconduct. The student shall be given at least five working days' notice of the meeting and has the right to be accompanied by a friend or member of the Student Union.
3. The student shall have the right to respond to the allegation and provide any evidence in support of their case, either in writing or at the meeting with the Investigating Manager. The student may also suggest witnesses to be interviewed as part of the investigation.
4. The Investigating Manager will decide how best and in which order to meet with the complainant and the student who is subject to the allegation, and may wish to meet with individuals on more than one occasion. The investigation will be conducted as quickly as practicable but it is important that all relevant information is gathered to inform the Investigating Manager's report.
5. Conduct of Stage 1 Investigation interview; The Investigating Manager has discretion to vary the practicalities of these arrangements as they see fit, provided any changes do not contravene the basic principles:
  - i. Introduce all person(s) present and confirm the purpose of the meeting; inform complainant/student subject to the allegation that they may take breaks where necessary;
  - ii. Provide an overview of the allegation and inform any person(s) present that they will be asked direct questions about the allegation;
  - iii. Invite the complainant/student subject to the allegation to present their case and any evidence;
  - iv. When asking questions avoid generalising and do not make assumptions: ask direct question to clarify any points and get specific details to establish all facts of the case;
  - v. Ask the complainant/student subject to the allegation if they are satisfied they have had a full opportunity to explain their case;
6. When the allegation is of any form of sexual harassment or assault, specific and tailored questioning is required. Examples and guidance for interviewing any person(s) involved in an allegation of sexual harassment or assault:
  - i. All possible efforts should be made to minimise further trauma; acknowledge seriousness of allegation and thank any person(s) for taking the time to attend interview;

- acknowledge that the situation is stressful and signpost to internal/external support services;
- ii. Be clear about the purpose of the interview, how the information will be used, and who will have access to it;
  - iii. Remain empathetic but neutral; simple validation of the person's feelings is more appropriate and effective;
  - iv. Explain that you are interested in hearing about the person's experiences, feelings, and thoughts during and since the alleged assault;
  - v. Though it may be uncomfortable, specific questions must be asked to establish the facts of the alleged assault: what exactly happened? Where did it happen? How did it happen?
  - vi. When the complainant is giving details of any sexual harassment or assault, facilitate this by using open-ended prompts to establish full details, avoid leading questions and allow them to set the pace of discussion;
  - vii. Thank any person(s) for their testimony and conclude the meeting by again signposting to support services; be mindful of the person(s) state of mind and if any immediate support is necessary.

## Appendix D: Conduct of the Stage 2 Disciplinary Hearing

1. This section defines the steps which should be followed during the Hearing itself. The Chair has discretion to vary the practicalities of these arrangements as they see fit, provided any changes do not contravene the basic principles.
  - i. Before seeing any of the parties involved, the Panel shall review the documentation relating to the case and have a preliminary discussion; the documentation should have been received by the panel 5 working days beforehand;
  - ii. The member of Policy, Governance and Information shall meet the student and any accompanying person(s) and escort them into the meeting;
  - iii. The Chair shall invite everyone present to introduce themselves by name and explain their role;
  - iv. The Chair shall explain the role and powers of the Panel, as set out in these Procedures, confirm that all questions should be asked through the Chair and detail, where appropriate, the possible outcomes of the meeting and the timeframe with which this will be communicated to the student;
  - v. The Chair will explain to the student and any accompanying person(s) that the student must speak for themselves and that the accompanying person(s) is present to act as support, only prompting the student where necessary, not directly speaking for them;
  - vi. The student will then be invited to present their case, talk through any statements or evidence and address the Panel directly;
  - vii. The Chair will then invite the Panel to ask any questions directly to the student;
  - viii. The student shall be invited to make a concluding statement, including any mitigation with respect to possible sanctions;
  - ix. The Chair shall ask the student if they are satisfied they have had a full opportunity to explain their case to the Panel;
  - x. The Chair shall conclude the hearing and ask everyone except members of the Panel to leave; the Chair will inform the student to expect the outcome in writing within the designated timeframe.
  - xi. The Panel shall discuss the case in private. The discussion and minutes of the meeting of the Panel are confidential to its members;
  - xii. The Panel shall make its decision;
  - xiii. If, for any reason during its discussion, the Panel decides that further evidence is required, they may adjourn the Hearing for this purpose.