



University of Essex



East 15 Acting School

Professional Code of Conduct 2025 - 2026

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Professional Code of Conduct

For students in all stages of study from 2024-2025 onwards

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

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

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

- punctuality
- full attendance (see further guidance below)
- preparation for classwork and rehearsals including learning of roles
- co-operation, team-working, professional behaviour as an essential part of the learning and rehearsal process

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

Part A: Attendance and punctuality

Principles

1. Full attendance is the expectation of both the industry and the School. East 15 Acting School deems that 'satisfactory' attendance means attending all scheduled classes and prescribed activities.
2. Non-attendance makes attainment of the following types of assessment criteria impossible:
 - a) Ability to work as part of a team
 - b) Contribution to group work or performance
 - c) Positive contribution to discussions

3. Where absence from classes and activities makes it impossible to meet the learning outcomes of the module, a fail grade is applied.
4. Punctuality is also essential, due to the collaborative nature of performance within strict time deadlines. All members of a group are disadvantaged by loss of time and repetition of material necessitated by poor punctuality.

Policy

5. To ensure that a student meets the Principles of the Professional Code of Conduct (PCC), students must not exceed three unauthorised absences in a module in any one term.
6. A student who has accrued four or more unauthorised absences recorded against one module in any one term will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module.
7. Where all sessions in one school day relate to only one module, a student absent on that day would accrue one absence mark only.
8. Students must adhere to the agreed absence reporting procedure (set out below).
9. In instances of unavoidable unplanned absence or illness, students will be marked absent regardless of whether or not they have notified the School.
10. Students who arrive after a class/rehearsal/technical construction session has started will be marked as absent and may not be permitted to participate in the class. This decision is at the discretion of the course tutor/activity leader. If not permitted to participate, students may be required to observe the class, subject to health and safety considerations.

Procedure

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

Type of absence	Action taken
<p>Absence is authorised in accordance with absence reporting/ monitoring procedure.</p> <p>No further action will be taken.</p>	<p>Absence is recorded for information.</p> <p>Where there are concerns relating to absences across modules (i.e. the student's overall attendance is decreasing), or there are concerns</p>

Type of absence	Action taken
	<p>around progress, a referral may be made to Student Support.</p>
One unauthorised absence	<p>An email is sent to the student advising of the absence.</p> <p>Absence advice will be copied to the relevant Head of Course.</p>
Two unauthorised absences	<p>A second email will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged between the student and the Head of Course to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require.</p>
Three unauthorised absences	<p>A third email will be issued and a meeting arranged with the School Manager. Further support will be offered to the student.</p> <p>For Tier 4 or Student Route visa students, a copy will be sent to the International Services Team for information.</p>
Four unauthorised absences	<p>A final email will be issued to the student confirming they have failed the PCC due to absence and they will receive a fail mark for the module.</p> <p>The case will then be referred to the Student Progress Team, who may refer it to the Dean in some cases, and the International Services Team (if applicable). The case may then be referred to the Board of Examiners.</p> <p>The Board of Examiners will receive a report on any unauthorised absences under the PCC and will determine whether to award a fail mark for the module.</p> <p>If necessary, an interim Board of Examiners will be convened in Terms one or two to consider the</p>

Type of absence	Action taken
	progress of students who have failed the PCC. Please see next paragraph.

Actions Taken by the Board of Examiners

14. Where a student has failed a module due to exceeding the maximum number of absences permitted under the PCC the Board of Examiners can consider the following actions:
 - a) Where a student has substantiated Extenuating Circumstances which directly relate to the absences, the Board of Examiners can treat the absences as authorised. Where this results in a total number of unauthorised absences being between one and three, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to continue with the stage of study.
 - b) Where the Board of Examiners judges that a student has no substantiated Extenuating Circumstances relating to the absences, the student must repeat the stage, normally on a full-time basis (The Board of Examiners cannot offer more than three opportunities to undertake the assessment for a module).
 - c) Where the Board of Examiners judges that a student has no substantiated Extenuating Circumstances relating to the absences, and the student has already had the maximum number of attempts at the module or cannot complete their studies within the maximum period, the student will be required to withdraw.

Part B: Preparation for classwork, co-operation and team-working

Principles

1. Preparation for classwork requires students to demonstrate that they:
 - a) Have read the required material.
 - b) Have thought about how to apply the material to the work in class.
 - c) Have worked, without supervisory input, with fellow collaborators (e.g. through rehearsal of a scene) to present the work in class.
2. Co-operation and team-working requires students to demonstrate effective collaboration by:
 - a) Sharing creative processes in class with fellow students.

- b) Sharing preparation of scenes via rehearsal working with actors and presenting the work in class.
 - c) Participating in group research of projects designated by tutors and presenting the work in class.
3. In general, preparation, co-operation and team-working are evidenced by the quality of collaboratively-based work presented in class/prescribed activity. One individual project that is deemed unsatisfactory on these grounds would not itself be a reason for failure. The assessment team take a view of accumulated evidence of the ability of a student to work as a member of the team.

Policy

- 4. To ensure that a student meets the Principles of the PCC, all requirements need to be met.
- 5. Where a student has failed to demonstrate their ability to prepare for class work or work co-operatively in a module in any one term, they will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module and will be referred to the Faculty Dean to confirm if a failure of the PCC has occurred will make one of the following decisions:
 - a) To ask the School to repeat any of the initial consideration stages, if any new information is presented, such as Extenuating Circumstances that have not previously been considered, or if any of the required stages have not been completed.
 - b) Confirm that a failure of the PCC has occurred and refer to the Board of Examiners to consider the student's ability to progress with their studies in view of the failure.

Procedure

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

Process	Action
Initial concerns: Progress concerns are raised informally with the student	<p>Course Tutors/Activity Leaders/Heads of Department/Heads of Course informally raise concerns with the student, highlighting the nature, extent and potential impact of the concerns, and recommend remedial action.</p> <p>At this stage the student may be signposted to seek support from Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service.</p>

Process	Action
	<p>The student must take remedial action. To support with this, the student will be sent an email confirming the discussion and the areas to be improved.</p>
<p>Continuing concerns: Progress concerns are raised formally with the student</p>	<p>If the Head of Course believes a student may be in danger of failing the Professional Code of Conduct in respect of preparation, co-operation and team-working, they will inform the School Manager.</p> <p>A meeting will be arranged with the student to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require in order to make the necessary improvements.</p> <p>The Head of Course will complete an Interim Report.</p> <p>The report will detail the areas in which the student may be failing, actions the student must take to improve and a timescale during which the student is expected to show sufficient improvement. The report will be issued to the student by the School Manager / Deputy Director and Head of Course.</p>
<p>Serious concerns: Formal warning issued</p>	<p>If the student makes no effort to improve within the given time, or improvement is insufficient so that the concerns remain, a formal warning letter will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged with the Head of Course and School Manager to discuss the matter.</p> <p>The formal warning letter will outline the implications of failing the PCC and the next steps if the behaviour continues.</p> <p>Following the meeting, the Head of Course will complete a Final report, which will explain again the areas of concern, what needs to be improved</p>

Process	Action
	and give a final deadline for improvement before the concerns are escalated.
<p>Continuing serious concerns: Referral to Faculty Dean</p>	<p>If the student continues to ignore the warnings, does not seek advice or support or makes no improvement and so continues to breach the PCC, the student will be referred to the Faculty Dean.</p> <p>The School will provide the Faculty Dean with all available documentation and correspondence, so that they can review the case.</p> <p>The student will be invited to provide a written statement to address their concerns, which the Faculty Dean will also consider.</p> <p>The Faculty Dean may invite the student to a meeting if deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The Faculty Dean will decide whether the case should be referred to a Board of Examiners as a failure of the PCC or whether the case should be passed back to the School to repeat any of the previous stages.</p>
<p>Concerns deemed to be a failure of the PCC: referral to Board of Examiners</p>	<p>Failure of the PCC will be deemed an academic failure, meaning a module(s) will have been failed and therefore the Board of Examiners will consider the following actions:</p> <p>Where a student has substantiated Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to continue with the stage of study and therefore deem that the PCC has not been failed.</p> <p>Where the Board of Examiners determines there are no Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, and the failed modules cannot be reassessed in-year, the student must repeat</p>

Process	Action
	<p>the stage, normally on a full-time basis (The Board of Examiners cannot offer more than three opportunities to undertake the assessment for a module).</p> <p>Where the Board of Examiners judges that a student has no substantiated Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, and the student has already had the maximum number of attempts at the module or cannot complete their studies within the maximum period, the student will be required to withdraw.</p>

Part C: Professional Behaviour and Conduct

Principles

1. Students are expected to listen to and act on advice from staff and maintain professional behaviour and conduct that is in keeping with both the Code of Student Conduct of the University of Essex and defined core professional expectations.

Core professional expectations, which if not adhered to will be treated as a breach of the PCC, include:

- behaviour which nurtures trust within the ensemble
 - behaviour which nurtures the principle of mutual respect of staff, peers and work being covered
 - behaviour that is respectful of diversity. No tolerance of discriminatory behaviours such as racism
 - behaviour which supports and does not detract from the learning of others
 - behaviour which is sensitive to the wellbeing of peers and assures safe working practices are consistently implemented during class work, rehearsal, and performance.
 - behaviour that would support progression into the industry
2. Where concerns around conduct are identified, the School will take a view of the accumulated evidence of the ability of a student to work in a professional manner and take action detailed within this policy to address those concerns.

3. The PCC is not intended to replace the Student Code of Conduct; both procedures may be considered at the same time / in parallel and investigations may be carried out collaboratively by the School and the Student Progress Team.

Policy

4. Where a student has failed to demonstrate their ability to maintain professional behaviour and conduct in a module in any one term, they will be deemed to have failed the PCC in respect of that module and will be referred to the Faculty Dean to confirm if a failure of the PCC has occurred.

The Faculty Dean may make one of the following decisions:

- a) To ask the School to repeat any of the initial consideration stages, if any new information is presented, such as Extenuating Circumstances that have not previously been considered, or if any of the required stages have not been completed.
- b) Confirm that a failure of the PCC has occurred and refer to the Board of Examiners to consider the student's ability to progress with their studies in view of the failure.

Procedure

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

Process	Action
Initial concerns: Progress concerns are raised informally with the student	<p>Course Tutors/Activity Leaders/Heads of Department/Heads of Course informally raise concerns with the student, highlighting the nature, extent and potential impact of the concerns, and recommend remedial action.</p> <p>At this stage the student may be signposted to seek support from Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service.</p> <p>The student must take remedial action. To support with this, the student will be sent an email confirming the discussion and the areas to be improved</p>
Continuing concerns: Progress concerns are raised formally with the student	If the Head of Course believes a student may be in danger of failing the Professional Code of

Process	Action
	<p>Conduct in respect of professional behaviour, they will inform the School Manager.</p> <p>A meeting will be arranged with the student to discuss the matter further and to see what additional support the student might require in order to make the necessary improvements.</p> <p>The Head of Course will complete an Interim Report.</p> <p>The report will detail the areas in which the student may be failing, actions the student must take to improve and a timescale during which the student is expected to show sufficient improvement. The report will be issued to the student by the School Manager/ Deputy Director and Head of Course.</p>
<p>Serious concerns: Formal warning issued</p>	<p>If the student makes no effort to improve within the given time, or improvement is insufficient so that the concerns remain, a formal warning letter will be issued to the student and a meeting arranged with the Head of Course to discuss the matter.</p> <p>The formal warning letter will outline the implications of failing the PCC and the next steps if the behaviour continues.</p> <p>Following the meeting, the Head of Course will complete a Final report, which will explain again the areas of concern, what needs to be improved and give a final deadline for improvement before the concerns are escalated.</p>
<p>Continuing serious concerns: Referral to Deputy Dean</p>	<p>If the student continues to ignore the warnings, does not seek advice or support or makes no improvement and so continues to breach the PCC, the student will be referred to the Faculty Dean.</p>

Process	Action
	<p>The School will provide the Faculty Dean with all available documentation and correspondence, so that they can review the case.</p> <p>The student will be invited to provide a written statement to address their concerns, which the Faculty Dean will also consider.</p> <p>The Faculty Dean may invite the student to a meeting if deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The Faculty Dean will decide whether the case should be referred to a Board of Examiners as a failure of the PCC or whether the case should be passed back to the School to repeat any of the previous stages.</p>
<p>Concerns deemed to be a failure of the PCC: referral to Board of Examiners</p>	<p>Failure of the PCC will be deemed an academic failure, meaning a module(s) will have been failed and therefore the Board of Examiners will consider the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Where a student has substantiated Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, the Board of Examiners may permit the student to continue with the stage of study and therefore deem that the PCC has not been failed. b) Where the Board of Examiners determines there are no Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, and the failed modules cannot be reassessed in-year, the student must repeat the stage, normally on a full-time basis (The Board of Examiners cannot offer more than three opportunities to undertake the assessment for a module). c) Where the Board of Examiners judges that a student has no substantiated

Process	Action
	Extenuating Circumstances or other mitigating factors, and the student has already had the maximum number of attempts at the module or cannot complete their studies within the maximum period, the student will be required to withdraw.

Part D: Provision, extenuating circumstances, appeals, guidance and support

Provision of the PCC according to academic stage

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

Extenuating circumstances

3. This is the procedure students should use to inform the Board of Examiners of any circumstances that are outside of their control and have affected their academic performance. This procedure can also be used to if there is an explanation for any unauthorised absences. All Extenuating Circumstances forms must be submitted by the deadline specified by East 15. Students should note that the East 15 deadline may differ from the general University deadline that is published on the website. Students are strongly advised to submit

documentation/medical evidence to support any claim of Extenuating Circumstances. Guidance on submitting [Extenuating Circumstances](#) and deadlines can be found on the University's website.

4. The University of Essex has a [Late Submission of Coursework procedure](#) which can be accessed via the University's website. East 15 has an Extenuating Lateness Committee consisting of the Deputy Director and the relevant Heads of Course/Skills. It will consider claims of Extenuating Circumstances related to the request to submit written coursework after the deadline.

Appeals

5. The normal right of a student to appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners shall apply. Details can be found on the [University's exams and coursework website](#).

Guidance and Support

6. The PCC can be downloaded from the [East 15 website](#).
7. Full details of the East 15 absence notification procedure is forwarded to all students at the start of the Academic Year via University of Essex email accounts and can also be found on the East 15 Moodle Page.
8. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the University of Essex website and contains 'Student Conduct Regulations' and 'Student Conduct Procedures'.
9. Students requiring support in relation to understanding and/or meeting the requirements of the PCC should seek immediate guidance from Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service.
10. Hard copies of all documentation relating to the PCC can also be obtained from the East 15 Administration Team.

Document Control Panel

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