University Regulations

Distance Learning Student Guide

September 2016

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1   About You and the University

1.1   What is the purpose of this handbook?

This handbook provides distance learning students with additional information, specific to distance learners about the various procedures, regulations and support systems within the University. It is intended for distance learning students on programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research levels. Distance learning students need to use the student handbook specific to their level of study (*Undergraduate Student Guide*, *Postgraduate Taught Student Guide*, or the *Code of Practice for Research Degrees*) in conjunction with this guide. Information specific to distance learning students can also be found in your Programme of Study Handbook (except for MPhil and PhD by Research students).

The University has made every effort to make the information as full and as accurate as possible, but you should note that minor changes are made from time to time. We shall try to keep any such changes to a minimum, and you will receive advance warning in the event of any alteration. We would also be grateful if you would let us know about any changes that you think might helpfully be introduced into future handbooks.

The handbook makes frequent reference to a number of other important sources of information relating to the University and to the way in which Programmes of Study (that's the name we give to your degree course) operate. These include Programme of Study Handbooks, Module Handbooks and the University's **Academic Quality Handbook (AQH)**.The AQH contains a wide range of information about the way in which the University operates and you are advised to familiarise yourself in particular with the following chapters:

- Chapter 5 – 'Framework for Flexible and Distributed Learning Provision' – which sets out the University's requirements in respect of distance and blended learning programmes;

- Chapter 6 - 'Taught Award Regulations' – which explains how taught Programmes of Study are structured and how we make decisions about the final awards;

- Chapter 7 - 'Assessment: Taught Programmes' – which contains information about the University's approach to assessment;

- Chapter 8 – 'Research Degree Regulations' – which sets out the rules governing the delivery and assessment of research degree programmes and includes the Academic Appeal Procedures and the Procedure for Student Complaints for research degree students;

- Chapter 12 – 'Student Representation, Engagement and Support' - which describes how the University assures the quality of the student experience, and provides details of our arrangements for providing you with academic and personal support during your studies;

- Chapter 13 – 'Student Cases' – which includes the *Academic Appeal Procedure* and the *Procedure for Student Complaints* for taught degrees.

The AQH is available in both Welsh and English on the University webpages and in the Faculty Offices: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/

Please bear in mind that, occasionally, information contained in this booklet might not apply to *certain* aspects of your particular Programme of Study. For example, information about formal examinations does not apply to Programmes of Study that do not assess your work through a formal examination.

This handbook is intended to be helpful to you and we would welcome your feedback on how it might be improved. Please send any comments to the Academic Office via quality@uwtsd.ac.uk.

There is a dedicated distance learning page (see link below) on the website with additional information on it as well as relevant information on web pages relating to your level and type of study (undergraduate, postgraduate taught).
http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/online/

1.2   The University's Framework for distance learning

Chapter 5 in the *Academic Quality Handbook* contains the University's framework for flexible and distributed learning provision. As is noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is expected that all new programmes that are offered using this mode of study adhere to this framework at the point of proposal. With the exception of a small number of programmes of study that are being discontinued, all current programmes now adhere to this framework. Your Programme of Study Handbook will give full details with regard to the exact teaching format of your Programme of Study.

1.3   How can I make my views known to the University?

The University values feedback from all its students irrespective of their mode of study and every effort will therefore be made to ensure that distance learning students are able to provide feedback to the University (e.g. through module and programme questionnaires or national surveys, such as the NSS, PTES or PRES) and are able to participate in the University's student representative system. Please note that 'attendance' at events such as annual reviews, validation events, or staff-student committee may take the form of video-conferencing or participation through Skype or via video-conferencing.

1.4   Study periods and submission deadlines

For most distance learning Programmes of Study, the University year is divided into two semesters. The first semester starts in September and lasts until late January when there is an examination period. The second semester starts in February as soon as the assessment process is complete and ends in June. Some distance learning courses may also offer the opportunity to take a module over the summer, by which the University means between April and September. Your Programme of Study Handbook will give you information about this.

Please note that taught distance learners will be given deadlines for the submission of coursework throughout the academic year. These deadlines are either communicated to you in your Programme of Study Handbook or in the module information given to you at the start of the module.

1.5   How will the University contact me?

All distance learning students will be supplied with a University e-mail address by Information Services prior to the start of your Programme of Study. This e-mail will be used to contact you with important information, so it is most important that you check it regularly. We ask you to use this e-mail address when contacting the university.

1.6   What is the 'MYTSD Student Portal'?

MyTSD is a student portal, accessible from the web site, which gives students access to a range of Registry services, including student enrolment and module selection for undergraduate students. Further services will be added over time, including module selection for postgraduate students. Students can log into MyTSD using their student IT access account log-in and password. MyTSD can be used to check personal data held in Registry, and to update information such as a change in address. Students are encouraged to visit MyTSD regularly to read correspondence from the University and to utilise the *Useful Links* sections on the *Homepage*.

2   About You and Your Academic Progress

2.1   How do I know what is expected of me and what I can expect from my tutors?

When you enrol on a taught Programme of Study, an MRes, or a Professional Doctorate, you will be provided with a Programme of Study Handbook. This will explain what is required of you in terms of matters such as, for example, teaching and assessment. It is your responsibility to become familiar with this information. If a programme is offered by distance learning, then it will make clear what is expected from you as a student studying through this mode. The Programme of Study Handbook will also make clear what you can expect from your module and personal tutors in terms of contact and responses to your queries. You will be given more specific information about your module (usually via the VLE) (e.g. topics of study, bibliographies and resources, teaching sessions, assessments, assessment criteria etc.). It will also detail how you will be able to make contact with other students enrolled on that module (e.g. through an on-line forum and discussion boards). Such information is normally provided to students via the University's VLE.

Coursework in the form of essays, seminar papers, or whatever else is prescribed by your lecturers or module tutors must be presented by the deadline dates assigned. If you have not received any instructions about the coursework requirements of a module, you should contact your module tutor or Programme Director as soon as possible. For information in relation to extenuating circumstances procedures, please consult the taught degrees student guide.

Distance learning students who have responsibilities and commitments in addition to their studies need to ensure that they do not enrol for more modules per semester than they are able to cope with. Please note that all part-time postgraduate distance students need to complete at least 40 credits per annum. Normally, one 20 credit module is completed per semester. A 20 credit module equates to 200 study hours.

2.2 Graduate Summer School and residential events

An annual graduate summer school is held for all postgraduate taught and research degrees students on the Lampeter campus, usually during the first week of July. The summer school is an excellent way to meet your tutors and fellow-students and to attend sessions that look to enhance research methods and skills. Many distance learning students find attendance at such events invaluable. Further information about the annual graduate summer school and details about the cost, dates, and programme, can be obtained from the University's Research, Innovation and Enterprise Services (RIES).

If your programme of study contains residential events, then arrangements for these will be given in your Programme of Study Handbook.

2.3 'Attendance' for Distance Learning Students

For distance learning students, 'attendance' is, of course, defined differently. Attendance for distance learning students may take the form of the submission of formative assessment during the module, the participation in online seminars, accessing video-cast or podcast sessions, on-line forums and discussion groups, attendance at scheduled meetings with the module tutor or module group through Skype or by telephone. All module tutors will define clearly what is expected from students as part of the module information given to students at the beginning of the module. Generally, it is expected that all such contact points are compulsory elements of the course as they ensure the engagement of the student with the entire module, thus ensuring that all aims of the module and learning outcomes are met.

For distance learning students writing their dissertations or research degree theses, the same regulations will apply as for residential students.

For distance learning students attending residential visits or summer schools that are credit bearing all scheduled classes are considered to be compulsory.

2.4 What might happen if my progress is unsatisfactory?

In addition to the information given in the Academic Quality Handbook with regard to unsatisfactory progress, please note that the interviews for any distance learning student whose progress is regarded as unsatisfactory may, where appropriate, take place by electronic means (e.g. Skype).

3 About You and Assessment/Examinations

3.1 What are the examination requirements for Distance Learning Students?

Depending on your Programme of Study, you may be required to sit formal examinations at times laid down by the University. For general information about examinations for distance learning students, see Chapter 5 of the Academic Quality Handbook. Your Programme of Study Handbook will give you further details and your Programme Director or module tutor will be happy to answer any questions you may have in relation to examinations.

4 Support for Distance Learning Students

4.1 Pastoral Care

All distance learning students studying with the University will have a personal or year tutor. If you have not been told the name of your personal or year tutor by your School at the start of your studies, your Programme Director will be able to tell you who your personal or year tutor is. Full information about the personal or year tutor system can be found in the Academic Quality Handbook and the Student Guide relevant to your level of study.

4.2 Student Services

The Student Services department provides high quality information, advice, guidance, practical and emotional support to enable all students to reach their full potential. In the case of distance learners, such assistance will normally need to be provided by telephone, e-mail or video conferencing – but the University will seek to ensure that the service provided is comparable with that provided to campus-based students.

Student Services offers a range of services to distance-learning students including:

- Careers Service;
- Counselling Service;
- Mental Health Advisory Service;
- Study Skills Support – advice on studying, preparing and presenting assignments etc. Details of the study skills support available to distance learners are provided on the Student Services webpages at: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/study-skills/
- Support for disabled students;
- Financial support (for eligible students) from the University's Hardship Fund (UK-domiciled students), and the University's Scholarships and Bursaries package including a limited number of awards for international students;
- General student finance advice including advice on managing student debt.

Details of how you can access these services, including e-mail and phone contact details are available on the Student Services pages of the University website: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/student-services/.

Most of the services are delivered throughout the year, whilst some services are limited to University term-time only.
The University is firmly committed to enhancing the support services available to distance learning students and will work to improve the range and quality of services provided.

4.3 Visiting the University

As a distance learning student you may from time to time want to visit the University for a short intensive study period, for example in order to access the library or meet with your dissertation tutor for a number of supervisory sessions. The University's Accommodation Officers will be able to help you to book a room on campus for a short period. Please note that it may not always be possible to offer visiting students a room on campus; at some times of the year the campuses get extremely busy.

5　Resources for Distance Learning Students

This section outlines the general resources available to distance learning students in terms of Information Services and Library and Learning Resources. Details of the availability of resources of a more specialist nature are provided in Programme of Study Handbooks.

A series of guides to support you in utilising all resources available at the University, The Hub, can be accessed via MyDay.

5.1　Information Technology & Systems (IT&S) for Distance Learning Students

The University recognises that Information Technology is an indispensable tool in the delivery and management of learning and is essential to support both the academic and administrative activities of the University.

As a distance learner when you have completed the enrolment process you will receive a confirmation of enrolment email to your personal email account. Once this is received you will be able to complete our online account creation process via https://login.tsd.ac.uk. Please view the quick guide for new students for full details of how to setup your IT account. This account will enable you to access to the following:

- **VLE (Moodle)** - An online area where you will find information about your programme, modules and administrative information – view the Moodle Guide which is available as follows:

  For students enrolled at Carmarthen/Lampeter/London:
  http://dysgu.ydds.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=8653%20%22target%3D%22_blank%22

  For students enrolled at Swansea:
  http://moodle.swanseamet.uwtsd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3

- **Microsoft Office 365 email account** – A Microsoft system that provides students with a UWTSD email account in the format of studentnumber@student.uwtsd.ac.uk (eg 12345678@student.uwtsd.ac.uk). Once your account is created you can access your email via MyDay or directly via http://www.outlook.com/uwtsd.ac.uk.

Service Desk

Technical support is available to distance learners during office hours and all requests are dealt with taking account of priority.

The main IT support for students is via the Service Desk. All IT problems and requests should be logged via the Service Desk where possible. There are three main methods to contact the Service Desk:
- Phone the Service Desk on **0300 500 5055** (ext **5055** internally).
- Email ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk
- Log on to https://webhelp.uwtsd.ac.uk with your account details to log the request/issue

Service Desk hours:

Term Time
Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 8pm. Fridays 8.30am – 4.30pm (except Bank Holidays and University closure days)

Non-term Time
Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5pm. Fridays 8.30am – 4.30pm (except Bank Holidays and University closure days)

For more information on IT&S at the University please visit our dedicated website www.uwtsd.ac.uk/its which contains all the information you need including:

1. Full video and PDF guides on various subjects
2. Getting connected pages with information on Student IT accounts, Email and Wireless access

5.2   Technology Enhanced Learning

5.2.1 MyDay

MyDay is a flexible student portal that will work in most browsers on desktop PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones and is available as an app for Apple, Android and Windows devices.

MyDay allows you to manage your student experience by providing a gateway to:

- Moodle
- Library services
- PC Availability
- Help & Advice
- Career Guidance

- University Email
- News and Events
- Important Announcements
- Student forms

How to access MyDay

1. Using any web browser type in: myday.uwtsd.ac.uk
   (Internet Explorer on campus PCs will automatically sign you in to MyDay)

2. If/When prompted - Enter your University email address and password. If you have problems logging in, check that the caps lock key on your computer keyboard is off and that you use the correct combination of lower case and capital letters in both your username and your password.

Problems?

Contact the IT Service Desk or email: myday@uwtsd.ac.uk

5.2.2 Using the VLE

Access to the University's VLE is important for all students, but even more so for students studying through distance learning.

Currently the University VLE system is Moodle. Your username and password for Moodle will be the account details confirmed by the online account creation process detailed above.

More detailed information about the relevant VLE for your studies and how to get help is available here:

Moodle: http://dysgu.ydds.ac.uk/

If you have completed enrolment and have received your confirmation of enrolment email but are having problems setting up your IT account then please contact ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk. If you have login details but still have problems logging on to the VLE, please contact your module tutor or Programme Director as soon as possible.

Please note that you should not try to access any courses before the start of the teaching study period as a module may not yet have been set up or teaching material may not yet have been uploaded.

5.2.3 Getting started with Moodle

All distance learning programmes of study have a Moodle space. This short section will take you through finding and logging into Moodle.

1. The web address is: http://dysgu.ydds.ac.uk/ (There is no need to remember the address, go to the **University home page** then to the link for **Current Students** at the top of the screen in Quick links).

2. Log into the Moodle page with your usual university username and password. This will take you to *your* homepage; you will see the Schools and *your* modules on the right side of the screen.

3. Click on the module name (on the right side of the screen) to access *your* learning materials and links related to the module.

4. There is additional support within Moodle from the front page in the link called Moodle Resources. Here you will find information on how to use some of the features. There is additional useful information on the front page including links to the Learning Resources Centre and Student Support. Additionally there is a link to a group of Discussion Forums within this space you will find a specific discussion link for distance learning students. At the top of the screen there are links to *Student Support, Students' Union* and *Library and Learning Resources*

5.3 Library and Learning Resources for Distance Learning Students

Information about services for distance learners can be found via the Library's website: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/services/services-for-distance-learners/

5.3.1 Online Library

In order to provide an equitable service to all students, the library aims to provide as many resources as possible electronically. The library subscribes to a wide variety of e-resources, including e-books and e-journals, all of which are available via the library website and are searchable via the library catalogue. E-resources can be accessed from anywhere using your university login: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/online-library/. For support in accessing and locating material and finding out which e-resources are most appropriate for your course, please contact your Subject Librarian who will be happy to assist you: outreach@uwtsd.ac.uk.

5.3.2 Borrowing resources

Should you wish to come to the library in person to borrow resources you will need your University ID card which is also your library card. Books are loaned to distance learning postgraduate and research students for a 6 week period. Your library account can be managed online via the library catalogue where you can check due dates and renew your books. Please be aware that you may not be able to renew your books if they've been requested by someone else, in which case it is advisable to return them as soon as possible to avoid incurring a fine.

Distance Learning students in the UK and Ireland are entitled to join the SCONUL Access scheme which is a reciprocal service supported by most of the higher education and national libraries of the UK and Ireland, and provides borrowing privileges for most distance learning students. This means that with a SCONUL Access card you may be able to borrow material for your course from a local University library. Further information on how to join the Scheme is available on the SCONUL Access website: http://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access or contact sconul@uwtsd.ac.uk for more details.

If you are unable to get access to the material you require, you can request it using the online form: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/services/services-for-distance-learners/. Please note that some services are only available to Postgraduate Distance Learners.

5.3.3 Advice and Support

The Library can also help you to develop expertise in finding, evaluating and using information effectively and ethically and advise on research data management. We can also help you with your bibliographies and citations, including the use of RefWorks; an online research management, writing and collaboration tool which you have access to. Please see Digital and Information Literacy for further details. Advice can be provided via e-mail, phone or Skype.

Students able to attend the annual Postgraduate Research Festival can also ask for a personal one-to-one session in order to familiarise themselves with the online library resources.

For further information about any of our services, please contact: outreach@uwtsd.ac.uk. It would be helpful if you were able to include your student number when contacting us so as to avoid any delays in responding.

5.4   General Information

5.4.1   **Useful Web addresses**

General distance learning	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/online/distance-learning-courses/
Moodle	http://dysgu.ydds.ac.uk/
Information Services	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/its
Library and Learning Resources	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/services/services-for-distance-learners/
Student Services	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/student-services/
Registry	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/registry/
Finance	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/finance/
Academic Office (including the Postgraduate Research Office)	http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/