

Chapter 12

Students and Quality

12. STUDENTS AND QUALITY

12.1 General Principles and Expectations

In accordance with Chapter B5 of the UK Quality Code, the University is committed to the principle that all students are provided with opportunities to engage individually and collectively in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience, specifically through:

- (1) their representation on committees responsible for the design, validation and monitoring of programmes of study;
- (2) being given opportunities to contribute to annual reviews of programmes of study;
- (3) being given opportunities to provide formal feedback on the quality of their learning experiences;
- (4) being encouraged to discuss matters directly with all staff and particularly with their personal or year tutor, or with other designated members of staff.

The University's minimum expectation is that the principle and arrangements described above will apply across its campuses and collaborative partner institutions. The arrangements may be supplemented as appropriate to reflect the requirements of specific locations.

The remainder of this chapter summarises aspects of the arrangements for student engagement within the University together with aspects of the arrangements for student support.

12.2 Student Charter

The Student Charter has been created in partnership between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, the student body and Trinity Saint David Students' Union. It explains clearly the mutual expectations of the University and its students and recognises that providing an excellent student experience is a key strategic priority for the University and the Students' Union.

The Student Charter covers all students and staff studying at the University. It sets out the responsibilities which the University will fulfil to its students. In addition it explains the responsibilities which students should fulfil whilst studying at the University. It also outlines the responsibilities of the Students' Union to the University and its students.

By having a Student Charter in place, the University demonstrates its full commitment to continually improving the quality of its services, and recognises that students are at the heart of the institution. The Student Charter emphasises the importance of belonging to a learning community, and of partnership working between staff and students. It also emphasises the importance of a strong and effective working relationship between the University and the Students' Union, and symbolises the joint commitment to securing an excellent student experience.

The Student Charter, along with the Relationship Agreement between the University and Students' Union, is reviewed on an annual basis and is published on both the University and Students' Union websites.

12.3 University Regulations

The general regulations for students are detailed in the document *University Regulations - Student Guide*. This document is published on the University website.

12.4 Programme of Study Handbooks

Programme Directors are responsible for ensuring that students are kept fully informed of the academic and administration details of their Programme of Study. For each year of study of the programme, the School will produce a Programme of Study Handbook which includes all relevant details. These Programme of Study Handbooks will normally be distributed to all students during induction.

12.5 Student Complaints

Details of the Procedure for Student Complaints can be found in Chapter 13 of this document, and are also published on the University website.

This procedure does not apply to student complaints about the behaviour or conduct of other students. Complaints of this nature should be raised with the Director of Student Services in the first instance.

12.6 Student Affairs - Committees

12.6.1 Student Affairs Committee

The Student Affairs Committee is charged with ensuring the provision of high quality support services for students across the University. Details of its terms of reference and membership are provided in Chapter 2.

12.6.2 Student Experience Conventions

A student experience convention will be convened every academic year at each campus location. The precise arrangements for these conventions, including the frequency of meetings, will be decided locally and will vary according to local needs and priorities. Each location may, in addition, have a range of other mechanisms to engage appropriately with its study body. They will provide an opportunity for representatives of the student body and Student Union to meet with senior members of academic and support staff to share information, discuss matters of general student interest and capture issues of concern. These conventions will focus primarily on improving the quality of the students' experience.

To ensure that matters raised at the student experience conventions are carefully monitored, evaluated and reviewed, minutes and action points are to be received by the relevant Faculty Board(s), the Central Resources Committee, and, where appropriate, other central committees of the University.

Terms of reference

- (1) To consider matters of a general nature linked to the University;
- (2) To consider matters of an academic nature linked to the Faculties;
- (3) To consider reports from duly elected students;
- (4) To provide feedback on issues raised by students;
- (5) To consider any other relevant matters linked to the Faculties or University.

Membership

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) (or nominee)
Relevant Dean(s) of Faculty (or nominee)
Relevant Heads of School (or nominee)
Relevant Directors / Heads of Support Units (or nominee)
Representatives from the student body as a whole (which reflect the nature of the student body of the location and the focus of this committee)
Student Union Representatives
Secretary

12.6.3 Safeguarding Forum

The University's Safeguarding Forum is responsible for overseeing all University matters related to safeguarding including the University's Safeguarding Policy (see Appendix SQ1). This includes the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults along with the administration of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedures (formerly Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) procedures). The Safeguarding Forum reports to the Student Affairs Committee.

12.7 Personal / Year Tutor System

The personal / year tutor system is an integral part of the University's academic framework. The University maintains the traditional model of personal and year tutors within the Faculty structure, and each student is allocated a personal or year tutor. Following many attempts over a number of years to devise one central personal tutor system for the whole University, it is acknowledged that it has not been possible to prescribe a system that is equally appropriate and effective within all Schools. Arrangements in relation to personal or year tutors are therefore made at School level.

The University is confident that students are given a high level of pastoral support from their tutors and from support staff, particularly within Student Services. However, it is also acknowledged that in practice, for a wide variety of reasons, students often choose to seek the advice and support that would normally be provided by a personal or year tutor from a member of the academic staff other than their nominated tutor.

12.7.1 Role of the Personal / Year Tutor

The role of the personal or year tutor includes:

- removing the barriers, both real and perceived, that can exist between staff and students;
- supporting the student's personal development;
- serving as a means of internal communication between the University's central services and students;
- providing an additional channel whereby student opinion can inform the development of services offered by the University.

The success of the personal or year tutor system at the University can be attributed, very largely, to the excellent informal relationships that exist between staff and students and to the commitment of staff to the welfare of students. The code of practice for personal or year tutors reflects this ethos of support.

12.7.2 Code of Practice for Personal or Year Tutors

Personal or year tutors are required to:

- treat all students with respect;
- treat every student as an individual with unique needs and aspirations;
- respect confidentiality;
- be proactive and reactive in combating discrimination in any form;
- act as a mentor and supporter to tutees.

12.7.3 Personal or Year Tutors - *modus operandi*

The personal or year tutor system is part of a University-wide service provided to students in addition to services provided by Student Services.

Personal or year tutors provide the first point of contact for advice, guidance and support. If they cannot answer the question or help solve the problem themselves, they should, in discussion with the student(s), be able to identify a source of advice.

All academic staff are potentially personal or year tutors and personal tutorial lists are generated by each School at the beginning of each academic session.

Students will be informed of their personal tutor before or during induction and will be provided with an outline of what they can expect from the personal or year tutorial system, and what they can contribute to it. Students will be asked to sign a statement which indicates that they have been given these details.

Students will normally remain with the same tutor for the duration of their time at the University. If a tutor leaves or is otherwise unavailable to continue with the duties of a tutor, students in his/her care will be assigned another tutor.

12.7.4 Support Liaison Tutors

In addition to personal or year tutors, all Schools have support liaison tutors who act as a point of contact within the School for students on support and welfare matters. Support liaison tutors also act as the main point of contact between the School and Student Services. Support liaison tutors play a key role in liaising with, and referring students to Student Services.

12.8 Student Services

Student Services is a professional support service providing high quality information, advice and guidance, practical and emotional support to enable all students to reach their full potential. The department also provides an accessible resource for the wider University community.

Services provided include the Careers Service and GO Wales employability programme, financial support for students, learning support including study skills support and support for disabled students, counselling and mental health advisory services and support for students from a care background. Student Services also works closely with the University Chaplaincy and Students' Union.

Further details regarding the range of services available to students are published in relevant student guides and on the University website.

All new students are introduced, during induction to the range of services offered by Student Services.

Appointments and referrals for all services provided by Student Services should be made at the Reception Desks in, or by phone or email with Student Services on each campus. All

appointments and referrals for support and advice from the University Chaplains should be made directly with the Chaplains.

The Halls of Residence at the Carmarthen and Lampeter campuses have designated Hall Wardens who provide welfare support to residential students. There are currently plans to introduce hall wardens on the Swansea campus.

12.8.1 Academic Scholarships and Bursaries

Various academic scholarships and bursaries are available to provide financial support for students during the course of their studies, details of which can be found on the University website and from Student Services.

12.8.2 Financial Contingency Fund Committee

Many students find themselves in financial difficulties. The Financial Contingency Fund administered by the Financial Contingency Fund Committee is designed to help students experiencing financial hardship through the provision of grants or emergency loans. The Financial Contingency Fund Committee normally meets fortnightly during term time and emergency applications are normally dealt with between meetings.

Student Services, in collaboration with the Finance department, also offers students support and guidance in dealing with debt. 'Money Doctor' surgeries are held on a regular basis to support those students in need of support and guidance.

All enquiries related to the Financial Contingency Fund should be directed to the Financial Contingency Fund, c/o Student Finance Officer in Student Services. Further details and application forms are available from Student Services Reception Desks and the Student Services webpages.

Terms of Reference

- (1) To develop and implement policies and procedures for allocation of the Financial Contingency Fund consistent with Welsh Government and HEFCW Guidelines;
- (2) To consider all requests from students for financial support and to allocate funds fairly and consistently in accordance with agreed policies and procedures;
- (3) To monitor, evaluate and review the University's arrangements for the allocation of the Financial Contingency Fund;
- (4) To liaise with the Faculties, the Schools and support units on issues relating to student financial hardship;
- (5) To prepare reports and recommend action in response to the issues arising from the allocation of the Financial Contingency Fund for consideration by the Student Affairs Committee.

Membership

Director of Student Services or nominee (Chair)
Representative from the Finance Unit
Representative of the Students' Union
Financial Contingency Fund Administrator/Student Finance Officer

12.8.3 Part-time Undergraduate Fee Waiver Scheme (HEFCW)

The University administers a Fee Waiver Scheme for eligible part-time undergraduate students who are unemployed and actively seeking work or who are in receipt of certain

Department for Work and Pensions benefits. The criteria for eligibility and application forms are available from Student Services. Details are also available on the University website under Student Services.

12.9 Study Skills Support

All students have access to generic study skills support to assist them in their studies, and in finding and using information. The provision varies according to need and is available bilingually. Details of study skills provision including drop-in study skills sessions available and study skills support for distance learners are available from Student Services and are also published on the Student Services webpages.

The Learning Resources Centre also offers Information Skills Consultations on a wide variety of topics. Students who require further information or wish to book a consultation should contact the Learning Resources Centre.

12.9.1 Support for Disabled Students

The University is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment.

If a student has a condition that affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, which is defined as a disability, the University is required to offer the student an opportunity for disclosure and to discuss support requirements.

All students are offered screening for indicators of specific learning difficulties on entry to the University. Students are supported in applications for the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). The University employs specialist learning support staff in a variety of roles. These staff support disabled students and provide them with an equality of opportunity to access their programme of study and reach their full potential. Referrals for specialist learning support should be made to Student Services.

12.9.2 Professional Development Plans

Academic schools use a variety of mechanisms to ensure that students actively engage with Professional Development Plans (PDPs). While the precise approach varies considerably between Schools, all students are actively encouraged to critically reflect upon their personal strengths and weaknesses and their development as learners during their time at University.

Students are generally introduced to the concept of PDPs as part of the induction process. The importance of actively engaging in professional development planning is reinforced by means of the personal or year tutor system and the Careers Service. Resources on PDP are also available on the Careers Service webpages. In addition, all first year students are encouraged to develop their individual PDPs as they progress through their university education. Staff within the Student Services team are available to support academic staff in developing this programme within their respective Faculties and Schools. Students can also seek advice and guidance from Careers Service staff.

Professional development planning is frequently embedded within the learning outcomes, assessment tasks and assessment criteria associated with particular modules. For example, assessment can take the form of process workbooks, reflective journals or work placement logs. The monitoring of progress made in relation to PDPs is part of the support offered to students by their nominated personal or year tutor.

Further advice and guidance on PDPs is available from the Careers Service or from personal or year tutors.

12.9.3 Careers Advice and Guidance and Work Placements

The University employs professionally qualified Careers Advisers who are able to offer all students advice and guidance in relation to careers and job applications. Appointments for a meeting with the Careers Adviser can be made at the Reception Desk in Student Services on each campus.

The University has recently developed a Skills and Employability Action Plan (SEAP) which outlines the University's current and future planned activities in relation to work placements and work experience, employer approved courses and embedding employability skills across all higher education curricula. Student Services also make arrangements for student work placements and work experience outside their Programmes of Study, as part of the GO Wales programme. All referrals in relation to such work placements should be directed to the GO Wales team in Student Services.

Student work placements are an essential part of many programmes of study and enable students to gain valuable work experience. Staff who are involved in organising student work placements are referred to the UCEA Health and Safety Guidance for the placement of Higher Education students (2009). This guidance provides a risk-based approach to what is required for approving placements, preparing students for placement and supporting students in terms of their health and safety on placement both in the UK and overseas. This guidance is available on the University intranet.

12.9.4 The TSD+ Scheme

As part of its commitment to providing a quality student experience and to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing the employability of its graduates, the University is establishing the TSD+ Scheme to promote extra-curricular and co-curricular personal and skills development activities that lead to a range of key graduate attributes.

The TSD+ is a collaborative initiative between the University and the Students' Union and will promote an active programme of personal development for all students including volunteering, internships and work placements, part-time and vacation work and involvement in running clubs and societies. The University will seek to develop a Higher Education Achievement Report for all graduating students and establish a system for recording relevant TSD+ activities as part of this report – enabling students to successfully articulate their employability skills and achievements to potential employers or future investors.

12.9.5 Medical Services

On the Carmarthen campus, the University works collaboratively with St Peter's Surgery, in providing health care provision for our students. St Peter's Surgery offers dedicated appointments to students at the main surgery. Medical referrals should be directed to St Peter's Surgery or the student's own, preferred medical practice.

On the Lampeter campus, the University works collaboratively with the Taliesin surgery adjacent to the campus, where there is a dedicated student nurse available on weekdays.

At the Swansea campus, the University works collaboratively with the Brunswick Surgery and it is recommended that students who do not already have a GP in the local area should register with this practice.

On all campuses, where issues relate to emotional well-being, a student may be referred to the Counselling Service or the Mental Health Adviser in Student Services.

The University also has a number of staff trained in First Aid that can be contacted via the Main Reception on each campus.

In the case of an emergency, staff should phone the Emergency Services immediately on 999.

12.10 Interview Arrangements for Disabled Students

Students are encouraged to disclose any disability during the application process and throughout their time at University. With the students' explicit consent, disclosed information may be shared and used to determine reasonable adjustments and compensatory measures. Students who decline to share information should be made aware of the implications of not disclosing this information.

Students that have disclosed a disability (for example, on their UCAS form) are encouraged to contact Student Services and their School to discuss their support requirements.

The University may call applicants that have disclosed disabilities for interview with a member of the School, support liaison tutor and a representative(s) from Student Services, along with any other relevant staff, as early as possible, in order that support requirements can be identified. Where complex support requirements are identified, the student's case will be referred to senior Student Services staff prior to any decision regarding an offer being made.

Similarly, applicants declaring a disability prior to or during an Open Day event should also be encouraged to contact Student Services and their School to discuss their support requirements.

12.10.1 Applicants to Initial Teacher Training programmes

Where there are concerns regarding an applicant's health, he/she should be advised to contact his/her GP to seek an appointment to undergo a medical health check with an Occupational Health specialist. Any costs incurred should be borne by the applicant.

12.10.2 Competency standards for entry into a programme of Initial Teacher Education and Training

All students on programmes leading to Qualified Teacher Status should be made fully aware of the professional requirements of their programme of study in relation to competency standards for entry.

Providers of ITET are responsible for decisions that can make a significant difference to individuals' careers. It is important that these decisions should be fair, enabling those who have the potential to be good teachers to progress to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and redirecting those who are unsuited to teaching.

The Equality Act 2010 means that providers must make sure they are not discriminating against disabled candidates, in either their selection procedures, their requirements for progression and completion of training or their provision of services. They also need to make sure that everyone admitted to ITET has the physical, mental, intellectual and behavioural competencies inherent for successful teaching, and that any who fall below required levels of competency leave the programme. Finally, the providers have to judge whether those admitted have the potential to meet the Standards required for QTS and decide, at the end of their training, whether they can be recommended for the award.

12.11 Disability Support Procedures

12.11.1 Identification

All students are offered screening for Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) during induction. When a student discloses an existing disability identified by screening, or self-referrals at a later stage, the following steps will be taken:

- (i) The student will attend an initial interview with one of the Student Services team to establish the nature of the disability and to ascertain what support might be available or required.
- (ii) Student Services will require evidence of the disability. This could take the form of:
 - a report from a general practitioner or consultant in the case of a physical or psychological medical condition;
 - a recent PATOSS or AMBDA registered Educational Psychologist's or Specialist Assessor's report (no more than two years old) in the case of Specific Learning Difficulties.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD/Neurodiversity) – the British Dyslexia Association (2007) lists the following as being covered by the term SpLD: Dyslexia, Dysphasia, speech and language delay or deficit, Dyspraxia, motor and co-ordination difficulties, Attention Deficit Disorder with or without hyperactivity, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome.

- (iii) Where the student does not have a current diagnostic assessment or has not previously been assessed as having Specific Learning Difficulties, Student Services will arrange for an initial assessment. Should a full diagnostic assessment be recommended following these tests, the student should be made aware by the assessor of the reasons for the referral.
- (iv) The Student Services team will arrange for further assessment to be carried out by a specialist assessor in Specific Learning Difficulties if such action is advised. Should the student be experiencing difficulties that require urgent support an interim measure of specialist support may be put in place.
- (v) Upon receipt of the full diagnostic report, the student will be invited to meet with the Student Services team to go through the content of the report, including the diagnosis and recommendations. It is essential to ensure that the student understands the report and its implications. Feedback should be handled sensitively with a clear understanding of the issues involved. Students are invited to sign disclosure forms allowing Student Services to notify the relevant members of University staff of the diagnosis and recommendations. Unless the student's disability could put other students and staff at risk, the student may choose not to disclose their disability to anyone apart from Student Services. In such cases, the student will be required to sign a form confirming this decision.
- (vi) Provided disclosure has been agreed, Student Services will notify:
 - the relevant Academic School(s) of the student's disability and any reasonable adjustments / compensatory measures required;
 - the Learning Resources Centre / Library of the need to arrange extended loans where applicable;
 - the Estates and Facilities Department, Accommodation Officer, Information Systems and Hall Wardens where necessary.
- (vii) In cases where the student wishes to apply for DSA, a copy of their medical or other evidence, including the relevant application form will be sent to the appropriate Awards Authority together with a covering letter requesting that the student be given interim support until a full Needs Assessment is authorised and carried out.
- (viii) Initial emergency specialist support will be arranged for disabled students with complex needs where this is requested by the student.

- (ix) In the event that the Awarding Authority agrees to the provision of support, Student Services will arrange for the student to undergo a Needs Assessment to determine what reasonable adjustments / compensatory measures are required. Any further advice/recommendations from the Needs Assessment Report will be sent to the Academic School(s).
- (x) In the event that the Awarding Authority deems the student is not eligible for support, Student Services will refer the student for generic study skills support.

12.11.2 Needs Assessment Procedure

The Needs Assessment process is carried out in accordance with National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC) guidelines.

The following steps indicate the procedure that is applied after the student has had their Needs Assessment:

- (i) The student will receive a draft copy of the assessment report, which they must return to the Assessment Centre with their signed approval.
- (ii) A final copy of the Needs Assessment report will then be sent to Student Services and to the relevant Awarding Authority.
- (iii) A copy of the report, and details of reasonable adjustments, approved and signed by the student are sent to the School and other relevant University staff.
- (iv) Student Services should keep a record of meetings where decisions are made in relation to disabled students.
- (v) Student Services are responsible for identifying and recommending reasonable adjustments / compensatory measures for assessment purposes. In making such decisions, care must be taken to ensure that the disabled student is not treated less favourably.
- (vi) Information regarding reasonable adjustments / compensatory measures for examinations and assessment is forwarded to the Registry who will make the necessary arrangements.
- (vii) Any ICT support/tuition/training recommended in the assessment report will be arranged by Student Services, once the student has received his/her equipment from the awarding authority.
- (viii) Specialist learning support is arranged by Student Services staff.
- (ix) Liaison / advocacy with academic schools is also carried out by Student Services where necessary.

12.12 Policy on Recording of Oral or Visual Presentations by disabled students

It is the policy of the University to provide equal opportunities for all staff and students and therefore it is fully committed to the principles established in equality legislation. As a further demonstration of its commitment to equality of opportunity, the University has a policy on the Recording of Oral or Visual Presentations by disabled students. This policy is published on the University website (see Appendix SQ2).

12.13 Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave Policy

This policy provides advice and guidance to:

- Students who become pregnant during their studies, to their partners, and to those who have recently become parents (e.g. through adoption) on issues related to pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption leave.
- University staff who may have a role in advising students on these issues.

The policy covers any student who becomes pregnant during her studies, and students who are about to become fathers. It also covers any student who is the partner (including same sex partner) of someone who is pregnant and expects to be responsible for the child, and any person becoming a parent (e.g. through adoption) of a child.

This policy, along with advice, guidance and sources of information and support for students and staff is published on the University website (see Appendices SQ3 and SQ4).

12.14 Support for students from a care background

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David is committed to providing a high standard of care and support for its students. Students entering the University from a care background can be assured that the University will offer appropriate support and information. Each campus has a named contact for leavers who will be able to provide information on all aspects of the University's support provision. Specific support available to care leavers includes pre-entry guidance and support with the application and admissions process, peer mentor support, targeted financial support, regular meetings with the named contact for care leavers and help with arranging accommodation. The University has been awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark in recognition of its work in supporting care leavers.

12.15 Monitoring of Quality

Various units within Student Services monitor their performance by soliciting user feedback. In addition, the degree of satisfaction with Student Services is monitored by a range of methods including the use of questionnaires at institutional level and feedback postcards available at Student Services.