

Learning and Teaching Support Handbook

Chapter 1 - Provision of information by Faculties to students

[Procedures for Partner Institutions: All partner institutions delivering programmes validated by the University of Exeter are required to observe this code of good practice]

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The provision of information to students about the University in general, and their programmes of study in particular, is an essential prerequisite to accompany the teaching and learning process. The aim of such information should be to clarify what is expected of students while a member of the University and what the University itself can be expected to provide in support.
- 1.2 The University publishes a range of sources of information for students centrally such as the [Student Information](#) pages. These sources cannot attempt to include the detailed information that students need to ensure that they meet the requirements and opportunities presented by their particular programmes of study; this should be a responsibility at Faculty level.
- 1.3 Faculties are encouraged to use the web as a reference point for more detailed information about University processes and Faculty programmes, thus avoiding the need to replicate information already available (though see 2.3 below). This approach is particularly recommended in the case of core University documents to ensure that University and Faculty information is not at odds with each other. Faculties should also ensure that their handbooks do not conflict with the University guidance documentation.

2. Responsibilities of Faculties

- 2.1 Faculties (and partner institutions) are under an obligation to provide core information to their students about their programmes and the Faculties itself, and this can generally be most effectively disseminated in the form of a student handbook circulated annually.
- 2.2 A student handbook should be readily accessible to the students at whom it is directed. All handbooks should be freely available online. The online copy of the handbook should be seen as the definitive version, although they may also be available in printed form, distributed ideally at the start of the academic session.
- 2.3 Student handbooks are normally updated annually at the start of the academic year. Amendments during the course of the year to the contents, whether in paper or electronic form, are a natural consequence of enhancements and other developments in teaching and learning. In applying such amendments, Faculties should ensure that the extent to which they affect students is made clear to them and, if applicable to a programme stage or module already started, is not to their disadvantage.
- 2.4 All students, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, should receive a handbook (or its equivalent) appropriate to their programme of study (see also 3.2 below). Handbooks should be supplemented as necessary by programme-specific guides, for example in the case of Combined Honours, multi-disciplinary taught masters programmes and interdisciplinary programmes, responsibility for which should fall to the programme director(s). Separate handbooks are likely to be needed for postgraduate taught and/or research students.
- 2.5 This code emphasises a handbook as an effective and convenient medium for disseminating Faculty and programme information to students. It is also an effective tool in the context of internal and external audit processes. However, Faculties will find it more convenient to use other means, such as e-mail and notice boards, for distributing certain information, particularly when speed is of the essence. Faculties and their staff should have mechanisms in place to cover such matters as lecture, seminar and tutorial dates and locations, meetings and general changes to teaching arrangements. Particular care should be taken to ensure that students from outside a Faculty but taking a module within it are included where appropriate.

3. Faculty Handbook contents

3.1 The contents of student handbooks will vary in detail according to Faculty and programme requirements. However, the following lists indicate the minimum contents that Faculties must ensure students have readily available to them. The information may be in the form of web-links to University pages or other key Faculty documentation.

Taught Students:

- Contents.
- Introduction/Welcome - *A form of welcome is particularly user-friendly in the context of newly admitted students.*
- Staff list - *Include such information as office location, telephone and e-mail details and research interests.*
- Faculty organisation, facilities and accommodation plan - *Include a list of staff administrative responsibilities. Also make reference to the whereabouts of Faculty notice boards, letter racks, lockers, computer rooms and other facilities.*
- Faculty policies relating to ethics, dignity at work and disability - *Details here may include reference to the University's statements.*
- Student representation in the Faculty - *As part of the organisation description, indicate what representation is available to students within the Faculty committee structure. Include details of the Student/Staff Liaison Committee*
- Academic year details - *Year dates should be included, particularly where they vary between programmes.*
- Code of good teaching practice - *This core document should include reference to the responsibilities of both students and staff.*
- Academic programmes - *Structure; programme specifications; module listing; credit; module/option choice; enhanced modularity opportunities; the Modular Degree; placements; year abroad.*
- Teaching methods - *Describe the various teaching and learning methods used during the programme(s): lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, laboratory classes, practicals, field work, etc.*

- Assessment - *Assessment/marking criteria; examination conventions; penalties for late submission; disclosure of marks and feedback to students; arrangements for vivas; aegrotat awards; plagiarism/cheating; academic appeals.*
- Prizes.
- Academic and personal tutoring system - *The Faculty's arrangements for academic and personal tutorial support, including access to tutors and the mechanisms for changing tutor. Detail any cohort e-mail short codes.*
- Programme evaluation and review - *The Faculty's systems for reviewing modules and programmes, including the use of student questionnaires and other feedback mechanisms and the use made of such information.*
- Complaints - *Refer to the University's [student complaints procedure](#).*
- Illness/medical certification - *Interruptions of study, transfer of programme and withdrawal mechanisms.*
- Programme costs - *Details of fieldwork, laboratory and other compulsory programme costs falling on the students.*
- Professional accreditation matters - *Include any necessary information on how module choice may affect professional recognition of an award.*
- Other academic advice - *Citation/reference conventions; essay writing; laboratory reports; dissertations/projects.*
- Health and safety.
- Library facilities.
- IT facilities.
- Photocopying facilities.
- Useful websites.
- Careers - *The University's [Career Zone](#) and any sources of advice within the Faculty including vacation job opportunities.*
- Faculty societies.
- University support agencies - *Refer here to such agencies as the Study Zone/ ASK Academic Skills, the Students' Guild Advice Unit/ the Students' Union (FXU) Advice Service, Family Centre: Streatham Campus/Woodlane Nursery: near the Penryn Campus, Wellbeing Services, AccessAbility, Student Information Desk (SID).*
- Faculty social opportunities.

PGR students:

- Contents.
- Introduction/Welcome - *A form of welcome is particularly user-friendly in the context of newly admitted students.*
- Staff list - *Include such information as office location, telephone and e-mail details and research interests.*
- Faculty organisation, facilities and accommodation plan - *Include a list of staff administrative responsibilities. Also refer to the whereabouts of Faculty notice boards, letter racks, lockers, computer rooms and other facilities.*
- Arrangements for Induction.
- Faculty policies relating to ethics, dignity at work and disability - *Details here may include reference to the University's statements.*
Student representation in the Faculty: indicate what representation is available to students within the Faculty committee structure. Include details of the PGR Liaison Forum.
- Academic year details - *Year dates should be included, particularly where they vary between programmes.*
- Periods of study.
- The Faculty's arrangements supplementing the University's code of good practice for the supervision of research students.
- Supervisor and PGR Pastoral Tutor roles.
- MyPGR.
- Training: *Researcher Development Programme and other training opportunities*
- Employment of PG students: *including the Faculty's Code of Good Practice: Employment of Postgraduate Students.*
- Complaints - *Refer to the University's [student complaints procedure](#).*
- Illness/medical certification.
- Interruptions of study, transfer of programme (including upgrades) and withdrawal mechanisms.
- Entitlement to Annual leave.
- Citation/reference conventions; plagiarism/cheating/research misconduct.
- Submission of Theses/Dissertations.

- Open Access: including Open Research Exeter.
 - Health and safety.
 - Library facilities.
 - IT facilities.
 - Photocopying facilities.
 - Useful websites.
 - Careers - *The University's [Career Zone](#) and any sources of advice within the Faculty.*
 - Faculty societies.
 - University support agencies - *Refer here to such agencies as the Study Zone/ ASK Academic Skills, the Students' Guild Advice Unit/ the FXU Advice Service, Family Centre: Streatham Campus/Woodlane Nursery: near the Penryn Campus, Wellbeing Services, AccessAbility, Student Information Desk (SID).*
 - Faculty social opportunities.
- 3.2 It may be more advantageous for some Faculties to publish the equivalent of their student handbooks in more than one volume, such as a handbook for each programme or even stage of a programme. In such cases, students will need to be clear about the location of more general information that is not replicated between volumes.
- 3.3 In compiling their student handbooks, Faculties will need to consider presentation and tone of language. Ideally, they should be user-friendly to encourage student interest while carrying the authority necessary to ensure that responsibilities are clearly understood. There may be advantage in involving student input to the editing of handbooks to aid this process.