

Policy and process for students under the age of 18 years

Jess Winkler – Safeguarding Manager

June 2019

Contents

Introduction	page 3
Key principles	page 4
Process	page 6
Review of policy and process	page 8
Further assistance	page 8

Introduction

The University does not discriminate on any grounds, including age, against any applicant who has met the University's entry requirements for a programme of study. The University admits a small number of students each year who are under the age of 18 years on entry. Whilst in practice the majority of these will become eighteen before the end of the first year, a few will be 17 or younger for longer than that.

The University is an adult environment; students are expected to act as adults and to assume adult level of responsibility. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study independently alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Places are offered on the understanding that, where relevant, students will be able to adapt to living away from home and manage the practicalities that this involves. The University recognises that students with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments or additional support to do so. The University treats all students as independent, mature individuals and students who are under the age of 18 years will be treated in the same way.

However, the University acknowledges that anyone under the age of 18 is legally a child and recognises that students under the age of 18 may therefore have different needs in relation to their support and wellbeing.

Admission of such applicants therefore requires additional consideration in order that the University can ensure that it fulfils its obligations and meets any additional needs in relation to support and wellbeing. Any special arrangements may distinguish between those who are approaching their 18th birthday, and those who exceptionally will be 17 or under for most or all of their period of study at the University. A distinction may also be drawn between those who are aged between 16 and 18 years, and under 16s.

Key principles

The University has a duty of care for all its students and staff. This duty is enhanced for students who are minors.

The University will not act in loco parentis, and will not take on those responsibilities from the parent or guardian. The parent or guardian is required to accept this - and the other arrangements set out below - by signing the appropriate form before a student may be admitted to the University.

International students who are under the age of 18 (and British students whose parents live overseas) will require a guardian to be appointed within the UK, accessible to the University and the student should the need arise. Where international students do not have appropriate contacts in the UK to fulfil this role, guardianships accredited by [AEGIS](#) can be arranged.

The University recognises that not all UK students under the age of 18 have a parent or guardian, for instance some of those who are care leavers or estranged from their families may not. Where students have a personal advisor from their local council, the personal advisor may act as their guardian for the purposes of this policy. The University believes that all students should have equal access to higher education and that its own policies should not impede this. Therefore the University can support guardianships to be arranged in situations where there is no appropriate guardian.

Emergency contact details must be provided to the University before a student registers and these details must be kept up to date - this is the responsibility of the student.

Students who are under the age of 18 years and will be living in university-managed accommodation will be required to sign a legally binding contract with Accommodation Services, as this would be classified as a 'necessity' for their way of life. Special consideration will be given to the allocation of accommodation to students under the age of 18.

Programmes may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the University. The University cannot take additional responsibility for a student under 18 participating in those activities. Where these activities are not a formal part of the programme of study, it is the student's responsibility to inform the organiser of their age.

Where a student who is under 18 is required to undertake a placement as part of the programme of study, appropriate arrangements will be made with the workplace to safeguard the student and to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, (such as Health and Safety and Working Time Regulations).

It is illegal for alcohol to be sold to or bought by students who are under the age of 18. The University will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in licensed premises under its control, and requires the Students' Union to do the same, but expects students to abide by the law and cannot be expected to supervise individuals in this respect.

Students who are under the age of 18 are encouraged to join University or Students' Union clubs and societies, however they are not to hold office and it is the responsibility of the student not to take on such duties.

The University will not make any special arrangements for restricting access to particular internet sites for students who are under the age of 18. They will be expected to comply with the usual rules and regulations for the use of IT as all other students.

The University will make all reasonable effort to bring to the attention of members of staff that it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years of age (Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000).

Legally, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. The University, as a Higher Education Institution, is not subject to legal safeguarding duties but is committed to its ethical duty to protect children from abuse and neglect. The University will respond to any concerns that a student under 18 is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect in accordance with its [Safeguarding Policy](#).

It is the University's policy that, in accordance with data protection principles, it deals directly with students and not through a third party. This approach will apply equally to students who are under 18, and therefore all correspondence will be with them and not their parent/guardian.

Process

In accordance with age equality legislation, an applicant's age will not have a bearing on admission to the University except in circumstances where the particular programme of study e.g. professional, might not be suitable or possible to complete. The Admissions Office will liaise with appropriate faculty staff members about this.

1 Guidance about the arrangements and the University's requirements and expectations will be sent to the applicant and the parent or guardian during the admissions process.

2 A parent/guardian is to sign the agreement before an applicant is offered a place on a programme of study. Should a parent or guardian not wish to sign the agreement, the University reserves the right not to process the application further. Where any applicant

does not have a parent or guardian they should contact the Admissions department for guidance on arranging a formal guardian.

3 Accommodation Services will take the student's age into account in the allocation of accommodation and will consider whether any other arrangements need to be made. Accommodation Managers are to be informed of any under 18 students in the residences for which they are responsible.

4 The Admissions Office will notify Placement Management and the faculties (via the Faculty Business Managers) of any under 18s due to register as students, allowing sufficient time for necessary arrangements to be made.

5 The Faculty Business Managers will liaise with the faculties to make any appropriate special arrangements, which might include:

- identifying an individual who shall take particular responsibility in the faculty for the student(s); such as an Academic Personal Tutor
- signposting these individuals to the online safeguarding guidance documents and to the safeguarding contacts around the University
- encouraging the individual to schedule regular individual meetings with the student(s) and helping to provide additional support and advice if necessary
- maintaining links with academic staff to discuss any issues that arise.

6 Non-academic activities - a student is responsible for informing the organisers of non-academic activities in which they wish to participate that they are under the age of 18 years. In such cases the organiser will undertake a risk assessment and discuss with the student any particular concerns that arise, which may result in the student not being permitted to participate, or only with the express consent of the parent/guardian. The organiser will make any necessary special arrangements if required.

Review of policy and process

This policy and process will be formally reviewed every three years unless there are internal or legislative changes that necessitates earlier review.

Further assistance

Further information on this policy and procedure is available from:

[Jess Winkler](#), Safeguarding Manager