

UWE Charter 2010



UWE Charter

Introductory statement

A fulfilling student experience

Students are what UWE is all about and our student body is one of the most diverse in the country. This Charter, developed jointly by the University and the Students' Union, explains the key elements of the academic and other services that we are trying to provide for you whether you are considering becoming a student, applying for a course, currently studying with the University or are a former student of the University. The Charter also explains what the University expects of you - if we work together we can ensure that you gain maximum benefit from your time with us.

Student focus

We are committed to the quality and continuous improvement of the student experience. Our Charter represents a key aspect of our focus on students and an important tool in helping you to make the most of your time at University. As well as our aspiration to be the best we can be, the Charter sets out the framework of a partnership between students, academics and our professional services that is based on mutual respect in which individual rights, responsibilities and diverse needs are promoted. By all of us working within this framework, we hope that you will have the best possible experience both academically and socially and help us to improve our students' experience year by year.

Postgraduate research students will also need to refer to the University's Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes Code of Practice for information on expectation of service and responsibilities.

Equity, fairness, and inclusivity

UWE recognises the value of diversity and the contribution that every individual can make. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and students and enables them to derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their involvement in the life of the University, and this Charter articulates our intentions to do this. We will be proactive about ensuring people are treated fairly regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation.

Professor Steven West
Vice Chancellor

The UWE Charter is a 'live document' (www.uwe.ac.uk/charter), and the University is committed to listening to feedback on the Charter. Comments on the Charter can be sent via email to charter@uwe.ac.uk.

The Charter is not a legal document, and is not part of the formal contract that exists between the University and its staff and students. It does not affect your legal rights.

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1. Thinking of applying to study with UWE?

When you are applying to study a university course or programme you want to be sure that you make choices which will be right for you. We intend to provide you with clear, accurate and comprehensive information about our courses and the services and facilities which we offer. When you make an application, we aim to process this efficiently following our fair and inclusive admissions policy. We welcome applications from all students from any part of the world, with disabilities, wider experiences, non-traditional backgrounds and any group under-represented in higher education.

We intend to:

- Through our prospectus, web pages and other document/s, provide information about:
 - the full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, distance-learning, short courses, continuing professional development, executive and research programmes that we offer;
 - the aims, content and structure of individual courses and programmes;
 - academic, skills and, where relevant, professional registration requirements for individual courses;
 - clear guidance about how to apply for individual courses;
 - the expected fees and other costs of being a student, and financial support available;
 - likely additional costs or unusual requirements of specific courses (e.g. relating to work or study placements, field trips, materials, equipment, or IT skills);
 - the services and facilities which we offer to students;

- the most recent results of quality assessments of our taught courses and research (including Quality Assurance Agency, Research Assessment Exercise and other relevant professional bodies) as well as the results of relevant surveys of student satisfaction;
- Hold regular Open Days and events at which you will:
 - have the chance to visit our campuses;
 - learn about the services and facilities available to you on campus;
 - be able to speak to staff and students about courses and services;
- Take all reasonable steps to make you aware of any changes to our recruitment and admission processes or courses as soon as possible;
- Process your application efficiently, providing information about the stages of the process and the outcome;
- Process your application transparently and fairly in line with the Admissions Policy available on our website;
- Safeguard all your personal information in accordance with the appropriate Data Protection legislation;
- For prospective applicants who declare as disabled we will provide all information, recruitment and admissions materials to you in appropriate alternative formats on request. Before you visit the University, we will ask you for your access requirements and will meet these if we reasonably can;
- Contact all students who declare as disabled, and send information about additional funding and support. We may invite you to the University to discuss your support and access requirements on the course you have chosen, or we may contact you by other means to offer information and advice;
- For international students, we will provide information on: scholarships and bursaries where relevant; contact details of in-country agents to help with the application and visa process; in-country visits during application process to meet UWE representative.

We expect you to:

- Read the information that we provide about our courses, campuses, facilities and services in order to establish whether UWE offers what you are looking for;
- Provide full and accurate information promptly when completing your application, or if we ask you to, about:
 - yourself;
 - your address and contact details;
 - your residency and nationality status;
 - your previous study and qualifications;
 - your work experience;
 - your health;
 - any disability, mental health or chronic medical condition that you may have;
 - any criminal convictions that you may have;
 - any other matter which is relevant to your application;
- Take part in selection activities, such as interviews, if required for your preferred course;
- Ensure that you claim all statutory allowances to which you may be entitled such as bursaries or disabled student allowance;
- Tell us promptly if:
 - there is a change in your personal circumstances and / or information provided during the application process;
 - there is a change in your fee, visa or residency status;
 - you decide to change the course you wish to apply for;
 - you wish to withdraw or defer your application;
- Make arrangements to cover the financial costs of study and life as a student, for example tuition fees and living expenses.

2. Gaining a place with UWE

When you are offered a place to study on a UWE course, we want you to get off to a good start. There are some things that you will need to think about and do straight away, and we will try to explain to you clearly what these are.

We intend to:

- Provide timely and accurate information about the arrangements for your enrolment, registration, induction and orientation;
- Provide relevant information and guidance about any specific requirements including those relating to international students;
- Provide information about UWE living accommodation and how to apply for it;
- When requested, allocate University accommodation efficiently;
- Provide information about other types of accommodation available to you;
- Provide information about living as a student in Bristol.

We expect you to:

- Provide evidence that you meet all the requirements of the offer;
- Read, understand, and comply with the terms and conditions of your accommodation contract;
- Engage with the welcome information and requirements for the registration and induction programme;
- Let us know if you decide not to register as a student.

3. Arriving to study

When you start your course we will do our best to give you any help you need to settle into learning and living as a student. We need you to make use of the materials and guidance which we provide, and take responsibility for organising your time.

We intend to:

- Provide you with materials about your course at the start of your programme or module which will include:
 - information about relevant staff, and how to contact them;
 - the aims and learning outcomes of your course;
 - teaching and learning methods used on your course;
 - an indication of the amount of time you will need to commit to studying for your course ;
 - assessment criteria and methods used on your course;
 - information about the penalties for non submission of assessed work, and the consequences of failure to attend classes and assessment sessions;
 - minimum requirements for the completion of your course;
- Provide you with the 'UWE Diary and Info' and other materials (some of which are on-line) which will include:
 - practical information such as where to find things and how to get around;
 - the University's Academic Regulations and University Rules;
- Provide you with an appropriate induction onto your course, into the Faculty in which your course is based, into the use of the Library and IT services, and introductory information about the student support services;
- Provide international students with: information on the airport pick up service; an appropriate induction session providing orientation on moving to the UK.

We expect you to:

- Familiarise yourself with your responsibilities under the University's Academic Regulations and University Rules which you will be required to follow while you are a member of the University;
- Familiarise yourself with the requirements of your course, particularly in terms of:
 - the amount of time you may need to commit to studying each week;
 - the type of assessments you will be required to submit and when and how you will be expected to submit these;
- Follow our procedures for registering and paying your fees;
- Attend any induction sessions that are provided for you;
- Familiarise yourself with the means by which any information or changes to information will be communicated to you (e.g. via the UWE portal, UWE-email, pigeonholes or message boards) and check these locations regularly;
- Ask a relevant member of staff if you are not sure about something – do not rely on information provided by other students.

4. While you are a UWE student

During your time as a UWE student, we want you to succeed. We intend to provide you with high quality teaching and facilities, assessment and feedback opportunities so you'll know how you're getting on. We expect you to understand your obligations, attend scheduled activities, stay in touch with us, and of course, study hard.

We intend to:

- Provide you with a timetable for all your regularly scheduled activities e.g. lectures, seminars, laboratory and practical sessions. We will do our utmost to give you reasonable notice of any alterations;
- Provide you with a high quality of teaching and other learning opportunities;
- Provide a relevant, appropriate and regularly reviewed and developed curriculum;
- Provide you with regular opportunities to receive feedback on your progress;
- Provide appropriate modes of assessment within your programme of study;
- Ensure fairness in assessment procedures;
- Provide you with information about plagiarism and other assessment offences; what they are and how to avoid committing them;
- Provide opportunities for you to engage in activities such as volunteering to enhance your CV;
- Provide you with a high standard of library and IT facilities;
- Provide you with safe and appropriate space, suitably equipped for teaching, learning and research activities;
- Provide you with information, as appropriate, related to the health and safety of yourself and others;
- Provide you with resources and guidance to help develop academic skills and competences;
- Where appropriate, provide support for English Language learning;

- For international students, provide guidance on visa regulations and assistance on visa extensions, if required;
- Provide, where appropriate, information or opportunities to gain work experience through placements;
- Provide you with assistance in developing your employability;
- On successful completion of your studies, invite you to attend an award ceremony;
- Provide you with a reference on request, as appropriate;
- Where appropriate, award you a qualification and provide a certificate of credit.

We expect you to:

- Act as a responsible member of the university community both within and outside your place of study; respect and support other students, staff, members of the wider community and the good name of the institution;
- Comply with our academic and other regulations and procedures;
- Where relevant, observe the professional code of conduct relating to your course;
- Promptly complete all administrative requirements necessary to enable your studies, and inform us of any relevant changes in your personal circumstances;
- Pay all fees to the University when they are due each academic year, and not incur debt;
- If you are an international student, comply with the requirements of your visa;
- Attend all scheduled teaching and assessment activities as required, and arrive punctually;
- Prepare for and actively participate in all scheduled teaching and assessment activities;
- If you are an international student take opportunities to further develop English language competence where necessary;

- Engage in directed tasks and other learning activities, working with others collaboratively during and between sessions as appropriate;
- Submit all required or assessed pieces of work or progress reports in the specified way and by the specified time / date;
- Obtain and use the range of feedback provided on your academic progress;
- Reflect on your own learning or research activities, and contribution to learning and teaching processes in order to become a more effective learner and/or researcher;
- Take opportunities to develop your academic skills and competences, including understanding and applying the regulations on plagiarism and other assessment offences;
- When undertaking research activities, observe University ethics procedures and research conduct;
- Take responsibility for the health and safety of yourself and others, by acting upon matters requiring reporting or cooperation;
- Be aware of the University's policy on Intellectual Property Rights, and seek further advice when applicable;
- Contact us if you are experiencing problems or difficulties and let us try to assist you, particularly if you think you may wish to change your programme, suspend your studies or leave the University.

5. Student Support Services

It's not always easy being a student. Whether you are part-time, full-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, researcher, 'mature' or just left school, sometimes you need a helping hand or the chance to relax. We will do our best to provide a range of services to support you in your life and study while you're a UWE student. We need you to be aware of when you might want a little extra help, and to take advantage of the services we offer.

We intend to:

- Ensure high quality, professional, confidential and appropriate support services are available covering:
 - faculty-based advice and guidance;
 - student finance;
 - academic-related matters;
 - research study and researcher development;
 - matters relating to international students;
 - practical matters relating to student life such as accommodation;
 - a student accommodation service;
 - career development;
 - personal counselling;
 - practical, individual support to students with disabilities and mental health needs;
 - facilities for spiritual discussion and worship;

- Enable, assist and encourage the UWE Students' Union to provide:
 - An independent perspective on University life;
 - Student representation on academic matters;
 - Student representation on local and national issues;
 - Peer support through a democratically led organisation;
 - Employment opportunities through the Job Shop;
 - Opportunities to participate in sports and to join our sporting clubs;
 - Social, political and cultural societies and activities;
 - Independent information, advice and guidance about practical matters relating to student life through the Advice Centre.

We expect you to:

- Take advantage as necessary and appropriate of the support services that we offer, observing any rules relating to their use;
- Encourage and make other students aware of support services at times of need;
- Consider becoming involved in extra curricular activities that will enhance your student experience.

6. How you can help us to keep improving UWE

We have a commitment to listen to and learn from the student community.

We will regularly make time to listen to student views about how we could improve your experience. You can help us by making the effort to share your ideas and comments with us.

We intend to:

- Regularly seek the views of students;
- Reflect on your feedback;
- Make improvements to our activities and facilities based on the feedback we receive from you;
- Do our utmost to communicate changes made in response to your feedback.

We expect you to:

- Engage and participate when we provide opportunities for feedback;
- Make use of the Student Representatives system;
- Fill in feedback questionnaires about each course;
- *Complete the PGR annual progress report.*

7. What if things go wrong?

We hope that you'll have no serious problems while you're with us.

Unfortunately sometimes things do go wrong. We will do our best to make sure that we have fair, transparent and reliable processes in place for resolving difficulties that arise and providing additional support where appropriate. You need to let us know as soon as an issue comes up so that we can help to resolve it.

We intend to:

- Provide a team of Student Advisers across the University to give advice and support, and seek to resolve with you any problems that arise. They may refer you to an appropriate service for further guidance;
- Provide procedures (through the University's Academic Regulations) to ensure that you are not unduly disadvantaged by unforeseen circumstances that arise during your study as a UWE student;
- Publish complaints procedures which explain what you should do if you have a complaint relating to your study or status as a UWE student which cannot be resolved informally;
- Should we receive a complaint from you, attempt to resolve the problem as quickly and as far as possible to your satisfaction and fulfil our obligations under the Complaints Procedure.

We expect you to:

- Seek guidance from an appropriate source as soon as there is a problem in order to maximise the chance that we can resolve it to your satisfaction;
- Follow the complaints procedure and any associated documents and guidance in order to help us handle your complaint as quickly and effectively as possible.

8. After you finish your studies

We hope that you have a wonderful time as a UWE student and that your relationship with us is one that you value while you are here and after you leave. We would like you to continue your relationship with us after you have finished your studies. If you keep us informed of your current address, we can let you know about developments at the University and how you can become involved again.

We intend to:

- Provide:
 - Automatic membership of our Alumni Association;
 - Our Alumni e-newsletters, designed to keep former students in touch with all things UWE;
 - Free access to the Careers Service for three years after graduation;
 - Information on further study opportunities at UWE;
 - Discounted library membership rate and reduced borrowing charges;
 - Discounted membership rates when you join the fitness suite in our Centre for Sport;
 - Help with organising a reunion. We are happy to send out invitations on your behalf to those alumni whose contact details we have;
- Support Business Start-ups through:
 - The UWE Ideas Factory and access to an Enterprise Adviser to discuss starting a business and developing enterprise skills;
 - UWE's Business Incubators to help you start or grow a business.

We expect you to:

- Help us by completing the destination of leavers from HE survey, which takes place in the January/February following your graduation (undergraduate level);
- Settle any outstanding debts to the University before you graduate;
- Consider supporting UWE through sharing your experiences of work with current students, engaging with the academic life of the university, or making donations to the university;
- Consider opportunities for lifelong learning through your continuing link with UWE, such as through our postgraduate provision and/or Continuing Professional Development programmes;
- As a research student, consider continual involvement in the research and knowledge exchange activities or your Research Centre, Institute or Department.