

UWE Cares Service Policy 2017/18

Money Advice and Funds Service.

Contents

Contents.....	2
Vision Statement.....	3
Objectives	3
1.0 Policy	4
Glossary	8

Vision Statement

The purpose of the UWE Cares scheme is to provide a consistent level of pastoral and financial support for care leavers, estranged students and carers. The overall aim is to level out the financial and academic disadvantage that this cohort of students face. We hope to encourage applications from this group of students, to support them through their time at UWE and to contribute towards the successful outcomes of the three groups of students.

The UWE Cares Scheme meets the recommendations for support for care leavers as published in the NNECL Supporting Care Leavers in HE and FE report
<http://nnecl.org/resources/nnecl-supporting-care-leavers-in>

The University has outlined its support for estranged students as part of the Stand Alone Pledge published here <http://www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk/champion-institutions/institutions/19-south-west/37-university-of-west-of-england>

Changes to the Scheme This scheme was initially developed for academic year 2016/17 and focused support for Care Leavers.

- The scheme expanded in 2016/17 academic year and now encompasses estranged students and carers as well.
- The name has changed from Transition Support Scheme to UWE Cares in January 2017.

Objectives

The objectives of the UWE Cares Scheme are to:

- Provide each eligible, identified student with an enhanced UWE Bursary
- Provide a named contact within the service and coordinate with other services across UWE to provide tailored support to each student.
- To monitor the outcomes of each new cohort of students, and benchmark against the general undergraduate population, and annually review the service provision.
- Provide a fair and transparent process for supporting care leavers, estranged students and carers.
- Satisfy the requirements of the UWE Access Agreement

1.0 Policy

This policy covers the UWE Cares Scheme for new students starting in the 2017/18 academic year as well as existing students under what was formerly referred to as the Transition Support Scheme.

1.1 Definitions

Care Leavers:

Someone who has been in care for 3 months between the ages of 11 to 16 **and/or** lived in supported housing from the ages of 16 to 18 **and** has not returned to live with their parents since.

There is no age limit.

Students can identify their care leavers status on their UCAS application form.

Estranged Students:

Students will be considered to be estranged if they have not had verbal or written contact with both of their biological or adoptive parent(s) for a significant period of time and this is not going to change.

A significant period is usually considered to be twelve months or longer prior to the start of the course.

Students must be under the age of 25 on the first day of their course.

Carers

A student will be considered to be a carer if they provide regular and significant daily care to a disabled or ill family member. It is expected that they will be living at the same address as the person to whom they provide care at the date of their application to UCAS.

Students will still qualify for this support even if they move away from home to study at UWE Bristol.

The person that is cared for must receive one of the following benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Council Tax Reduction or Housing Benefit that includes a disability premium as part of the assessment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Tax Credits that include a disability element

1.2 Eligibility

To qualify for the UWE Cares Scheme students must:

- Be entering onto the first year of an undergraduate course at UWE for the first time.
- Be entitled to apply for and have received the full tuition fee loan from Student Finance England.
- Have met the requirements of registration and have made arrangements to pay their tuition fees.
- Meet the age restrictions as per 1.2
- Provide the required evidence to establish their status as either a care leaver, an estranged student or a carer, as per 1.3

Exclusions:

Students registered on any postgraduate, distance learning or CPD courses. International and EU students will also be ineligible for the scheme.

1.3 Evidence

Students must provide evidence to establish that they meet the criteria to be considered as either a care leaver, an estranged student or a carer. If this evidence cannot be supplied then the student will not qualify for the outlined support under the UWE Cares Scheme.

The university will contact all eligible applicants during the summer and start of term to request evidence.

Care Leavers:

Students will qualify (whatever their age at the start of their course) if they have been in care for 3 months between the ages of 11 to 16 **and/or** have lived in supported housing from the ages of 16 to 18 **and** have not returned to live with their parents since. Applicants will be asked for evidence from a third party (such as a Social Worker) that confirms the above status, including confirmation that the applicant has not returned to live with parents.

This category does not include applicants who have been the subject of a residence order.

Estranged Students:

Students will qualify if they are permanently estranged from their parents (i.e. have had no contact with them) and that this has lasted for at least a year and they are under 25 years of age on 1 September 2017.

Usually, applicants must be assessed by Student Finance England as estranged.

Estranged applicants must provide a copy of the evidence that they used to apply to SFE for their assessment as an independent applicant. This will include a copy of the supporting letters from a third party e.g. teacher, GP etc.

Carers

Students will qualify if they can provide an award notice for the qualifying benefit (dated 2017) for the person that the applicant provides care for. This will need to show the same address as that held by UWE on application **and** evidence that the applicant is providing regular and ongoing daily care. This should be confirmation from a third party such as GP, teacher, carers network or similar organisation.

If an applicant is unable to provide the above evidence, then they will need to provide a letter from their relative confirming that the applicant is providing care plus a letter from the applicant that details the care provided.

Qualifying benefits

- Attendance Allowance
- Council Tax Reduction or Housing Benefit that includes a disability premium as part of the assessment
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Tax Credits that include a disability element

Evidence must be submitted for consideration by the UWE Cares Team. If the incorrect evidence is supplied or it does not sufficiently outline the student's status then the student will be asked for more evidence. If further evidence is not received or does not sufficiently establish the student's eligibility then the UWE Cares Team reserves the right to reject the student's application on the basis of insufficient evidence.

1.4 Right of Appeal

It is UWE's responsibility to operate a transparent and fair process for allocation of support for care leavers, estranged students and carers. Should a student be dissatisfied with the decision regarding the evidence they have supplied (see 1.3) they will have the right to appeal.

Appeals must be made by the applicant by email. Parents, friends or family members cannot appeal on behalf of an applicant unless the applicant has provided explicit consent in writing (by email). Appeals need to be made to the Head of Money Advice and Funds Service (MAFS). When considering an appeal, we check that the application was processed correctly and consider any additional information or documents that are provided in support of the case. It is not possible to allocate support on appeal where the institutional eligibility criteria have not been met.

We aim to respond to appeals within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

Appeals must be made by email to UWE.Cares@uwe.ac.uk

1.5 The UWE Cares Package of Support

Once eligibility and evidence has been established, each student will be entitled to the following support package for the duration of their time at UWE:

Specialist Support:

- A team of dedicated advisers within the Money Advice and Funds Service (MAFS) to act as a first point of contact to coordinate student support from the point of application through to graduation.
- A phone call or email at least once a term to check in with students.
- Monitoring of students' academic progress and identification of individual specific support needs.
- Termly meeting of The UWE Cares Success Monitoring Group to monitor student's progress and review service provision.
- A dedicated Disability Adviser
- A dedicated Careers Coach
- Support with study skills from dedicated members of library staff
- A Peer Assisted Learning scheme

Financial Support:

- A £2,000 bursary paid in the first year of study, £1,000 paid in subsequent years. More details of the UWE Bursary Scheme are available here <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/feesandfunding/fundingandscholarships/uwebursary2015/whatistheuwebursary.aspx>
- Access to Money Advisers for specialist funding advice (face to face, email or over the phone) and support with funding applications.
- Regular financial health checks from a Money Advice Worker to support budgeting and money management.
- A graduation bursary of £500 to support with the cost of graduation

Accommodation Guarantee:

- Priority allocation to UWE Bristol accommodation for the whole of a student's course, not just the first year.
- Payment of an accommodation deposit, if required
- A guarantee of UWE accommodation for 365 days for each year of study.
- The University will act as a guarantor or support with the cost of an external guarantor scheme for care leavers and estranged students
- Chance to apply for the Unite Scholarship to cover the cost of 3 years of accommodation in Unite Students Accommodation

Additional

- An event for these three groups of students before the start of the course to ease the transition into university life.
- A welcome event during the start of term to meet students and promote the support on offer.
- Dedicated [Society ran by the Students Union](#) to encourage support for and to promote the understanding of these three groups of students.

Glossary

- **MAFS:** Money Advice and Funds Service.
- **UWE:** The University of the West of England.
- **UWE Access Agreement:** UWE will make an annual commitment of £10.5 million to reach out and support applicants who despite obtaining the qualifications are still missing out on higher education because of their background- check this for 17/18
- **NNECL:** The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
- **Stand Alone:** Charity Supporting people experiencing estrangement from their families
- **UCAS:** Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

- **CPD:** Continued Professional Development
- **EU:** European Union