



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT CHARTER





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This Charter will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff and student representatives. If you have any comments on this Charter, please contact the Head of the International Office.



Introduction

This Charter sets out the standards of service which the University aims to provide to international students whether you are considering becoming an international student, applying for a course, currently studying with the University or are a former international student of the University. For the purposes of this Charter an international student is a student who normally resides outside of the British Isles and who is studying at one of the University's four campuses. (A separate charter will be developed for e-learning students). The University is committed to aiming for the highest quality possible and this Charter is one way of outlining that commitment to you. This Charter should be read in conjunction with other University of Ulster Charters, and in particular the University's Student Charter.

What this Charter does

- Most of the rights included in this Charter have been developed as a means of ensuring that we achieve and maintain the highest standards of provision. This is a statement of intent and is not a legal document and there may be occasions when the University or students are prevented or delayed from meeting the expectations outlined in this Charter through circumstances or delays beyond their control.
- This Charter also sets out what we expect of you. The quality of the service that we believe you are entitled to expect is, therefore, balanced with responsibilities placed on you as a student: both are intended to ensure that you gain maximum benefit from your time with us.

The University aims to provide equality of opportunity for all regardless of gender, marital status, religious belief, political belief, race, ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or responsibility for dependants. We expect that you will help to create and maintain an environment which encourages equality of treatment and is free from harassment and discrimination.

Measuring our performance

We continually measure the effectiveness of our service(s) through questionnaires on English Language provision and Orientation Programmes. In addition, in drawing up this charter, we consulted with International Students, the Students' Union, Student Support, Residential Services, Research Office, Faculties, Academic Registry, Alumni Relations, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and staff in the International Office/Centre for English Language Teaching on key areas of our service that are of greatest importance to students. As a result four key performance indicators were developed and these are included in the relevant section of this charter. Our performance will be continually measured against these indicators. Responses made to student enquiries and applications received are recorded and reviewed annually. The appropriateness of our English language support is monitored through student feedback and through a system of accreditation monitored by the British Council. The key performance indicators included in this charter are:

1. Responses to enquiries from prospective international students.
2. Timely consideration of applications from prospective international students.
3. Relevance of Orientation Programmes. We aim to have student feedback that indicates a minimum of

70% of students to be either satisfied or highly satisfied with the Programme.

4. Appropriateness of English Language provision. We aim to have student feedback that indicates a minimum of 70% of students to be either satisfied or highly satisfied with the level of English language provision.

Information on the outcomes of these performance indicators is available from the International Office and a statement on each of the performance indicators is placed annually on the International Office website (www.ulster.ac.uk/international)

Consultation

Five key areas were identified for inclusion in the charter – international enquiries, international admissions, English Language provision, international student support and international alumni. Initial discussions on each of the areas were held at a meeting of all staff in the International Office/Centre for English Language Teaching. This was followed up by individual meetings with a wide range of students and staff within the University including an international student focus group. The International Office/Centre for English Language Teaching will continue to have regular team meetings and include an annual periodic review of this charter in March/April each year. Further student focus groups will be held periodically. There will be ongoing consultation with Faculties and Departments and further opportunities for discussion will arise through meetings of the Student Support Committee and the University's three Steering Groups that oversee international activities.

Students of other Institutions studying for qualifications awarded by the University of Ulster

The University is the awarding body for a number of courses delivered by other institutions. In recognition of the variety of facilities and methods of provision available at other Institutions, the University does not require partner institutions to implement this Charter.

If you are considering becoming an international student

We hope that you will find that the University of Ulster is the right place for you. To help you make the appropriate informed decisions for study with the University, we will provide you with information about study opportunities, equivalencies of your academic study, the quality of our provision, the costs of study, immigration regulations and the facilities available to you. We will endeavour to ensure that all information is clear, accurate and timely at the point at which it is produced.

You have the right to expect from the University:

- the provision of detailed information in English on full-time taught courses and research opportunities;
- the provision of information on general entry requirements and advice on how your academic qualifications equate to these, from staff experienced in working with enquiries from prospective international students;
- information on tuition fees and other costs, including residential fees and what is covered by these, associated with your attendance at the University;
- that, if appropriate, you will receive information on the University's Pre-sessional English Language for Academic Study course;
- that we will take reasonable steps to keep you informed of course developments;
- the provision of clear information on the services and facilities available to you at each campus;
- that 90% of all enquiries about taught courses will be responded to within seven working days of receipt by

- the International Office; and
- that 90% of all enquiries about research programmes will be responded to within seven working days of receipt by the Research Office.

What we expect of you:

- that you will present information about your academic qualifications and relevant work experience clearly and accurately;
- that you will advise us if you have any special needs; and
- that you will make every effort to ensure that you use the information and sources of advice available to you to make an informed choice of course.

www.ulster.ac.uk/international/prospective

Applications from prospective international students

In considering an application from a prospective international student the primary consideration is your ability to meet the academic criteria for a course and that no candidate should be excluded from entry to a course by reason of religious belief, political opinion, race, ethnic origin, gender or race. We will also provide appropriate support for international students with disabilities and aim to equalise your opportunities by making reasonable adjustments. Other factors such as work experience may also be taken into account when reaching a decision. Prospective international students must also meet the specified English Language requirements for admission.

You have the right to expect from the University:

- that your application will be considered fairly, efficiently and by staff who are experienced and knowledgeable about international education systems and academic qualifications;
- for taught courses that 90% of applications will be considered within 28 working days of receipt by the International Office;
- for research programmes the Research Office will acknowledge receipt of your application within seven working days;
- that we will contact you to invite you to discuss any special requirements if you have advised us that you have a disability, mental health concern or chronic medical condition which requires specific adaptations to be made to ease your admission to a course at the University;
- that in offering you a place on a course at the

- University you will be provided with a letter of offer in the accepted format to assist you with your application for entry to the UK via the British Embassy/British High Commission in your home country;
- that Study Abroad and Exchange, including SOCRATES –ERASMUS, students note that we cannot always guarantee that your first choice modules will be available;
- that we will provide you with information on living and studying in Northern Ireland and at the University including the location of campuses, the 'meet and greet' service, and the dates of orientation programmes;
- that prospective international students will be guaranteed University managed residential accommodation, in a single room, if they meet the deadlines for application for accommodation (1 August for semester one entry and 30 November for semester two entry); and
- that we will provide you with details about how to find private accommodation if you wish.

What we expect of you:

- that unless restricted by disability that you will personally complete the application form for admission and provide complete and accurate information about your academic qualifications, including English Language ability, work experience, special needs, and financial sponsorship, and that you will provide any additional information required of you within a given timeframe or inform the University of any relevant changes in your circumstance. You will be required to provide original documentation to confirm your academic qualifications at the time of registration;

- that you declare whether or not you have criminal convictions;
- that you provide full and accurate information relating to your health if required to do so by the professional entry criteria of a particular course;
- that you will normally submit your application form for a taught course within the published deadlines for application;
- that you will pay the accommodation booking fee in a timely manner to reserve your place in University accommodation;
- that you will honour the contractual obligation with the University Accommodation Office; and
- that you will advise the University if you subsequently decide to withdraw your application;

www.ulster.ac.uk/international/prospective/



English Language provision for international students whose first language is not English

In recognition of the importance of English Language support the University offers programmes on a pre- and in-sessional basis that are specially designed for international students.

You have the right to expect from the University:

- English Language provision that meets the needs of international students;
- teaching by academic staff who are qualified Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages;
- a pre-sessional English language programme for students at a specified level of ability that will prepare you for your chosen course of study; and
- a range of skills workshops that cover a number of aspects of the English Language.

What we expect of you:

- that you will provide complete and accurate information about your English Language qualifications prior to admission to the University; and
- that you will attend those English Language classes that you have enrolled for and inform us if you are withdrawing from any class.

www.ulster.ac.uk/celt/



Support for international students

The University recognises the transition international students need to make when they live and study in another country. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible and to ensure that appropriate support is available throughout your course of study.

You have the right to expect from the University:

- that staff will be courteous, prompt, professional and efficient in their dealings with you;
- that you will receive advice on the 'meet and greet' service that is offered on specific days to international students arriving in Northern Ireland for the first time;
- that you will have the opportunity to participate in a formal or informal orientation programme that will introduce you to your campus and the local area;
- that you will have access to relevant health, counselling and welfare advice;
- that you will receive advice about your immigration status within the experience of those staff designated Immigration Advisors within the International Office; and
- that a Studies Adviser will be allocated to discuss your individual academic studies with you.

What we expect of you:

- that you will be courteous, prompt, efficient and behave in a professional manner in your dealings with staff;

- that you will allow adequate time prior to the start of your course to apply for your visa or entry clearance to the UK;
- that you will advise the University in advance of your arrival date so that we may ensure that your accommodation is available for you;
- that you will register with the local police (PSNI) if required to do so;
- that you will feel able to raise any matter of concern that you might have with the appropriate member of staff at the University or with an officer of the Students' Union.

Websites:

<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/international>

<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation/>

<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/studentssupport/counsellingguide/index.html>

<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/>

<http://www.befrienders.org>

International Alumni

The University values its relationship with international alumni and we hope that you will continue your relationship with us after you leave the University. If you wish to do so, please keep us informed of your current address and we will let you know about significant developments at the University and how you can become involved again or meet up with old friends.

You have the right to expect from the University:

- provision of automatic membership of the Alumni association;
- that overseas Alumni Associations are encouraged and appropriate guidance is available from the Development and Alumni Relations Office to support activities such as reunions and branch meetings.

We would welcome:

- that you keep the University advised of any change in your contact address.

www.ulster.ac.uk/alumni



How you can be involved

A wide range of methods are used to find out from students how satisfied they are with the service we are providing, any difficulties they are having and what improvements can be made. Your contribution to this process is invaluable and you are encouraged to contribute whenever you feel able.

All Students enjoy free and automatic membership of the University of Ulster Students' Union. The Union is active in all matters of student welfare and represents students within the University and externally.

<http://www.uusu.org/main/>



What if things go wrong?

We hope you will find little to complain about our services but if you do bring concerns to our attention you can be sure that they will be treated seriously and that every effort will be made to resolve them.

If you do have a complaint in connection with the key performance indicators it should be addressed to the Head of the International Office in the first instance. The Head of the International Office will endeavour to raise your complaint with the relevant member of staff or department.

Complaints procedure

The University also has a student complaints procedure for dealing with most complaints about any aspect of the academic or other services provided by the University. There are a number of types of complaint which are not dealt with under this procedure, such as where the complaint relates to academic decisions or to sexual, racial or religious harassment or discrimination, for which separate procedures exist. Details of all procedures are outlined within the student complaints leaflet. Copies of the Student Complaints leaflet are available from University Libraries, Student Support Offices, the Students' Union or from the University website. If you would like advice on the University's procedures, you should contact the Student Complaints Liaison Officer. The Students' Union can also assist with providing advice and support to students.

No student will be disadvantaged because he or she has made a complaint in good faith.

Disciplinary procedures for students

In addition, you should note that there are disciplinary procedures for students who break University regulations or fail to comply with instructions regarding conduct. Details are provided in the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations.

Contacts

Students' Union

Offices at each campus

Info@uusuu.org
+44 (0)28 7032 4373
www.uusu.org

Accommodation

Accommodation Office at relevant campus

Belfast & Jordanstown: +44(0)28 9036 6941

Coleraine: +44(0)28 7034 4164

Magee: +44(0)28 7137 5233

www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation

International Office/Centre for English Language Teaching

International Offices at

Jordanstown, Coleraine & Magee +44 (0)28 7032 4991

www.ulster.ac.uk/international_students

Careers Service

Careers offices on each campus

Careers@ulster.ac.uk
<http://careers.ulster.ac.uk>

Student Support

Student Support offices on each campus +44(0)28 7032 4397

www.ulster.ac.uk/studentssupport

IT User Services

ITUS Helpdesk

+44(0)28 9036 6777
helpdesk@ulster.ac.uk
www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus

Library

24 hour information line

+44(0)28 9036 8530
www.ulster.ac.uk/library

Alumni Office

Alumni Relations Manager
University of Ulster
Shore Road
Jordanstown Newtownabbey
Co Antrim
BT37 0QB

+44 (0)28 9036 8350
www.ulster.ac.uk/alumni

Student Complaints

The Student Complaints Liaison Officer
University House
University of Ulster
Cromore Road
Coleraine
BT52 1SA

+44 (0)28 7032 4991
www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/complaints

Useful Information

The University has a wide range of information available to help you. You can access most of this information from the University's website: www.ulster.ac.uk or our staff will be happy to help you.

DOCUMENT

University Student Handbook

Research Studies Handbook

Handbook for International Students

Counselling and Guidance Booklets

- About the Counselling Service
- What you need to Know before your First Appointment
- Protecting Yourself Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault
- Understanding Depression
- Settling into University
- Mature Students
- Supporting dyslexia
- The Counselling and Guidance Service – Resource Guide for Academic Staff
- Disability Matters – A Guide for Students and Applicants
- Letting us know about disabilities
- Information on Financial Support for Students

Student Complaints Leaflet

Guide to Library Services

Guide to IT User Services

Careers Service: Gateway Series

Equality Scheme







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www.ulster.ac.uk/studentcharter