

UWS Student Carers Statement

Version - v3 – February 2025

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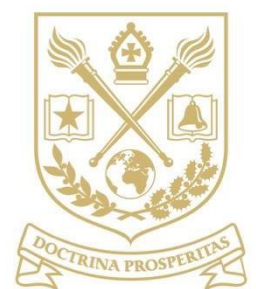
Procedure Owner – Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Success)

Parent Policy Statement – Learning, Teaching and Student Success Policy Statement

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Changes and Reason for Changes – Alignment with Senate Regulatory Framework Style Guide and updated links.



1. Introduction

The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) is committed to supporting Student Carers both pre-entry and during their studies.

A Carer is defined by the Carers Trust as:

“anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.”

This definition does not include a student caring for their child/children.

2. Statement of Intent

The UWS Student Carers Statement outlines the supporting structures and commitments to Student Carers both pre-entry and during their studies.

UWS is an inclusive university committed to ensuring that every student gets the most out of their university experience, regardless of their personal circumstances or background. To meet this commitment, the University has a wide range of support services to ensure that all students fulfil their potential, achieve their goals and enjoy their time at UWS.

UWS has a strong tradition of working with Student Carer applicants and students, and this commitment is embedded in all provision. This is a strategic priority for UWS and with partnership working, both internally and externally with other organisations, ensures the provision of information, advice and guidance to support all Student Carers to have a positive experience at UWS from pre-entry and beyond graduation.

The support for Student Carers is guided by the UWS Cares Working Group.

3. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code

The Student Carers Statement reflects the UWS commitment expressed within the [UWS Equality Diversity and Human Rights Code](#):

“The University of the West of Scotland’s (UWS) purpose is to change lives, transform communities and encourage enterprise through outstanding, distinctive and progressive higher education. UWS values equality and diversity. We strive to create an inclusive culture which celebrates difference and unlocks the talent in our staff and students.

UWS aims to be a provider of choice for students and business and believes that embedding equality, diversity and human rights in our organisation is integral to achieving this aim.

UWS is committed to advancing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of fairness, dignity and respect.”

4. UWS Cares Working Group

The Student Carers Statement and supporting action plan are overseen by the UWS Cares Working Group. This comprises a representative group of staff from across professional services and the Students' Union, including those in key applicant and student-facing roles, and students with caring experiences.

The UWS Cares Working Group meets twice yearly to review the UWS Carers Action Plan and discuss support for Student Carers at UWS. The Group is closely aligned with work to enhance the learning opportunities and experience for care experienced students and estranged students.

Student Carer Annual Action Plan

The UWS Cares Working Group oversees an annual action plan which is principle-driven and sets out detailed actions to be undertaken to:

- Identify
- Support
- Report

Actions and SMART targets are agreed annually and reviewed twice yearly, with clear tasks, responsibilities and deadlines recorded.

5. Support for Admission to Study at UWS

Contextualised Admissions

The UWS approach to admissions is outlined in the [UWS Admissions Procedure](#).

Contextualised admission is embedded within the core ethos of the University of the West of Scotland.

Student carers are included in the contextual approach to admissions:

“To attract and retain students (from a wide and diverse community) who have the potential to complete their programme of study successfully and benefit from the experience, UWS identifies additional means of assessing potential to demonstrate an ability to meet selection criteria.”

In practice, contextualised admission aids the progression of learners into higher education from the most deprived backgrounds through UWS entry thresholds that separate standard entrance requirements and minimum academic standards necessary to successfully complete a degree programme.

The University has standard entrance requirements and minimum entry requirements for applicants who are care experienced, carers or estranged; who have participated in Top-Up, Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), Focus on College or University Study (FOCUS) West or Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), have government-recognised asylum or refugee status and those from a SIMD20/SIMD40 postcode.

Recognition of Prior Learning

UWS receives applications from a diverse group of applicants, including those without the standard entrance or minimum entry requirements. For applicants without formal qualifications, the [Admissions Procedure](#) supports applications to study at degree level based on experience knowledge and skills, reflective of broader life experience through

Recognition of Prior Learning. The [Recognition of Prior Learning Handbook](#) outlines two ways in which prior learning is recognised to support entry to UWS: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

Pre-entry Support

Applicants with declared caring responsibilities receive the following support pre-entry:

- Dedicated, named contact for carers from pre-admission and throughout the student journey at UWS
- A dedicated email account for carers to contact: WeCare@uws.ac.uk
- One-to-one tailored support and advice sessions
- Assistance with UCAS or SAAS application
- Advice about student funding and managing your money during your studies

6. Declaring and Confirming Carer Status

Students can now declare their carer status on their UCAS Application, and support is available on the UCAS site and on the UWS website: How can UWS support me?

To best support students, the UWS enrolment process provides opportunity to self-declare carer status.

The self-declaration is supported by the definition of a ‘carer’. The explanatory text seeks to reduce concern over declaring carer status by making explicit:

“At UWS we provide a variety of support to Student Carers, if a student informs us that they fit into this category we will be in touch to outline support available.

Students are asked to revalidate this information annually through the registration process. A student can also declare a student carer status in-year, by contacting the dedicated student contacts (WeCare@uws.ac.uk).”

7. Support Arrangements for UWS Student Carers

UWS provides one-to-one support to enable student carers to access and succeed at university. The UWS We Care Team is a consistent point of contact for Student Carers from pre-entry, through the student journey, and as graduates.

The We Care team seeks to provide support or signposting for student carers including:

- Advice about student funding and managing your money during your studies, including applications for discretionary funding
- Access to discretionary and childcare funds
- Access to counselling to support emotional wellbeing and development
- Access to Silver Cloud, an interactive online tool to help you manage worry, understand your feelings and better deal with any challenging thoughts
- Help developing study skills to prepare for degree level study
- 365 days accommodation
- Access to the Careers Service during and after your studies
- Changes to study arrangements such as authorised interruption

The We Care Team is accessible at WeCare@uws.ac.uk

Where students are struggling with the time commitment of University or their caring responsibilities consideration will be given to changing the mode of study where possible, for example from full-time to part-time, or through a temporary break in studies.

The We Care Team supports Student Carers through this process, recognising that these decisions can have significant financial considerations, are not available to all students (for example international students) and are not available for all programmes.

8. Recognition

The UWS Student Carers Statement has been developed with the benefit of identifying good practice from across the Scottish HE sector and has benefitted from resources collated by the Scottish Carers Trust and effective institutional policies implemented, notably, at the universities of Stirling, Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian.