



University  
Centre  
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

# Student Handbook

For students studying on a Higher Education programme delivered at University Centre Somerset at  
Taunton, Bridgwater or Cannington Campuses

The information provided in this handbook is correct at the time of publication.

May 2024

Please note: If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the HE Team on  
[HE@btc.ac.uk](mailto:HE@btc.ac.uk)

## Contents

<b>1. Welcome and introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Academic calendar .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. University Centre Somerset Contacts .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Programme Specification.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Student support, guidance, and advice .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. Opportunities for Professional Development Planning (PDP) .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>7. Work placement information .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>8. Facilities, Resources and Services.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>9. Award Boards and External Examiners.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>10. General reading list.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>11. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>21</b>

# 1. Welcome and introduction

Welcome to University Centre Somerset (UCS), part of Bridgwater and Taunton College; in partnership with the Open University. University Centre Somerset are very proud of what we have to offer and the high standards our students achieve. Our focus is very much on you the student, and our aim is to help you to achieve your goals. This is a generic student handbook designed for all HE learners at UCS and holds information that is important to students being taught across all three campuses; Bridgwater, Cannington and Taunton.

## Employability

UCS has strong industry links, and we have close relationships with employers to ensure our courses prepare our students to be successful in their chosen careers.

### 1.1. Background, history, philosophy

UCS is the key Higher Education (HE) institution in Somerset with approximately 1000 students following HE programmes. UCS works with Pearson and other Awarding Organisations. Your course is subject to stringent quality assurance processes and External Examiner scrutiny.

As a Higher Education student at Bridgwater and Taunton College, you automatically become part of University Centre Somerset. UCS prides itself on its modes of flexible delivery allowing greater accessibility than a traditional university setting. We offer part-time courses and on-site childcare at both our Bridgwater and Taunton campuses, giving you the support to study alongside your work or family commitments.

## 2. Academic calendar

Autumn Term	
Induction and Enrolment: <b>9<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Fresher's Week: <b>16<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
Start of term: <b>16<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>	End of term: <b>20<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>
Reading week: <b>28<sup>th</sup> October-1<sup>st</sup> November 2024</b>	

Spring Term	
Start of term: <b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>	End of term: <b>4<sup>th</sup> April 2025</b>

Reading week: <b>13<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February 2025</b>
Easter Holidays: <b>7<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> April 2025</b>

<b>Summer Term</b>	
Start of term: <b>22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025</b>	End of term: <b>27<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>
Reading week: <b>26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b>	

UCS and College are open throughout the year, except for the Christmas period shown above and Bank Holidays.

The dates shown above signify principal teaching and learning dates, key administrative times, and College closures.

Your programme will consist of a range of modules or units studied over two semesters each academic year.

An academic planner, semester timetable and assessment schedule/planner will be provided to you on enrolment, highlighting holidays, reading weeks, assessment schedules and key events for the academic year.

In addition, for each semester you will be provided with a module handbook that outlines what you will be studying, a brief weekly session outline and assessment profile.

### 3. University Centre Somerset Contacts

Role	Name	Contact information
For queries related to Academic Regulations, HE policies, Extenuating Circumstances etc.	Higher Education Team	<a href="mailto:HE@btc.ac.uk">HE@btc.ac.uk</a>
Registrar (HE Admissions)	Emma Lilley	<a href="mailto:lilleye@btc.ac.uk">lilleye@btc.ac.uk</a>
HE Student Engagement Officer	Sue Stevens	<a href="mailto:stevenss@btc.ac.uk">stevenss@btc.ac.uk</a>
To solve IT issues	Technology Helpdesk	<a href="mailto:ITSHelpdesk@btc.ac.uk">ITSHelpdesk@btc.ac.uk</a>
Library resources queries and support sessions; HEADstart	The LRC Team	<a href="mailto:lrcenquiries@btc.ac.uk">lrcenquiries@btc.ac.uk</a> (for B/W and Cannington) <a href="mailto:tauntonlrc@btc.ac.uk">tauntonlrc@btc.ac.uk</a> (for Taunton)
Printing and copying	Reprographics	<a href="mailto:reprographics@btc.ac.uk">reprographics@btc.ac.uk</a>
Support with specific difficulties you may be facing	Wellbeing Team	<a href="mailto:Bridgwaterwellbeing@btc.ac.uk">Bridgwaterwellbeing@btc.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Tauntonwellbeing@btc.ac.uk">Tauntonwellbeing@btc.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Canningtonwellbeing@btc.ac.uk">Canningtonwellbeing@btc.ac.uk</a>
Safeguarding concerns	Campus Specific Safeguarding Officers	Taunton Campus–Helen Windsor: <a href="mailto:windsorh@btc.ac.uk">windsorh@btc.ac.uk</a> Bridgwater Campus–Keira Scott: <a href="mailto:scottk@btc.ac.uk">scottk@btc.ac.uk</a> Cannington Campus–Leesa Hayes: <a href="mailto:hayesl@btc.ac.uk">hayesl@btc.ac.uk</a>
For advice about support tailored to your Needs e.g., Bursary support and guidance	Student Support	<a href="mailto:StudentSupport@btc.ac.uk">StudentSupport@btc.ac.uk</a>  For information relating to HE Bursaries please refer to the HE Student Support Funding Policy (link below)
To help with accommodation queries	Student Liaison Team	<a href="mailto:Residentialenquiries@btc.ac.uk">Residentialenquiries@btc.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:residentialservices@btc.ac.uk">residentialservices@btc.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:canningtonresidential@btc.ac.uk">canningtonresidential@btc.ac.uk</a>
Loan and payment queries	Finance Team	<a href="mailto:Finance@btc.ac.uk">Finance@btc.ac.uk</a>
To provide extra support with learning in lessons and exams	Learning Support Team	<a href="mailto:ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk">ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk</a>

For future course and career options and information	Information and Guidance Team	<a href="mailto:Info@btc.ac.uk">Info@btc.ac.uk</a>
Informal Complaints	Course Leader – Nath Thomas	To resolve your complaint as quickly as possible, raise the issue with your course leader or the relevant manager – <a href="mailto:ThomasN@btc.ac.uk">ThomasN@btc.ac.uk</a>
Formal Complaints	Complaints Co-ordinator	<a href="mailto:complaints@btc.ac.uk">complaints@btc.ac.uk</a> Please refer to the HE Complaints Policy and Procedure (link below)
UCS HE Policies		<a href="https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about/policies-regulations/university-centre-somerset/">https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about/policies-regulations/university-centre-somerset/</a>

### Keeping in Touch

If we need to get some information to you, we'll most likely do one or more of the following:

1. Send you an email – to your UCS/College email address
2. Speak to you in a tutorial or lecture session
3. Put the information on The Virtual Learning Environment (Teams Chat)

To make sure you don't miss anything, it's worth keeping a regular eye on all these places. That way, you can be confident you're up to date with the latest news.

### Contacting staff

From time to time, you may want or need to see a member of academic staff – to discuss your progress, say, or ask a question. The best way to set this up is by sending an email or messaging them on Microsoft teams. All our staff are very approachable, and care deeply about your success. So don't be afraid to get in touch.

If you have any confidential/private matters you wish to discuss such as 'extenuating circumstances' that are causing you difficulties in completing your assignments, you can email the HE Team at [HE@btc.ac.uk](mailto:HE@btc.ac.uk) or contact your Personal Tutor – [ThomasN@btc.ac.uk](mailto:ThomasN@btc.ac.uk)

The curriculum team understand and recognise that there are occasions where you may have difficulties attending classes because of personal, financial, or academic problems. If so, please talk to your Course Leader or your Personal Tutor at the earliest stage so we can support you in the best way possible. We want to ensure that you have every chance at success in your chosen course, and that we support you the best we can.

## 4. Programme Specification

The table below outlines the units that will be delivered on the programme in each year of study.

### Year 1 Level 4 HNC Units

Unit No.	Unit Title	Credit
1	Nutrition*	15
2	Fundamentals of S & E Psychology*	15
3	Anatomy & Physiology*	15
4	Professional Skills (Pearson Set)*	15
5	Coaching Practice & Skill Development	15
6	Training & Fitness Testing	15
9	Biomechanics	15
10	Technology in Sport	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

## Year 2 Level 5 HND Units

Unit No.	Unit Title	Credit
14	Research Project Sport	30
15	Advanced Coaching	15
16	Performance Analysis	15
17	Talent Identification & Development	15
26	Exercise Physiology	15
32	Psychology for Performance	15
33	Strength & Conditioning	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

To see the specifications for each of these units, please consult the BTEC Sport and Exercise Science Programme Specification which can be found by clicking [here](#).

## 5. Student support, guidance, and advice

### 5.1 Induction arrangements

At the start of your course, you will have an induction week. A full programme is provided, which will include:

#### a) Enrolment and UCS Student ID

If you have not already enrolled online you will be asked to complete relevant forms. Following enrolment, you will receive your UCS Identity card (ID) and you will be given access to the UCS/College systems and Common Areas. We ask for your help by always wearing your UCS ID when on UCS/College premises. Wearing your ID helps to ensure we maintain our open campus and protect and safeguard those who may be vulnerable. Wearing your ID will enable us to notice and challenge anyone who does not have an ID and a good reason for being on site.

#### b) Central and Academic Induction

- Welcome to UCS with central induction key facts for all UCS students
- Welcome and introduction to the team tutors
- What it means to study at higher education (degree) level
- Developing independent learning skills
- Programme-specific information, relevant to the year of study which may include timetables, programme content, module descriptors, project briefs,

module delivery, module feedback and arrangements for the preparation of your dissertation

- The role of the Additional Learning Support Team and how they can help
- Tutorial arrangements

c) **Induction to the UCS/College Environment**

- A tour of the library/learning resource centre and an introduction on how to use the facilities, including the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and the student portal
- Fire evacuation procedure
- Health and Safety

## **5.2 Attendance requirements**

Studying at higher education (degree) level is a great opportunity, and it's one that we want you to grasp. We expect you to attend all timetabled sessions and we ask that all students avoid taking holidays during term-time; this includes the weeks leading up to the end of the academic year.

If you don't turn up to lectures, tutorials and seminars, you might not perform to the best of your ability. Failure to attend can also impact on those studying around you, for example in the case of group projects and presentations.

A poor attendance record could result in the following:

1. Maintenance loans/grants payments being withheld
2. The College informing the Student Loan Company and the UK Visas and Immigration as applicable. Failure to attend could therefore impact on the funding available and/or your ability to remain in the country
3. You may be withdrawn from the programme

Please take your responsibility to attend UCS sessions extremely seriously. In our experience, students who don't turn up perform badly in their courses.

*What happens if I can't attend lectures?*

If you're too ill to attend lectures, you should send your apologies via email or contact your Personal Tutor and be sure to catch up on the work you've missed as soon as possible.

If you are absent for two consecutive weeks, without prior notification, your Tutor may invite you to attend a tutorial meeting.

Where there is unexplained absence of more than four weeks, we may start the process to withdraw or suspend you from the programme of study.

## **5.3 Personal tutoring**

As part of our commitment to your wellbeing, you will be allocated a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor will act as a mentor for your academic studies but also as



counsel should you need it. Your Personal Tutor will also be able to signpost you to other support or information as required.

Personal Tutors have a particular role for first-year students, because they help you to manage the transition into university life, as you progress through your studies, your Tutor will also help you to prepare for life beyond your degree and your future career or study options.

## **5.4 Study skills**

### *Making the transition to university-level study*

When you study at degree level, you are expected to take a great deal of responsibility for your own work. This is a significant difference between university level and school or college, and sometimes takes a bit of getting used to.

To help you make the transition, our teaching staff provide a range of learning opportunities that will increase your knowledge and equip you with the skills to pursue independent study. These include lectures, group work, discussions, student-led activities, simulations, working with technology, practical scenarios and directed study.

Whatever activity you're engaged with, the one way to ensure it enhances your performance is to engage with it fully. We want you to work in partnership with your lecturers so that you do as well as you possibly can.

With that in mind, we encourage you to take responsibility for developing the required knowledge and skills to succeed in your degree. If you do this, we commit to giving you the best possible support in realising your ambitions.

You'll soon find that degree-level study challenges your time-management and prioritisation skills in new ways. You'll have to make time to study at home and ensure you are organised enough to meet deadlines for assignments.

To give you a sense of the likely time commitment you'll need to make during your course, an average 20-credit module requires a total student effort of 200 hours. Discount the time when you're in lectures, seminars, or workshops, and you'll see that there's a considerable onus on you to use your time constructively.

For most students, this is the great advantage of university level study. It frees your time, so that you can study at your own pace and in your own way. Even better, it gives you the opportunity to make new discoveries and connections for yourself, thereby firing your imagination and putting you in control of your learning.

### *Experiencing difficulties?*

That said, some students find it harder than others to move to degree-level study. If this is you, do not panic. It does not mean you're not as clever as your peers, or that you won't end up being every bit as successful.

It just means you need some support to develop the skills needed to succeed at this level. We're here to provide just that support, so please contact your Personal Tutor, who will help you identify what's needed. This may include study skills mentoring or accessing help from staff in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC).

## Study skills support – LRC

New undergraduate students are encouraged to complete our HEADstart programme (Higher Education Academic Development), which will develop the skills required to confidently succeed at university-level studies. The core sessions in the programme are:

1. Library resources
2. Partner University portal and library resources (where applicable)
3. Harvard referencing
4. Avoiding plagiarism
5. Evaluation of information
6. Academic writing

In addition, the Learning Resources Service (LRS) offers sessions that help you with study skills and research. Group sessions are organised by your lecturers, but you can arrange individual appointments to help with the following areas:

1. The Harvard referencing systems
2. Academic writing skills
3. Essay structure
4. Searching the library catalogue
5. Searching e-books
6. Searching other academic electronic sources – databases, e-journals, e-newspapers, company/market research reports
7. Searching the Internet
8. Searching strategy (Boolean operators, wildcards, truncation, search strings)
9. General research sessions (using various information sources from printed to electronic and audio-visual)
10. Advanced study skills/research (conducting a literature search and literature review)
11. Using Turnitin plagiarism detection service
12. Being an effective learner (critical thinking skills, information dissemination, writing skills), etc.

A dedicated study skills area is available on the BTC Libraries link on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). The libraries at all our campuses stock a good range of study skills books, details are available via the Heritage library catalogue <http://heritage.bridgwater.ac.uk/>

## Dissertations and Research Projects

Historic copies of dissertations (good standard) are available to view in the LRC. This means that students can use them for reference purposes, but they cannot be loaned. For class activities such as student approximating grades, the dissertations can be loaned out to a Module Leader. Dissertations are supported by your Module Leader and supervisor. They will guide you through the process, in a set of individual meetings offered and taught lessons. In the event of completing primary methods of research, students are supported to submit their research proposal to an ethics panel for approval. You will continue to have timetabled lessons and 1-1 support available.

## Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct is defined as any improper activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student, or another student, an unpermitted academic advantage in a summative assessment. This includes plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, essay mills/contract cheating, failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations in carrying out research, fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of data and misconduct in examinations.

For more information on this, please consult the UCS HE Academic Misconduct Policy which can be found here: <https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about/policies-regulations/university-centre-somerset/>

## 5.5 Careers advice

### *Preparing for your future*

As a graduate, the world is your oyster when it comes to careers. You could work in the public, private or third (charity) sectors, in the UK or overseas. As part of your learning and growth at University Centre Somerset, we encourage you to consider your career options at an early stage in your studies. We'll help you to find a pathway that makes the very best use of your skills and aptitudes and provide you with the educational opportunities to pursue it.

On successful completion of a foundation degree, we encourage you to consider applying for the Honours Degree Top Up. On completion of your Honours Degree, we encourage you to consider both a continuation of your studies at Master's level or to enter employment in the sector for which you have prepared. A further opportunity if you are considering teaching is to apply for the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE).

The Information and Guidance Team offers information, advice and guidance that will help you make the right choice for your future. This includes:

1. A wide range of up-to-date information on courses, careers, working/study abroad, voluntary work, grants, and finance
2. Help with CV writing, interview preparation, interview techniques and careers-related topics
3. Comprehensive computer packages designed to help with course and career choices
4. Individual and confidential careers interviews with the Information and Guidance Team or Careers Advisors
5. A dedicated Information and Guidance and Student Support area where you can access information and explore alternative sources of funding, as well as researching qualifications available and finding out more about the facilities at UCS.

Further guidance is available from the Info, Guidance & Careers Advice Team, details of which can be found at this link <http://www.bridgwater.ac.uk/college-information.php?category=107>

## **5.6 Professional body recognition**

Membership of a professional body may be something that you wish to pursue if your chosen profession is related to the subject area of that organisation. Indeed, you may wish, and the teaching staff would encourage you, to include such membership on your CV. If you wish to progress becoming a member of a professional body any membership fees will be your responsibility.

## **5.7 Opportunities available to students on completion of the programme**

We have designed a programme of studies for you that we hope will help you to secure a job once you complete your studies with us. The programme is designed, however, for you to help yourself too! It is your responsibility to keep records of what you have learnt to be able to demonstrate to an employer what you have achieved whilst at UCS. You will need to start thinking about your career and planning early on in your programme.

## **5.8 Counselling and student welfare: it's good to talk**

### *Support on non-academic-related issues*

We want you to thrive during your time at UCS. That means providing all the support you need, not just with your studies but with every aspect of your life.

For example, we can provide support to help reduce your stress, help you manage your money and, if relevant, get used to living away from home. We also help you manage the fine balance between study and family or work commitments. We can also look at the mode of your study and can sometimes consider moving you from full-time to part-time study if that helps with your situation and needs.

If you need more specific help, or there's a particular issue that's worrying you, contact your Personal Tutor or The Wellbeing Team (at your campus), who will put you in touch with someone who can support you (refer to section 3 of this handbook)

## **5.9 Support for students with special needs and long-term health conditions**

At UCS we are aware that disability covers a wide range of impairments and we strive to ensure that our provisions and structures consider, as far as possible, the full range of needs that disabled students have.

If you have a disability, we at UCS are committed to helping you make the most of your time studying with us. We are conscious that no two people are the same and strive to make provision for your precise needs.

Here are some of the ways that we support people with disabilities during their time at UCS:

1. Ensuring access to the physical environment (both facilities and equipment)
2. Providing adequate and accurate information for students both prior to joining and while at UCS
3. Disability awareness workshops are held as part of the UCS/College staff development programme
4. Bursary funding to cover diagnostic assessment through the Additional Learning Support Team

Our Additional Learning Support Team provides individualised support that is tailored to your needs. So, whatever your disability, learning difficulty or additional needs, please tell us as soon as possible. You can do this by completing a Student Disclosure Form in your first meeting with your Personal Tutor, or at Student Services. Once you submit this document, an Additional Learning Support Tutor will be in touch to discuss your needs privately. You can also declare your disability, learning difficulty or additional need after term has started by emailing the HE Additional Learning Support Team on [ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk](mailto:ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk).

In these ways, we do everything in our power to help you flourish in your time at University Centre Somerset.

#### *Other support*

Here are some of the other ways that we help you to fulfil your potential while you are with us:

1. We provide detailed feedback on assessed work, helping to develop your knowledge and understanding
2. Tutorials – many subjects have timetabled tutorials where work can be discussed with subject tutors. You can also arrange to meet tutors at other times to discuss your progress
3. The UCS/College VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) system and email. Staff use these to initiate discussions and set up learning support groups for their modules, ensuring you can keep thinking together, even when you're not in lectures
4. Electronic learning. We provide access to eBooks, electronic journals, and research papers as well as resources such as eBook readers and laptop computers
5. Module Handbooks/Assessment Briefs and other learning resources are made available as appropriate for individual courses by Module Leaders.
6. Learning Resources Centres (LRCs) are available at each campus – Taunton, Bridgwater, and Cannington. HE Students Common Room and LRC spaces are available at each of our different campuses.
7. Resources can be borrowed from any of the campuses – a reliable van service transports resources between all LRCs. Resources can be reserved using a reservations service via the Heritage library catalogue. A professional librarian and learning resource assistants are available to help you in these places. Full details of how to access these resources are available via your course tutors, your Personal Tutor and on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment)

#### **5.10 Financial advice and support.**

If you need help with your finances, go to Student Services who are available on both the Taunton and Bridgwater Campuses. Our staff will be able to advise and support you.

You can find information about what bursaries and funds are available to support you at <https://www.somerset.ac.uk/student-services/money-matters/he-loans-grants-andbursaries/>

If you wish to talk to someone about applying for an HE Bursary, please email: [studentsupport@btc.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@btc.ac.uk)

If you wish to talk to someone about applying for the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Technology Support Fund or HE Diagnostic Support Fund please email: [learning.support@btc.ac.uk](mailto:learning.support@btc.ac.uk).

## 6. Opportunities for Professional Development Planning (PDP)

Professional Development Planning (PDP) is defined as:

*“a structured and supported process undertaken by a learner to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development. It is an inclusive process, open to all learners, in all HE provision settings, and at all levels.”* (QAA, 2009, Personal Development Planning: Guidance for Institutional Policy and Practice in Higher Education) – This is the most up to date description of PDP by the QAA as of 2023.

The level of engagement and what you get out of your period of higher education is your choice. You have responsibility for your own learning.

Taking stock of your position and setting goals in all areas of your life is a crucial step, but to maximise your potential you must be clear about how you can transfer the skills and knowledge you have acquired into other situations. You must learn to be able to communicate your unique skills and abilities.

The programme specification and module specifications included in your Programme Quality Handbook detail the range of skills and abilities that you will have acquired should you succeed in passing the course.

Our online guide to Professional Development Planning is available on the HE Info Hub, accessed via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). It guides you through the process just described, helping you to consider where you are and where you want to be with reference to the following areas:

**Key Transferable Skills** – These are the skills that employers need and that will help you to thrive in any walk of life. An online audit helps you identify your skills, work out which ones you need to develop, and plan for acquiring them in the future.

**Background** – This area is a chance to take stock of where you’ve come from. It considers your current skills, qualifications to date, work experience, positions of responsibility held and involvement in extra-curricular activities. You’ll be encouraged to think about how you’ve developed because of these experiences, and to pinpoint your strengths and areas for improvement. As well as your own review, it is helpful to receive feedback from other people, giving you a realistic picture of your achievements and abilities.

**Learning Style** – Everyone learns in their own way, but your general tastes can be categorised into a particular learning style. A short online test helps identify yours, which will make it far easier for you to continue acquiring knowledge and skills to release your full potential.

**Goals** – You need to set goals if you're to achieve your dreams. This part of the PDP process helps you do just that, enabling you to focus your career aspirations, your academic ambitions, and your personal objectives.

**Planning** – Now you need a plan to achieve the goals you've identified. As well as identifying practical steps, we offer a financial planning tool to help you budget for the future.

**Opportunities** – The world is full of opportunities, and you'll be faced with plenty of them at UCS and in the local area. Consider what's on offer, from voluntary work to round the-world expeditions.

**Progress** – This is the crucial part. Having set goals and identified a way to achieve them, you need to check in with yourself on a regular basis and review progress. This may only take a couple of hours each term, but it's key to making the most of your time at UCS.

**Job Applications** - This section contains useful tips on producing a professional CV that will improve your chances of securing job interviews. By working through your PDP, you will already have identified your experience, skills and abilities. It's worth keeping a brief note of these things, therefore, so that you have the information at your fingertips when applying for jobs.

**Reference** – If you apply for a job, you'll need a reference. Your Personal Tutor is able to provide this, and their job is made easier by having access to this part of your plan. This gives them the information they need, making it much easier for them to wax lyrical about your achievements.

## 7. Work placement information

### 7.1 Rationale

#### *The importance of your Work-Based Learning (WBL) placement*

Work-Based Learning (WBL), sometimes known as Professional Practice, is a defining feature of your course. It involves you spending time in a real-world working environment, bringing the knowledge you're garnering in your studies to bear in a professional context.

At University Centre Somerset, students undertake WBL in a variety of places, relevant to their degree programme. Whatever you end up doing, it will be a valuable opportunity to establish yourself in a working environment, and gain experience of the professional world.

In addition to completing placements in work environments, you may be given live industry-focused projects to complete. As a result of these activities, you will always be encouraged to ground your academic learning in a practical context. This is one of the things that will give you an edge when it comes to seeking employment, because you'll already understand the world of work, and be comfortable operating within it.

### *The skills you'll develop through WBL*

Here are some of the skills we expect you to develop by the end of your degree, thereby enhancing your appeal among prospective employers:

1. Career management skills: *e.g., preparing effectively for the recruitment and selection process* • Skills in lifelong learning: *e.g., reflecting critically on academic, personal and professional development, identifying and articulating achievements and planning for the future*
2. Business and organisational awareness: *e.g., understanding changing working practices, including self-employment, with particular reference to the professions and sectors relating to your programme of study* • An international outlook: *e.g., understanding the attributes and breadth of outlook appropriate for working in a global economy*

## **7.2 Criteria and approval processes for suitable placements**

We encourage you to set up your own placement, drawing on contacts you make in your chosen industry. We believe that this helps you to develop your independent and professional transferable skills. However, if you have difficulties, staff will offer support and guidance. Staff will approve the placement, ensuring it is suitable and safe, as well as providing a realistic opportunity for you to meet your programme learning outcomes.

It is essential that you discuss any proposed work placement with your Personal Tutor or a member of teaching staff. That way, we can ascertain its suitability, then you can get on with setting it up with the appropriate co-ordinator to check its health and safety.

## **7.3 Responsibility for finding and arranging placement**

Depending on the course and level of study, it is your responsibility to accrue appropriate industry experience during your studies, and to establish links with relevant employers in your chosen field. But we'll support you every step of the way. You won't be alone, therefore, thanks to our advice and assistance in what could turn out to be one of the most significant experiences of your life.

## **7.4 Student responsibilities**

When you go on your work placement, it's important to remember that you represent University Centre Somerset, Bridgwater and Taunton College and your Awarding Organisation. We therefore expect the highest standards of behaviour from you, thereby ensuring you project a professional, courteous and conscientious image. This will also benefit you, by enhancing your appeal with a potential employer, and help you establish a good reputation.

## **7.5 Supporting and feedback arrangements**

You'll be allocated a UCS-based supervisor for every placement that you undertake. Their role is to provide a single point of contact, both for you and your work



placement provider. So, if either of you have any problems, your placement supervisor or land-based work placement co-ordinator are the first ports of call.

## 8. Facilities, Resources and Services

If you've visited University Centre Somerset, you'll know that we have outstanding facilities and services. For further details, please look at the UCS website:

[www.somerset.ac.uk](http://www.somerset.ac.uk)

*Social Spaces* – you are welcome to use the facilities on any campus

### **Taunton:**

*The Core* – Including: Wellbeing Team, SU, BTC Active, Multi-faith service, comfy seating, sexual health clinic – C Card service

*The UCS Common Room* – quiet study spaces, social space, comfy seating, kitchenette facilities (microwave, fridge, hot water etc.), Student Union.

*The Restaurant* – variety of meals, snacks, drinks etc.

*Quantock Restaurant* – a professional working restaurant run by staff and students in Taunton

*Gym*

### **Cannington:**

*UCS Study Room* – with informal study space within the NCfN building with a café next door. *The Common Room* – Residential Team, SU, BTC Active at request, multi-faith service at request, comfy seating, Ping-Pong table, pool table, large screen TV, books, sexual health clinic – C Card service

*Gym* – located in the NCfN building

*National College for Nuclear (NCfN) Social Space* – comfy seating, working spaces

*The Farm social space* – catering outlet, social seating, TV

*Animal Management Centre*

*The Restaurant* – variety of nutritional meals, snacks, drinks etc.

*Walled Gardens & Tea Room*

### **Bridgwater:**

*The Hub* – Wellbeing Team, SU, BTC Active, Multi-faith service, comfy seating, health advisor room, sexual health clinic – C Card service

*Gym*

*The Restaurant and Cafes*– variety of meals, snacks, drinks etc.

### **Resources**

#### **Taunton:**

1. Hair Salon
2. Barbering
3. Stationery Shop

4. The Core
5. UCS Common Room
6. Catering Outlets
7. LRC
8. Student Accommodation
9. Student Union
10. BTC Active sessions
11. Counselling Service
12. Health Advisor
13. Wellbeing Team

**Cannington:**

1. The Common room
2. Catering Outlets
3. LRC with a dedicated HE Room
4. Student Accommodation
5. Residential Team
6. Student Union
7. BTC Active sessions
8. Counselling Service
9. Health Advisor
10. Wellbeing Team
11. Riding Stables
12. Golf Course

**Bridgwater:**

1. Hair Salon
2. The Hub
3. Catering Outlets
4. Costa Coffee
5. LRC
6. Student Union
7. BTC Active sessions
8. Counselling Service
9. Health Advisor
10. Wellbeing Team

**Services**

*Students Union (SU)*

As a student at UCS you are automatically a member of the Students Union. The Student's Union is led by the annually elected HE Student President who is also the HE Student Governor and sits on the Board of Governors as well as being a full member of the Senate that oversees Higher Education at UCS.

Do consider getting involved as a student representative for your course or an area-wide representative to help us ensure that we hear the student voice so that we can respond to it.

#### *Learning Resource Centres – Study Skills*

The LRCs at Taunton, Bridgwater and Cannington offer the HEADStart programme (Higher Education Academic Development) to support our undergraduates with building their study skills, referencing and research skills. They offer group sessions as well as one to one sessions. Online materials are also available to support you 24/7. Do go and ask for guidance and support.

#### *Additional Learning Support Team*

Do contact the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team to discuss any disability or learning difficulty. You can contact them by email at: [ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk](mailto:ALSHESUPPORT@btc.ac.uk)

#### *Support via the central HE Team for Long Term Health Conditions*

If you have a long-term health condition, do disclose this to your tutor at the start of the course or as soon as it becomes apparent. Your tutor can then arrange with the central HE Team [HE@btc.ac.uk](mailto:HE@btc.ac.uk) to record this with evidence, so that if your condition flares up during your course we can assist by seeing how we can best support you, without needing to bother you with forms at what might be a difficult time for you later on.

#### *Wellbeing Team*

The Wellbeing Team provide emotional support, mentoring, advice on sexual health, help and advice in relation to drugs and alcohol, mental health support, advice in relation to family issues, relationship issues, signposting to external support.

#### *Counselling Team*

The Counselling Team provide a confidential and flexible counselling service

#### *Health Advisor*

The Health Advisor provides a confidential service with guidance in relation to sexual health and pregnancy, drugs and alcohol support, health conditions/concerns, first aid.

#### *Student Support*

The Student Support Team can offer you advice on finance, transport, and housing.

#### *Residential Team*

The Residential Team can provide you with information about student accommodation. We have student accommodation on the Cannington Campus and a 5-minute walk from the Taunton Campus.

#### *Multi-faith Service*

We have quiet rooms available for contemplation, meditation or prayer. Our Chaplain is willing and able to support those of any faith and none.

#### *Safeguarding and Prevent*

UCS and Bridgwater and Taunton College take their responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults / adults at risk, very seriously. If you have any concerns about your own or anyone else's safety and wellbeing please contact one of our Safeguarding Team. There are posters around each campus to

tell you who the members of the Safeguarding Team are and how to contact them. Alternatively, you can email [staysafe@btc.ac.uk](mailto:staysafe@btc.ac.uk) and explain your concerns. Reception can always help you to contact them as can your tutor. Do talk to someone if you are worried about something or worried about someone else.

Prevent is the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people from becoming radicalised or supporting terrorism.

A useful film available from the following link shows what to do in the case of a terrorist attack – to run, hide and tell:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

### *Central HE Team*

The HE Team, based at the Taunton Campus are the main link between UCS and our partner universities. Led by the Head of Higher Education, the HE Co-ordinators work with the curriculum teaching teams to ensure that everyone works in line with the academic regulations of their awarding university and the policies and quality processes in place within UCS.

The HE Team process Extenuating Circumstances / Mitigating Circumstances forms and those relating to Long Term Health Conditions. They are available to advise you on matters relating to policies and academic regulations.

## **9. Award Boards and External Examiners**

### *Award Board*

The Award Board considers and confirms the marks for formal assessments and records the resulting degree classifications. This is where your performance in modules, and in your overall qualification, is formally verified and confirmed.

Any marks given to you by tutors in advance of the Award Board, must be treated as provisional. They only become final marks once approved by the Board.

### *External Examiner*

Every Higher Education provider has to submit its marking to an External Examiner. This is usually an academic from another institution, who has relevant subject knowledge and is an experienced marker and assessor in your field.

Their role is to ensure the rigour, quality, and consistency of marking, and compare it with other institutions. That way, we – and you – can be confident that the mark you receive withstands scrutiny at a national and international level.

The External Examiner reads a sample of all marked work in any given award. They usually do this during a twice-yearly visit to UCS, when they review work and offer comments about its grading. They then report to the Award Board, verbally and subsequently in writing, identifying areas for improvement and confirming the accuracy of the tutors' marking.

Course Leaders then write a response to this report, and identify steps being taken to meet the External Examiner's recommendations.

For further information on the role of the External Examiner go to...

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B7.pdf>

## 10. General reading list

Please consult your tutor for the most up to date reading list for your programme of study.

## 11. Conclusion

We hope that this handbook has provided you with useful information about what is available to you at UCS. Should you have queries, please speak to your Course Leader on [ThomasN@btc.ac.uk](mailto:ThomasN@btc.ac.uk) or the HE Team ([HE@btc.ac.uk](mailto:HE@btc.ac.uk)).

We wish you all the very best in your studies at UCS.