

UNIVERSITY CENTRE SOMERSET HIGHER EDUCATION

ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

Relevant to students studying a Higher National Certificates (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND) with Pearson UCS validated award or an Open University validated award

Students enrolled with any other partner university should refer to that university's policy.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to clearly state University Centre Somerset (UCS) approach to, and methods of, providing additional learning support for its higher education students at UCS, part of UCS College Group.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy supports the Aims and Objectives as outlined in the UCS College Groups Strategic Plan. The outcome of the Policy will empower and support all students to make exceptional progress that leads to positive destinations, thus providing all learners with a positive experience.
- 2.2 This procedure applies to all programmes of level 4 or above including those that are validated by UCS or validated externally by our HEI partners, which receive Office for Students (OfS) funding.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This information is relevant to all students and staff (academic and support) involved in the delivery or support of higher education programmes.

4 Purpose of Additional Learning Support

- 4.1 The purpose of Additional Learning Support (ALS) is to provide services and/or facilitate access to services for students who require additional support to enhance their ability to learn, enabling them to develop strategies to become independent learners.
- 4.2 The HEI partner or awarding body retain the responsibility for the quality and standards of the programme and final award. Where they have over-arching policies in place relating to the provision of additional learning support for students affiliated with them then their policies shall apply. Their policies and procedures may differ, but this policy seeks to give an overview of how these approaches are managed by UCS.

5 Overarching Principles

- 5.1 The overarching principles of additional learning support for higher education at UCS, describe the values and characteristics expected because of the implementation of this policy:
- All students are treated fairly, equitably and with respect

- Students, as key stakeholders, are involved in the design and review of this policy

6 Related Information

6.1 This policy should be read with reference to:

- HEI partnership agreements and specific student representation policies and procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- UCS HE Student Support & Bursary Funding Policy

7 Reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

7.1 The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) notes that 'From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education'. This policy has been written to reflect the expectation for quality, core and common practices and guiding principles given in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published by the QAA, with particular reference to the Advice and Guidance contained within the publication: Enabling Student Achievement <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/enabling-student-achievement>

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 UCS

UCS is responsible for ensuring there are clear procedures and opportunities available to enable HE students to be informed about and engage with additional learning support as needed. UCS is obliged to do this as stated within its HEI partnership agreements. UCS, as a HE Provider, takes account of the UK Quality Code published by the QAA as a key a reference point for the quality management and enhancement of its higher education provision.

UCS is also responsible for meeting the ongoing conditions of registration of the Office for Students. This includes:

- Condition B1: 'must ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high quality academic experience.'
- Condition B2: 'must take all reasonable steps to ensure:

- a. each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and
- b. effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

8.2 Students

HE students are responsible for being pro-active and timely in responding to the requests from ALS and applying for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the Needs Assessment (NA) with ALS support and guidance and providing the ALS team with the resulting reports. Exam access arrangements will be identified and included in the full diagnostic assessment process.

For those learners who are not in receipt of DSA, at least 4 weeks' notice is required when requesting exam concessions to be put in place.

8.3 Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team holds overall responsibility to ensure there are systems and structures in place that are fit for purpose for additional learning support.

8.4 Additional Learning Support Team

The Additional Learning Support Team will support the learner in accessing the DSA, a diagnostic assessment and the NA.

On receipt of the DSA2 the coordinators will contact the student to inform them of receipt of the DSA2 support needs to be agreed within 14 days of receipt of DSA2.

ALS administration staff will store all supplied diagnostic reports, DSA2s and NAs as evidence for exam concessions and support and exam concessions will be entered onto ProMonitor/ProSolution.

For those students who request their support to be supplied by UCS, and have a DSA and NA:

- The Additional Learning Support Team are responsible for supplying the correct support as defined by the NA, that it is reviewed and tracked correctly, to inform Course Leaders of the support via ProMonitor and to invoice Student Finance England. ALS will inform the Course Leader of any changes of support arrangements via ProMonitor
- All sessions will be agreed and booked in advance with the allocated support worker and student.
- Additional Learning Support will ensure staff qualifications and professional membership are kept up to date in line with the DSA Quality Assurance Process
- Additional Learning Support will ensure all support staff are qualified as defined by the DSA Quality Assurance Process.

For those students who wish to access support elsewhere:

- It is not the responsibility of UCS to ensure that the support is correct
- The learner will advise the lecturing teams on strategies and techniques to support learners in the classroom where appropriate

8.5 Assistant Principals

Assistant Principals are responsible for the programmes of study and students within their Area, or for the services that support them. Therefore, they are responsible for ensuring that students have opportunities to access additional learning support and that their teams are informed of the processes governing this.

8.6 Deputy Head of Department

Deputy Head of Department provide a curriculum based lead for academic activity based on subject disciplines. Regarding HE additional learning support the Deputy Head of Department is responsible for ensuring all reasonable adjustments are implemented.

8.7 Course Leaders

Course Leaders manage individual programmes of study. They may have different areas of responsibility based on partnership arrangements with universities, but these responsibilities will be broadly similar. Key areas of responsibility will include oversight of all students enrolled on their higher education programme(s) and therefore the knowledge of each of their individual learning plans, progress towards achievement, any additional support that is in place and the exam concessions that have been

agreed. Course Leaders should be knowledgeable of additional learning support systems and services and be able to at least sign-post students to relevant services.

Course Leaders are responsible for:

- Including feedback from ALS to inform student reviews/Personal Development Plans (PDPs)
- Passing onto ALS any copies of reports received directly from students
- Ensuring that students work with their exam concessions as a normal way of working.

8.8 Support Services Managers

Support service managers with roles in varying services are responsible for having awareness of topics, activities and issues that affect HE students and to understand the wider context in which they reside. This may include being able to effectively signpost students to the correct team that can help with their additional learning needs.

8.9 Exams Office

The Exams office is responsible for ensuring all exam concessions are in place and appropriately staffed as defined on ProSolution.

9 Additional Learning Support Structure

9.1 Overview



9.2 Purpose of Additional Learning Support

UCS is committed to developing inclusive learning approaches and to providing additional learning support to secure learning success for all.

9.3 The Process of Providing Additional Learning Support

UCS will ensure all learners with additional support needs have equal access to the curriculum and are able to work towards meeting their full potential. This will be achieved by supporting the students through the DSA, diagnostic assessment and NA application process and providing the specified support, if requested, that is defined in the NA or diagnostic report.

9.3.1 Exam Concessions

UCS will implement exam concessions as defined in the NA or diagnostic report that is supplied by the student, and the evidence will be held by the ALS team and recorded on ProMonitor/ProSolution.

The ALS Team / Exams Team will liaise closely with the Course Leader for Trainee Nurse Associate and Nursing Degree qualifications when considering exam concessions. This is to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and UWE who validate these programmes. The NMC have very specific requirements in relation to what is acceptable and what is not allowable in terms of exam/assessment concessions for students on these programmes.

9.4 Communication of Opportunities for Additional Learning Support

9.4.1 Pre-Enrolment

All students receive a link to the DSA website and a contact e-mail for learning support at UCS in their offer letter.

Any student who is either already being supported by UCS, or who declares an ALS support need on their application form, is contacted by ALS HE Support Advisor and assisted in the DSA application process.

9.4.2 Induction

During the induction process all students are informed of the DSA process and who to contact for assistance.

9.4.3 On-Programme

Students can be referred by their Course Leaders to ALS for signposting to relevant or to the EAA team for concessions.

9.5 Feedback about the Additional Learning Support Services and Processes

The HE student survey includes questions on learning support. Questionnaires are placed in the HE support rooms which can be completed anonymously.

Feedback from the students is recorded at every support session and informs the next support session. In addition, an end of year survey is undertaken which as well as the online HE student survey and the anonymous feedback questionnaires will inform planning for the subsequent year.

9.6 Annual Monitoring, Review and Self-Evaluation

At the end of each academic year there is a period of review and self-evaluation that takes place. These are formal documented processes through which programmes and the college management of HE is reflected upon, improvements identified, and good practice noted for sharing during the next academic year. The self-evaluation informs the future strategic direction of the college and actions required at an operational level to achieve it.

10 Additional Learning Support Services

10.1 On-going professional development

The EAA Team keep up to date on annual JCQ training, weekly meetings and approved memberships. NMHs access regular updates and training where appropriate

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) specialists attend regular regional forums to discuss emerging issues. The ASC facilitator takes the lead in the regional transitions of ASC into FE, HE and gaining employment.

The Assistant Principal - Group Foundation Learning & ALS is kept informed of changes to the DSA via links with partner Universities and regional Colleges. There is a comprehensive personal development programme within UCS to which every member of staff is expected to participate. There is an annual staff conference which all are expected to attend. Further updates and training are provided in the HE Course Leaders meetings.

10.2 Services available to students

On receipt of the NA by UCS the HE Learning Support Advisor will refer the student to the most appropriate support including:

- Specialist support in dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia
- Study skills
- ASC support
- Mentoring
- Counselling
- Assistive technology
- Hearing loop

11 Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

11.1 Students can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) if they have a:

- Disability or long-term health condition
- Mental health condition
- Specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or dyspraxia

They must also:

- Be an undergraduate or postgraduate student (including Open University or distance learning)
- Have a condition that affects their ability to study
- Qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- Be studying on a course that lasts at least a year

For Further information - <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>

12 External Review

12.1 UCS is subject to external review. The primary mechanism for this is through the Designated Quality Body (DQB) appointed by the Office for Students to review quality in higher education in the UK. The DQB expects students to be involved throughout their review process. Other review mechanisms UCS is subject to are generally on a university specific basis with periodic reviews of provision or UCS as a partner, or from other regulatory bodies specific to areas of UCS's higher education provision. Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and Cert Ed is subject to inspection by OFSTED. Any such reviews would include reference to:

- Senate meetings

- Self-Evaluation reports
- Validation documentation - handbooks
- HE Courses meetings
- ALS HE monitoring meetings

13 Review of Policy

13.1 In writing this policy partner university policies, procedures and protocols have been referred to thus ensuring that this policy aligns with and/or complements their processes and expectations. The UCS Senate is responsible for monitoring policies and activities relating to higher education. The SMT Policy Review Group is responsible for the review and approval of the policy and is due for review on the date stated on the front of this policy.

Appendix 1

HE Exam Concession Arrangements

