



University
of Glasgow

Student Carers' Policy

For implementation in Session 2011-12

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1. Introduction

This Policy provides advice and guidance to:

- Students who, at any point during their studies at the University, provide emotional or practical support to a relative, close friend, or neighbour, who is unable to manage alone,
- University staff who have a role in advising or supporting students who already are or who anticipate becoming carers.

2. Scope of the Policy

The policy covers any current or prospective student who has sole or shared responsibility for a relative, close friend or neighbour because they are ill, have a disability, are experiencing mental distress or affected by substance abuse¹. This responsibility for emotional or practical support may occur at any point in their university career and may not be predictable, or have a set timescale.

The need for care can often be differentiated as 'short' or 'long' term. The University acknowledges that requirements and demands on the carer may fluctuate and can often intensify over time and recognises that each carer's needs are unique.

The scope of this policy does not include parental responsibilities, unless for a disabled child, or any caring responsibilities as part of a voluntary placement or where payment is received.

The policy focuses primarily on the responsibility of caring and impact on study-related matters. Sources of help and advice on related issues can be found at the end of the document.

3. Policy Statement

The University believes that caring responsibilities in themselves should not prevent students from succeeding in their studies. The University is committed to providing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate students' success, making sure no student is disadvantaged whilst ensuring academic standards are not compromised. The degree of flexibility that can be offered will vary between University Colleges, (e.g. professional degrees may have less leeway for flexibility than others) but all Colleges will follow the general approach set out in this document.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University.

¹ As described in [Caring Together: The Carers Strategy for Scotland 2010 - 2015](#)

4.1 Confirming Carers Status

A student carer has the responsibility for confirming their status as a carer. The University recognises that carers exist in a variety of situations thus proof of status may come from a range of sources. The following supporting documentation may be regarded as acceptable confirmation of the student's status as a carer:

- Self certification regarding the nature of the caring duties and how this may affect their study, including how long they anticipate this will last;
- A doctor's letter confirming that they have the responsibility of caring for a close friend, relative or neighbour and any perceived impact on the student;
- A local authority carers' assessment;
- Any other reasonable evidence.

At any point the School/College may request further information or evidence to confirm caring status or any changes to the student carer's responsibility.

4.2 Contacting the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor

In order that the University may make appropriate provision the student carer must let the University know the circumstances regarding the care they provide.

Advisers of Studies are the first point of contact for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who are carers and the Supervisor is the first point of contact for postgraduate research students who are carers. When a student takes on caring responsibilities they should inform their Adviser of Studies/Supervisor as soon as possible. It is in the student's best interest to provide the Adviser of Studies/Supervisor with evidence of their carer status as, in the event of an examination or other compulsory component being missed and the student being unable/unwilling to provide evidence (e.g. because it is of a confidential nature), the Adviser of Studies/Supervisor can confirm that they have seen evidence to cover the absence. In addition to their Adviser of Studies/Supervisor, students may also choose to speak to another member of staff, with whom they are comfortable, about their circumstances.

Any prospective student with caring responsibilities who wishes to notify the University of his/her situation should contact the Student Services Enquiry Team for advice.

4.3 Contacting the School

Following discussion with the student, the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor has responsibility for notifying the relevant Subject Head(s) or PGT Programme Leader of the student's carer status and, with the student's permission, providing them with a copy of the supporting documentation.

4.4 Implications for Study

The student's Adviser of Studies or Supervisor will discuss with the student how the caring responsibilities are likely to impact on their study.

A plan should be drawn up on the form provided (Appendix 1) by the student in conjunction with his/her Adviser of Studies/Supervisor detailing any special

arrangements required during the period in which care is being provided. This plan may cover short, long term, or intermittent caring responsibilities and the nature of this should be reflected in the document. The form should then be signed by the student and all relevant Heads of Subject²/PGT Programme Convener, confirming mutual understanding of the student's carer status and any special arrangements that may be required. The student should receive a copy of this, as should other appropriate member(s) of staff (including, where required, Conveners of Boards of Examiners or Progress Committees). The student's permission should be established before passing this information on; if not, then support cannot be provided.

4.5 Withdrawal from or Suspension of Studies

The carer's responsibilities may change and develop over time, and in some cases students may need to withdraw temporarily or suspend their studies. The student together with their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor will decide whether an interruption is needed and, if so, the time period this needs to cover. This decision should also take into account the academic requirements of the student's programme of study.

The carer must notify their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, if there are any changes to the level of care s/he is required to provide. It is therefore the responsibility of the student carer to liaise regularly with their Adviser of Studies/Supervisor, to assess the effectiveness of any special arrangements put in place. Where necessary, further adjustments can be made and mutual understanding of the adjustments confirmed in writing by the student and the Heads of all relevant Schools using the relevant form (Appendix 1).

If, after discussing their situation with their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, a student decides to withdraw they must let the Registry know by completing and submitting a 'Withdrawal from University' form³.

Where suspension is approved for a postgraduate research student, the Supervisor must complete an 'Approved Suspension of Studies from University' form⁴ and submit it to the Registry.

4.6 Resuming studies

The student should inform their Head(s) of Subject or PGT Programme Convener once ready to return and plan, with their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, an appropriate timetable for re-integration into their programme of study, including the examination schedule where appropriate.

Any student who has formally withdrawn from their course must formally reapply to the University to resume their studies, similarly if a student has arranged a change to a part-time programme of study and wishes to resume a full-time curriculum. In both instances, the student should contact their Adviser of Studies or Supervisor to discuss the changes they wish to make.

² Schools may delegate this responsibility to another individual, e.g. School Learning & Teaching Convener

³ Form available at http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_169377_en.pdf

⁴ Form available at http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_139245_en.pdf

4.7 Financial Considerations

Undergraduate students should note that funding will normally stop when the suspension of study begins. Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) supported students must inform SAAS of their situation. SAAS will be able to advise on possible future eligibility. Non-Scottish UK students should seek advice from their relevant funding body.

Applications to SAAS for funding to resume studies should be made at an early stage to ensure that the student receives a decision from SAAS in sufficient time to resume their studies on the required date.

The University Refund Policy⁵ covers refunds of tuition fees for self-funded or privately sponsored students who suspend study. Students in this situation should approach Registry or the Student Services Enquiry Team for further information.

Postgraduate and Research students receiving funding from external bodies should follow the guidance for their particular scheme, or contact their funding body or sponsor for further advice.

International students with financial sponsors must contact their sponsors and agree a plan of action (such as deferring study/ when to resume study etc). They should also consult the International Student Support Team with regards to any potential implications for their visa status since they will no longer fulfil the requirements of the immigration rules as a student if they have withdrawn permanently or temporarily from their studies.

The benefit rules are different for UK, EU students and international students, and further advice should be sought from the International Student Support Team, the Student Services Enquiry Team, SRC Advice Centre or Department for Work and Pensions.

4.8 Accommodation

A student carer living in university accommodation may be required to move closer to the person they care for to offer further support. At this point contact should be made with the Accommodation Office for advice.

For those living in alternative accommodation or seeking advice on other accommodation issues further sources of help and support can be found in the 'Sources of Information and Help' section at the end of this document.

5. Complaints

Any student who feels that the University has failed to adhere to this policy may raise a complaint under the University's Complaints Procedure (see <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/workingwithstudents/complaints/>)

⁵ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/registry/fees/refund/>

It is suggested that problems are resolved as informally as possible in the first instance. The SRC Advice Centre can provide impartial, confidential advice to students in this situation (contact details are provided at the end of this document).

6. Guidance for Staff

This section provides guidance on supporting students coming under the scope of this policy and for any member of staff with a role in advising or supporting students. At all times, staff must ensure that students with caring responsibilities are not treated less favourably than any other student on the basis of their circumstances. In line with the University's legal obligations, flexibility should be shown where possible to ensure continued learning is facilitated. Information provided by students should be treated confidentially (being passed on where necessary and only with the student's consent) and with sensitivity. Staff should not attempt to influence any student's decision but should be non-judgemental and provide impartial advice.

6.1 Initial Contact

When a student contacts a member of staff to discuss any circumstances covered by this policy, a response should be made within five working days and further discussions arranged as soon as possible thereafter. Where the member of staff contacted by the student is not the student's Adviser of Studies, or Supervisor in the case of postgraduate students, permission should be sought from the student to inform the Adviser of Studies or Supervisor.

6.2 Enabling Continuation of Study

Whilst it is recognised that each request must be dealt with on an individual basis, there are a number of measures that can be used in order to enable the student's continuation of study. These include:

- Allowing time out of study for an anticipated amount of time if increased support is required by the person for whom the student provides care.
- Giving permission for periods of absence for medical appointments, where the student carer is required to provide support or transport, and making arrangements for the student to catch up on missed classes where practicable.
- Showing a degree of flexibility regarding assignment deadlines if the student's circumstances make it difficult for them to be met.
- Allowing resit examinations to be counted as first attempts where there is written evidence that caring responsibilities have prevented the student from taking them at the usual first attempt.
- Consideration of any requests to transfer to part-time study, where this is possible (although the student should bear in mind the financial implications of this course of action).
- Offering support to help the student reintegrate to their studies after a prolonged period of absence.

It is important to take the views and wishes of the student into account, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements as one size fits all approach may not suit all students. All decisions taken should be discussed with the student and, with the

student's permission, the student's Adviser of Studies or Supervisor, if a postgraduate research student, should be kept informed.

6.3 Academic Standards

Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility should be exercised, care must be taken to ensure that academic standards are not compromised. A balance must be achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged, and giving undue special treatment.

It is not necessary for the University to grant every request made, although efforts should be made to meet reasonable requests. Requests should not be refused solely on the basis of being too costly to implement, although this will necessarily be considered when assessing the overall 'reasonableness' of a request. If any request is refused, the reasons for the refusal should be provided in writing to the student, and should include details on the right to appeal.

6.4 Delineating Arrangements

Where specific arrangements are required to be put in place for a student who is already granted additional arrangements (e.g. on the grounds of disability), these should be kept separate in order that it remains clear which arrangements relate to which particular circumstance. This ensures that these arrangements are in place for the required amount of time and also clarifies adherence to the different pieces of legislation.

For staff requiring more detailed guidance, advice can be sought on any of the above from the Equality & Diversity Unit.

7. Sources of information and help

General information and advice

SRC Advice Centre	www.glasgowstudent.net/advice/ 0141 339 8541
Student Services Enquiry Team	http://www.gla.ac.uk/students/sset/ 0141 330 7000 student.services@gla.ac.uk
Student Services (Dumfries)	http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_74906_en.pdf 01387 702066
The Princess Royal Trust for Carers	www.carers.org/ 0141 221 5066
Carers Scotland	www.carersscotland.org 0141 445 3070

CarersLine

0808 808 7777

Open: Wednesday and Thursday between 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm.

Finances

Department of Work and Pensions

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone/MoneyMatters/index.htm>

SAAS

<http://www.student-support-saas.gov.uk/index.htm>

Students domiciled in England

www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Students domiciled in Northern Ireland

www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

Students domiciled in Wales

www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Student Counselling

www.gla.ac.uk/services/counselling/

0141 330 4528

Student Counselling (Dumfries)

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_74906_en.pdf

01387 702066

University Accommodation

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

0141 330 4743

Accommodation (Dumfries)

Natalie.Anderson@glasgow.ac.uk

01387 702054

Interfaith Chaplaincy

www.gla.ac.uk/services/chaplaincy/index.html/

0141 330 5419

International Student Support

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/international/support/>

Equality and Diversity Unit

www.gla.ac.uk/services/equalitydiversity/

0141 330 1887

Approved by:

Student Support and Development Committee: 14 January 2011

Senate: 3 February 2011

PART 2⁶

STUDENT DECLARATION

I confirm that the information that I have provided on this form is accurate and undertake to record all periods of absence as a result of my caring duties in line with the requirements of the [Student Absence Policy](#) and to notify the relevant Head(s) of School/Programme Convener by telephone, e-mail or letter each time that I have a need of the special arrangements that I have requested. I understand that in cases of incomplete assessment resulting from good cause, it may be necessary for my situation to be discussed anonymously with the relevant Board of Examiners.

Student's name in full:

Signature:

Date:

STAFF DECLARATIONS

I confirm that I understand that the carer status of the student named overleaf may have implications for the student's learning and assessment and undertake to provide the special arrangements requested by the student where practicable. Any unforeseen changes to the support/leeway that subject staff are able to provide will be discussed with both the student and his/her Adviser/Supervisor. I also confirm that the student's carer status will be shared with relevant Course Leaders to enable the requested arrangements to be put in place. The student's carer status will only be shared with another staff member(s) where awareness is necessary in order to provide the requested support.

Name of Head of School/Programme Convener⁷:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Head of School/Programme Convener:

Signature:

Date:

Name of Head of School/Programme Convener:

Signature:

⁶ This section must be signed by the student and all relevant Heads of School. The Adviser of Studies/Supervisor will co-ordinate the necessary arrangements.

⁷ Schools may delegate this responsibility to another individual, eg School Learning & Teaching Convener