

E-LEARNING STUDENT SUPPORT CHARTER

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Introduction

This Charter explains the academic and other services available to you whether you are considering becoming a student, applying for a course or are currently studying with the University.

For the purposes of this Charter, an e-learning student is a student normally on a fully online (distance education) course of study but can also include those studying by blended learning. The University is committed to aiming for the highest quality possible in its e-learning provision and this Charter is one way of outlining that commitment to you. This Charter should be read in conjunction with the main Student Charter (<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/studentcharter/>).

This Charter also explains what the University expects of you. The quality of the services that we believe you are entitled to is balanced with responsibilities placed on you: both are intended to ensure that you gain maximum benefit from your time with us. The ethos of a University is different from that of educational institutions at secondary level, further education or other training, and this Charter seeks to explain how you can make the most of the opportunities that the University of Ulster student experience has to offer.

This Charter applies to all applicants, students or alumni of the University of Ulster. It is not a legal document and does not affect your legal rights.

Access & Distributed Learning

Access and Distributed Learning (ADL) hosts the e-learning campus of the University. It is responsible for the University's Virtual Learning Environment (WebCT) and the design, development and support of e-learning programmes and courses. These activities are carried out in partnership with Faculties of the University.

Consultation

This Charter was developed in consultation with (fully online) e-learning students. This was achieved by a series of questionnaires made available to all e-learning students in the University. The results of which enabled the identification of three key areas for inclusion in the Charter:

- When considering applying for a course
- Applying for a course
- Support during study

The Charter was produced in conjunction with the University's Charter Review Group and has been approved by the Senate of the University.

When considering applying for a course

What potential students can expect from the University:

- Clear information on structure and content of courses, including appropriate academic contacts.
- Clear guidance on what students are expected to commit to in terms of learning.
- Information on appropriate computer requirements and the IT skills required to undertake an e-learning course.
- A helpful and courteous service at all times, when you contact Access and Distributed Learning, or a member of the course team.
- Detailed information on course costs and payment methods.

As a potential e-learning student we expect you to:

- Consider carefully whether online distance learning is suitable for your needs and learning style.
- Familiarise yourself with what you are expected to commit to.
- Consider whether you have an appropriate level of IT skills to undertake an e-learning course.

We measure our performance against many standards such as:

We aim to ensure:

- 90% of students we survey, who participate in an e-learning course, are either satisfied or very satisfied with the information provided on the Access and Distributed Learning website or Faculty publications.
- 90% of students we survey are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of service provided pre-application by either Access and Distributed Learning or Faculties.

Applying for a course

What students can expect from the University:

- Timely consideration of applications.
- Timely communication by e-mail about your application.
- A choice of application formats.

As a potential e-learning student we expect you to:

- Provide clear, accurate and up to date information about your academic qualifications and relevant work experience during your application.
- Maintain a working e-mail address and check it regularly.
- Advise us if you have any specific additional requirements in relation to disability to enable us to discuss these with you.

We measure our performance against many standards such as:

We aim to ensure:

- 90% of students we survey are satisfied or very satisfied with their application experience.

Support during study

The University aims to provide a range of quality resources and services to support your learning.

What students can expect from the University:

- Access to a quality Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
- Remote access to an appropriate range of e-resources, including e-journals and articles, to support your learning.
- Appropriate and flexible opportunities for engagement with course materials, course directors, teaching staff, other University support staff and other students during your course of study.
- Flexible access to appropriate studies advice.
- Detailed guidance on appropriate software requirements for your course.
- A comprehensive pre-start induction to online learning at the University.
- Access to appropriate technical support.

As an e-learning student we expect you to:

- Engage fully with course materials, staff and students during your course of study.
- Take part in any pre-start induction courses and note course requirements such as participation in online discussions and assignment deadlines.
- Keep your computer up to date in terms of appropriate software such as anti-virus programmes.
- Pay all appropriate tuition fees in accordance with the University's Tuition Fee Payment Policy.

We measure our performance against many standards such as:

We aim to ensure:

- 90% of students we survey are satisfied or very satisfied with the support they receive during study.

In addition to the performance indicators detailed above, student feedback has indicated that students on online courses would welcome an opportunity to comment on their e-learning experience on an ongoing basis. As a result we invite comments via online polls on various aspects of e-learning throughout the year and feedback to appropriate course teams, Faculties and Departments on a regular basis.

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. Most problems can be resolved by contacting either your course director or Access and Distributed Learning. Further details on the complaints procedure can be found in the main Student Charter (<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/studentcharter/>).

If you do have a complaint in connection with the key performance indicators relating to this support charter, or with any other aspect of your student experience as an eLearning student, it should be addressed to the Director of Access & Distributed Learning in the first instance. The Director of Access & Distributed Learning will raise your complaint with the relevant school, department or member of staff.

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. Details are available at:

<http://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/gmau/complaints.html>

Comments

We would welcome your comments on this Charter or on any aspect of our services. You can send your comments to elearning@ulster.ac.uk

Where can I find further information on...?

eLearning at Ulster	elarning@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0)28 9036 8686 www.ulster.ac.uk/elearning
Students' Union Offices at each campus	info@uusuu.org +44 (0)28 7032 4373 www.uusu.org
Career Development Centre Career Development Centres on each campus	careers@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0)28 9036 6247 careers.ulster.ac.uk
Student Support (including student health, disability services, counselling services, student financial advice)	www.studentsupport.ulster.ac.uk
IT User Services ITUS Helpdesk	helpdesk@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0)28 9036 6777 www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus
WebCT Helpdesk	webcthelpdesk@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0) 28 9036 8686 http://wiki.ulster.ac.uk/display/VLESUPPORT/
Library 24 hour information line	+44 (0)28 90368530 www.ulster.ac.uk/library
Student Fees Office	fees@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0)8700 400 702 www.ulster.ac.uk/finance/fees/
Student Complaints The Student Complaints Liaison officer Room J503, University of Ulster Cromore Road Coleraine BT52 1SA	studentcomplaints@ulster.ac.uk +44 (0)28 028 7032 3213 www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/qmau/complaints.html

