

**UNIVERSITY *of* ABERDEEN**

# **STUDENT CHARTER**

**Session 2004-2005**

**The Student Charter can be accessed at:-**

**[www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/charter.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/charter.hti)**

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## THE STUDENT CHARTER

The Further and Higher Education Charter for Scotland sets a framework for the standard of service that you as students can expect to receive from our University. This leaflet is a guide to the services provided by the University and indicates in which University documentation, the Centre for Lifelong Learning publications, *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*, *Catalogue of Courses*, *University Calendar*, you can find more detailed information about those services.

For our part we expect you to make full and responsible use of the opportunities open to you through the University. Details of your responsibilities are contained in the Code of Practice for Undergraduate Teaching, the Code of Practice on Student Discipline, and in the Codes of Practice for Postgraduate Taught Students and for Research Students.

### University Mission

The University of Aberdeen aims to be excellent in delivering learning and teaching, in undertaking research and commercialisation, in promoting research and scholarship, and in governance and management. The University will be accessible and inclusive.

The University's activities will be guided by its seven underlying principles:

1. **Improving** continuously the quality of its teaching and learning, research, governance, leadership and management.
2. **Realising** the potential of all its students and staff.
3. **Increasing** the European and international dimensions of its activities.
4. **Contributing** towards the creation of democratic societies which value their cultural legacies, and are characterised by social inclusiveness and openness.
5. **Encouraging** the development of philanthropy to build a stronger environment for excellence in teaching and research.
6. **Supporting** and promoting a sustainable, safe and aesthetically pleasing environment.
7. **Enhancing** its role as a regional, national and international cultural centre.

### Before you begin

#### Enquiries and Visits

If you are a prospective student and have any enquiries about the University, or if you wish to visit it before deciding whether to apply to study here, contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service: the address, phone number and e-mail address are in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*. Part-time study enquiries should be addressed to the Centre for Lifelong Learning. If you are a prospective postgraduate you should get in touch with the relevant School: contact names and phone numbers are in the *Postgraduate Prospectus* ([www.abdn.ac.uk/sras](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sras)).

#### Admission, Courses and Programmes

As an undergraduate student you apply for admission to a particular degree programme and are admitted to a degree (e.g. MA, BSc, BEng, LLB) rather than to a School. Full details of our degree structures and programmes are contained in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*, which also outlines entry requirements and explains how you should apply for admission.

All postgraduate students apply for admission either to a taught or to a research programme, as detailed in the *Postgraduate Prospectus*.

For part-time study at undergraduate level you apply for admission through the Centre for Lifelong Learning who can also provide details of courses, information and facilities for open/distance learning, and application forms.

All applicants are assured of the same consideration and are assessed by common standards. The standard terms which govern all offers of admission to the University are available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/charter.hti#appendix](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/charter.hti#appendix)

The *University Calendar*, including the General Regulations for First Degrees and Supplementary Regulations, is available in the University Library or on the University's website at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar.hti)

The *Catalogue of Courses* is a companion volume to the *University Calendar* and contains details of all the undergraduate courses taught in the University, except those for the degrees of MBChB. It is also available on the University's website at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/index.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/index.hti). The *Catalogue of Courses* gives credits and titles of courses, brief descriptions of their content, the name of the course co-ordinator and details of assessment methods (including the proportion undertaken through continuous assessment and through examination). Further documentation on course requirements, including reading lists and detailed aims and objectives of courses, is provided by Schools.

If you will be undertaking postgraduate study, a booklet entitled *Joining Instructions* can be downloaded from [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/joinings](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/joinings). Students should access this before arrival in Aberdeen.

### **Flexible and Distance Learning**

If you are a mature student, aged 21 years or over (or over 18 and having had a break after leaving school), the University is committed to providing you with the opportunity to study for a first degree. Adults who lack standard qualifications are invited to offer other evidence to support their entry. A team of Advisers in the Centre for Lifelong Learning can give you advice on Degree Study, Individual Subject Study, Access to Degree Studies, the Summer School for Access and Open Lectures for courses available on-campus and at a distance. Information and guidance can be found in the *Undergraduate Prospectus* and the Guide for Part-time Study Guide from the Centre for Lifelong Learning. A Student Handbook is also given to all students, which addresses issues specific to part-time and distance students. Programme Prospectuses provide information about qualification aims, regulations and brief course descriptions.

### **Facilities**

Aberdeen has a wide range of excellent facilities available to its students. Details of accommodation in University Halls of Residence can be found in the *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectuses*. If you accept a place in university accommodation you will enter a formal contract with the University binding you to 38 or 48 weeks of residence. Students are not normally released from such contracts, and you will be required to pay the relevant charges for the entire period. Information on other facilities, for example, the Advisory Service, the Counselling Service, the Library, the Computing Centre, the Language Centre, Museums and Collections, Sport and Physical Recreation, the Old Aberdeen Medical Practice, the University Chaplaincies, the Careers and Appointments Service and the University Service Units are to be found in the *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectuses*, or in the various leaflets produced by the Student Support Services.

### **Student Support Services**

Student Support Services includes the Student Advice and Support Office (located in the University Office and including the Student Advice Officer, the Student Support Officer/Disabilities Advisers, and the International Student Advisers), the Dental Unit, the Counselling Service, the Halls wardens and the University Chaplaincy. For those who live in University Halls, there is also a well-developed Wardenial system which aims to provide a safe and supportive environment. Self-help is encouraged

and information is available on any student PC on the campus: select "Students" on the University's home web page or: [www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students/)

The co-ordination and development of student support services is the responsibility of the Director of Student Support Services, who is also available for consultation or guidance in the case of complaints. Full details of support services are contained in the *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*, and the leaflet *Supporting Students* (see: [www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/central/students/) which includes access to the complaints procedures).

## **Students with Disabilities**

The University welcomes students with disabilities and is committed to improving access to its courses, facilities, and social life. It is University policy to consider applications from students with disabilities on the same grounds as apply to all candidates.

It is also policy to take specific disabilities into account when making arrangements for the assessment of a student's performance. If you wish special consideration, the onus is on you to notify the University via your Adviser, the Departmental Disabilities Co-ordinator or the University Disabilities Advisers at the earliest opportunity.

Details on arrangements for students with disabilities can be found in the *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*, and in the University's *Disability Statement* (available from Student Support Services), which takes account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 (Part IV: Education, 2002). Prospective students are welcome to contact the University Disabilities Advisers for informal discussion.

## **International Students**

If you are from overseas, information on language requirements, accommodation and pre-University courses, is contained in the *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*. The International Student Advisers are available to support you during your studies. English language enquiries should be addressed to the English Language Co-ordinator in the Language Centre.

## **Child Care**

Nursery accommodation with facilities for children aged 0-5 is available in the University. Details on the Rocking Horse Nursery can be found in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*.

## **Financial Information**

You can find financial information, including that on student loans, financial support from the University, entrance bursaries, sponsorship and hardship funds in the *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*. Information on University fees is also provided in the *Prospectuses*, and in the fees leaflet in your joining instructions or can be accessed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees)

Full-time undergraduate students should remember to apply for their student support in advance of coming to the University and must re-apply in advance of each academic year. Student loan instalments will be paid direct into a student's bank account.

The following web-site contains useful information on applying to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs), the Student Loan Company, and how to pay tuition fees: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees)

## **While you are a student**

### **Equal Opportunities**

The University of Aberdeen confirms its commitment to equality of opportunity, whereby staff and students are treated fairly and with respect. The University welcomes diversity and seeks to provide an inclusive environment in which to learn.

### **Race Equality Policy**

The University of Aberdeen adopts a zero tolerance approach to racist behaviour as outlined in the Anti-Racist Policy in which the commitment to the equal treatment of all persons regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin or colour is affirmed. The Policy sets out the University's commitment to eliminate racial discrimination, promote equal opportunities and promote good race relations between persons of different racial groups. A copy of the University's Race Equality Policy can be accessed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/racepolicy](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/racepolicy) and the Procedures for Dealing with Complaints of Racial Discrimination can be accessed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x14.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x14.hti)

### **Sexual Harassment**

The University has adopted a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment. The Policy Against Sexual Harassment and the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Harassment are displayed on noticeboards or available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x11.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x11.hti) (for Policy) and at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x12.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x12.hti) (for Procedures).

### **Students' Association**

The student voice is a key element in developing our welfare service and the Students' Association (SA) provides a vital contribution to policy and practice in this area. The SA provides a range of services including sports clubs, societies, welfare and educational services. These are managed through the Association Executive and SA Council. The SA provides entertainment through the Hilton Union. Welfare support can also be sought through sabbaticals, Niteline and the SA Info and Advice centre. The JobLink service offers a valuable service to students seeking part-time employment.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Codes of Practice for Undergraduate Teaching, for Postgraduate Taught Students and for Postgraduate Research Students, detail the responsibilities as students (including in regard to attendance) and those of the teaching staff. The Codes are statements of good practice. Student opinion is sought through Course Evaluation and the Class Representatives elected by each class. The Codes can be accessed at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section5.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section5.hti)

### **Quality Assurance**

The University seeks constantly to maintain and enhance its teaching and learning through a range of academic quality assurance mechanisms. The University Committee on Teaching and Learning and the undergraduate and postgraduate Academic Standards Committees monitor courses and programmes of study and the way in which they are taught and assessed. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is responsible for the external assurance of quality and standards in teaching and learning. The QAA also undertakes regular institutional reviews of the University's quality assurance procedures and the enhancement of quality. The quality of research work is assessed in national Research Assessment Exercises whose findings are also published. The performance of individual members of the academic and administrative staff is reviewed through the University's staff appraisal procedures.

University examinations at every level include a vital element of outside monitoring by External Examiners from other universities, whose role it is to ensure fairness and the maintenance and comparability of academic standards.

## **Academic Welfare**

If you are an undergraduate or Centre for Lifelong Learning student, you will be allocated an Adviser of Studies whose name will be included in your joining instructions. You will be given an opportunity to talk to your Adviser at registration so that you and your Adviser can agree your curriculum for the forthcoming session. Your Adviser is a source of advice on academic matters, particularly in relation to your curriculum and general academic progress. Your Adviser is also a possible first port of call if you have any personal difficulties. Distance learning students are encouraged to contact their Adviser by phone or e-mail. Further information on "Advising" and on "Advisers" will be sent to all new students with their joining instructions in a document entitled *Important Information for Getting Started*. Further information on "Advising" is available in the document *Student Attendance, Performance and Assessment* and the accompanying "Getting Started" document which can be accessed at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/sapa/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/sapa/) These documents include information on the procedure if you have a grievance concerning the Advising system.

If you are a postgraduate student on a taught programme, your School will make appropriate arrangements for your supervision. If you are a research student you will be allocated an appropriate supervisor(s).

## **Academic Learning & Study Unit**

Managing your own learning may be one of your biggest challenges at University. To gain the most from your studies you need good study skills. If, at any stage of your academic career, you wish to enhance your study skills: note-taking, assignment/essay writing, presentation skills, time management, exam preparation etc., the Academic Learning & Study Unit can help.

ALSU provides:

- Workshops
- Advice sessions
- Online resources

For further information please visit our website at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/alsu/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alsu/)

## **Academic Requirements**

If you are an undergraduate or Centre for Lifelong Learning student registering for the first time, in your joining instructions you will be advised to consult a document concerning attendance, performance and assessment available on the web at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/sapa](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/sapa). This contains all the University-level information relevant to your programme of study. School requirements, including details of assessment, monitoring of performance, submission dates for assessments etc., will be provided by your Schools.

Rules for the conduct of prescribed degree assessments for degrees and diplomas can be accessed via the Registry's web page ([www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/)). The University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline, which incorporates the policy on Cheating in Assessments, is available from the Senate Office of the Registry and on the web at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.hti). Cheating, which includes plagiarism, is deemed to be a disciplinary offence, and the Code of Practice indicates the penalties available if an allegation of cheating is admitted or proved. The Code of Practice on Student Discipline also includes the University's definition of plagiarism in paragraph 2.1.1h. The SA can also offer advice relating to Student Discipline.

## **Academic Appeals**

If you ever wish to appeal against an academic decision (e.g. by Examiners refusing to award a pass or awarding an unacceptable class of Honours; or by Examiners of a thesis for a higher degree) you should consult the *Policy on Academic Appeals* and the accompanying *Guidance Note*. These can be downloaded from the web at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/appeals). You should note that appeals committees will limit their consideration on matter of procedure, competency and/or prejudice. Those involved in considering academic appeals will not review the question of academic judgement which is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made the academic judgement. For an appeal to be upheld, a student must have suffered material disadvantage. The SA can offer advice on this matter.

## **Career Opportunities**

Throughout your time at University, and indeed after you have left the University, you may make use of the information and advice facilities of the Careers & Appointments Service. The Service provides information on career areas, postgraduate study, employment recruiting, regional, national and overseas study and employment. There is also a computer-assisted careers guidance programme and special sections for international students and students with disabilities. You can also contact us via the web at [www.abdn.ac.uk/careers](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers)

## **When you leave the University of Aberdeen**

### **Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees**

The University offers a range of qualifications. Details of the requirements for successful completion are given in the University Calendar.

### **Graduation**

Once you have completed your degree you can graduate either in person or *in absentia*. Award ceremonies are not open to Certificate or Diploma students, these awards being conferred *in absentia*. All students must apply to receive an Award. Information on graduation can be obtained from Registry Services or on the web at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/graduation.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/graduation.hti) Information is also made widely available before each ceremony.

### **Postgraduate Study: here and elsewhere**

The *Postgraduate Prospectus* is the first port of call for students interested in pursuing further study in the University. Information on courses available at other universities can be obtained from the Careers & Appointments Service and from the University Library.

### **Alumni**

All students who successfully complete their courses, whether graduates, exchange students, or diplomates are invited to keep in touch with the University. The Alumni Relations Office will send you the *Aberdeen Magazine* twice a year, which carries news and feature articles on developments at the University, updates on your classmates and information on events and reunions. Visit [www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni\\_relations](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/alumni_relations) to find out more about staying in touch.

### **General Council**

If you are a graduate of the University, you automatically become a member of the General Council. Since 1860, the General Council has played a role in the governance of the University. As a member, you are involved in the election of the Chancellor, who is the titular head of the University. You also elect four graduates to sit on the Court, and 21 members of the General Council's Business

Committee, which keeps a close watch on decisions of the Court and looks after graduates' interests. The General Council meets twice a year, to hear reports from the Principal, other senior staff and the Convener of the Business Committee. You are welcome to attend these meetings, which are held in December and June each year and are followed by informal lunches where you can meet fellow graduates.

### **Alumnus Association**

The Aberdeen University Alumnus Association, which has its own membership, separate to the Alumni Relations Office and the General Council, publishes the *Aberdeen University Review*, a twice-yearly magazine of articles and papers, poetry and personalia. Members of the Alumnus Association who live in Aberdeen can take advantage of the annual social activities and outings. Applications for membership should be sent to: The Secretary, Alumnus Association, University Office, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 3FX.

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### **MAKING YOUR OPINIONS KNOWN**

Universities cherish freedom of speech and the responsible expression of all opinions. There are many formal and informal channels of communication within the University through which you can make your views known to academic staff and to the University authorities. The SA represents the interests of students on University decision-making bodies, and will advise individuals how best to make their views heard if informal approaches seem not to have worked. Students also elect the Rector every three years. He or she holds one of the most senior positions in the University and has a special responsibility to look after student interests. The Rector or his/her Assessor (representative) can be contacted through the SA.

Any complaint about your contacts with the University before you join it, including complaints about the *Undergraduate* and *Postgraduate Prospectuses*, should be addressed to the Senior Vice-Principal, University Office, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3FX.

When you are a member of the University, the normal method of making a complaint is to first approach the person who is in charge of the particular area of the University's activity concerned, e.g. a Head of School about academic matters, a Warden about residential matters, etc.

A copy of the University's *Complaints Procedure* can be obtained from the Student Support Office, which can provide advice in regard to complaints or non-academic appeals.

Advisers, supervisors or the SA will assist you if you are unsure how to pursue a complaint. There are specific procedures (mentioned in earlier sections of this document) for dealing with Racial Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Academic Appeals.

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## Standard Terms Governing Offers Of Admission To The University

**Acceptance of an offer of admission is subject to the following terms and conditions. You must read these before you accept.**

- (a) Any offer of admission to the University is made on the understanding that in accepting it you will undertake to observe the Ordinances and Resolutions of the University Court and to abide by the rules and regulations which the University makes for its students from time to time, and also to observe the terms and conditions contained in the latest edition of the relevant University Prospectus, which are detailed in (g), (h) and (i) below. Any offer is contingent upon the acceptance of these terms and conditions by you and therefore you must read them before you accept it.
- (b) Any offer of admission is made without prejudice to the right of the University to vary or withdraw it if information of a serious nature comes to the notice of the University (whether relating to events occurring before or after the date of the offer) which could reasonably have influenced the University's decision if known at the time the offer was made.
- (c) Any offer of admission does not imply that any financial assistance will be available from the University. Postgraduate applicants who wish to be considered for research council studentships, University Postgraduate Studentships, or similar awards, should contact their prospective supervisor or Head of School regarding this.
- (d) Admission to individual courses within any degree, diploma or certificate programme is subject to the satisfaction of academic prerequisites and, where course numbers are restricted, to the availability of places. ERASMUS and other full-time non-graduating students whose native language is not English wishing to register for courses at Level 3 in English may be required to sit a diagnostic test before being permitted to register for such courses.
- (e) With the exception of ERASMUS and other students admitted under reciprocal exchange agreements and of staff under a contract of employment to the University, all students are required to pay tuition fees annually. Details of these fees can be found at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees). Estimates of the other expenses which may be incurred by students taking courses in specified subjects are contained in the University Calendar, available at [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/contents.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/calendar/contents.hti). If you receive an award from a source which carries with it payment of all or part of your tuition fees direct to the University, these fees will be claimed from the award-giving body, and you will be invoiced for any balance, once the amount of their contribution is known. Otherwise you will be responsible for ensuring that tuition fees are paid, normally in one sum, at the time of registration. Your acceptance of this offer of admission to the University will be taken as an acknowledgement by you that you are aware of this obligation and of the time at which it must be met, and that you accept it. When Schools issue teaching material to students, they may make a charge for this to cover reproduction costs.
- (f) If you are an overseas student and your native language is not English you may be required to take a test of proficiency in the comprehension and use of English language before you begin to study. If your proficiency does not reach a satisfactory standard you may be directed to attend classes in the University's Language Centre until you have reached an acceptable standard.
- (g) The University will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver courses in accordance with the descriptions set out in the editions of its Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectuses current at the time an offer is made. However, it reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue courses and to merge or combine courses, if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary. If the University discontinues any course, it will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative course.
- (h) All students are required, as a condition of enrolment in the University, to abide by the University's Code of Practice on Student Discipline, as amended from time to time. A copy of the current Code is available on the University's website at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.hti](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendix5x15.hti)
- (i) The University cannot accept responsibility, and expressly excludes liability, for loss or damage to students' property, and transfer of computer viruses to students' equipment.