

## **Under 18's policy**

### **Aims**

It is a condition of admission to the University that the parent or guardian of any student who is under the age of 18 years confirms, by signing and returning the enclosed pro-forma, their acceptance of the arrangements set out in this document; once the student reaches the age of 18, these accepted terms will automatically be regarded as agreed by the student.

### **Introduction**

The University of Leicester is committed to equal opportunities in its admissions; this is underpinned by the University's Single Equality Scheme. All applications are considered on their individual merits. Occasionally the University admits students who are under the age of 18 years. These students and their families should understand that the University of Leicester is an adult environment; students are expected to act as adults and to assume adult level of responsibility. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study and live independently alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Places are offered on the understanding that the students will be able to adapt to living away from home and deal with the practicalities that this involves. The University treats all its students as independent, mature individuals and students who are under the age of 18 years will be treated in the same way.

However, the University acknowledges that anyone under the age of 18 is legally a child and recognises that students under the age of 18 may therefore have different needs in relation to their support and wellbeing. Staff in support services, accommodation and academic departments work together to ensure the wellbeing of students under the age of 18 is maintained accordingly.

### **Parental Responsibility**

The University is not able to take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and it will not act *in loco parentis* in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years.

### **Guardian's Responsibility**

Where a student is from overseas and the parents remain abroad, the University requires contact details of a guardian for the child who is in the UK, who preferably lives in or near Leicester, and who will be accessible to the child and to the University should the need arise. The University requires a copy of the guardian's agreement with the parents, in which the guardian asserts that they will act on the parents' behalf until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Being a guardian involves carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of the parent as delegated by the child's parent(s). As such it is a private agreement between the parent and the guardian. The University is not able to assist parents in finding a suitable guardian but for those families who do not have friends or relatives in the UK, a list of accredited agencies can be obtained from:

The Association of Educational Guardians for International Students (AEGIS)

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1453 755160

Email: [aegisuk@btopenworld.com](mailto:aegisuk@btopenworld.com)

[www.aegisuk.net](http://www.aegisuk.net)

## **Emergency Contact**

It is particularly important that emergency contact details are provided for students under the age of 18 years and such students and/or their parents are required to supply this information prior to their arrival at the University.

## **Health**

In rare instances, consent for emergency medical treatment may be required before parents or guardians can be contacted. The University therefore requires parents to give their consent that, in the case of such an emergency, a senior member of the University has parental permission to act on medical advice and do what is in the best interests of the child. **By signing the enclosed pro-forma, the student's parents or guardians indicate their consent to act in this way.**

Parents or guardians are responsible for ensuring that the University has been informed of any special needs or requirements.

## **Parental Involvement**

It is the University's usual policy to deal with students and not with parents; this approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. Although those under 18 are regarded as children under UK law, they still have the legal right under the Data Protection Act (1998) for information about them not to be disclosed without their explicit consent. This means that the University is not able to give information to parents regarding the student's progress, results or any other personal circumstance unless the student has given specific consent. The University will therefore correspond with students, not parents.

## **Child Protection/Safeguarding**

As a matter of law, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. The University has a responsibility to protect those under the age of 18 years from abuse and is obliged to report any suspicions or allegations of abuse of children to the appropriate Social Services Officer. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to the University's Child Protection Officer who will contact the appropriate authorities.

## **Notification of Age of Student**

The relevant Head of Department and Residential Support Manager will be notified, prior to registration, of any student within their Faculty or residence who will be under the age of 18 years on entry to the University. The Personal Tutor and relevant Residential Advisors will also be notified. Teaching and other staff will not routinely be made aware of a student's age.

## **Contracts**

As a general rule, those under the age of 18 are unable to enter into legal contracts. Where contracts are required, e.g. for tuition fees or accommodation, the University requires parent or guardian to act as guarantors and to honour all obligations under any contracts with the University that the student enters into prior to his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. **By signing the enclosed pro-forma, the parent agrees to this.** Failure to pay debts due to the University could result in studies being suspended.

## **Student Accommodation**

Under 18's are normally allocated to en suite accommodation but this cannot be guaranteed. Parents should recognise that residential accommodation offered by the University is generally intended for the use of adults and that, save in exceptional circumstances (e.g. relating to health issues or disability), special arrangements cannot be made.

## **Field Trips**

Courses may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the University. The University is not able to take any additional responsibility for a student who is under the age of 18 years in relation to such activities. Unless indicated otherwise, **by signing the enclosed pro-forma the parent/guardian gives consent for the student to take part in these activities on that basis.** Students taking part in exchange programmes with other institutions will be required to adhere to the policies and procedures applicable to that place.

## **Alcohol and Tobacco**

It is illegal for alcohol or tobacco to be sold to or bought by individuals who are under the age of 18 years.

The University will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the University's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. Individuals are subject to random checks in relation to their age when using any licensed premises in the UK. The Students' Union is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its own licensed premises.

## **Relationship with staff**

Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which may include members of University staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years.

## **Holding Office**

Students who are under the age of 18 are encouraged to join University or Students' Union clubs and societies but are not able to hold office until after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (this is because Officers carry legal responsibilities). Their participation in certain activities may be limited.

