

Guidelines on the Production of Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes

2019-20 edition (v.1.0)

The Guidelines on the Production of Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes are produced, on behalf of the Academic Policy Committee, to assist schools in the preparation of student handbooks for taught programmes and ensure that students receive information about their schools and courses, and the University generally – including its regulations – that is relevant, comprehensive, timely and accurate.

The Guidelines are divided into three sections.

Editors must consult all three sections when preparing student handbooks.

Section 1 – General principles

Defines the University's agreed principles about the content, presentation and publication of student handbooks for taught programmes

Section 2 – Specific guidance about content

Contains specific guidance about required and recommended content for each handbook heading

Section 3 – Template

Standard text entries

Additional resources: A range of other resources accompany the guidelines to assist handbook editors. These include a cover/title page template, a font style guide and a web-site publishing help-document.¹

The pages below comprise section 2 of the handbook guidelines.

Section 2: Notes of guidance about content

About Section 2

This section contains guidance for handbook editors about content for inclusion in handbooks, but which schools are free to present to their students in the format that they feel best reflects the culture of the school and the needs of their students. Highlighted text within boxes indicates where centrally-supplied standard text is available; these entries have been pre-inserted into the handbook template.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Please look out for important notes of guidance, in particular, when consulting this section. Important notes are flagged by capitalised red text.

Standard text entries

Centrally supplied/standard text entries have been deliberately worded for accuracy and relevance to the majority of the student body.

Text variants for different types and levels of study

Standard text entries can be considered suitable for all taught students unless specified otherwise. If separate text entries are supplied that are specific to either undergraduate, taught postgraduate, campus-based or distance learning students then you should keep the text entry for the level and/or type of study relevant for your handbook and delete the standard text entries within that section that do not apply.

Order of headings

After the first topic (Welcome/Introduction), the order of headings is *generally* not significant and sections can be combined or further sub-divided if required.

Deletion of/amendment to standard text sections

Occasionally, it may be necessary for a handbook editor to omit a whole section altogether or to make minor amendments to the default text entry to ensure a handbook is applicable to its specific target student readership. An example may be deleting the special equipment section for a course with no such requirements. This is perfectly acceptable providing the revised text remains accurate and appropriately regulatory compliant.

Additional help with content

Editors with any uncertainty about the suitability of additional content or a proposed amendment to standard text are encouraged to discuss it with the contact named in the guidance section (where given) or with your College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office. It is strongly recommended that this discussion takes place at the earliest possible opportunity and not left until the intended handbook publication date.

Contents

Section 2: Notes of guidance about content	2
Welcome/Introduction.....	6
Induction	6
Special equipment (if applicable)	6
For international students	6
For Joint Degree Students (CB only – delete if not appropriate)	6
Your University Calendar and Teaching Timetable	6
Distance Learning Teams (DL only - delete if not applicable)	7
School Details	7
School Communications	7
Staff List and Key Contacts.....	7
Student Communications and Personal Details	8
School Facilities.....	8
Learning Support	8
University Library.....	8
IT Services	8
Student Learning Development.....	8
Learn a language with <i>Languages at Leicester</i> (Campus only – delete if not applicable).....	9
Your Students’ Union.....	9
Other University Facilities	9
University Regulations.....	9
Student Responsibilities and Conduct	9
Attendance and Engagement Requirements (Campus only).....	9
Engagement Requirements (DL only)	9
Neglect of Academic Obligations (campus only – delete section if not applicable).....	10
Examination regulations (for courses that involve examinations only)	10
Suspension of Studies	10

Withdrawal from Studies.....	10
Course Details.....	10
Programme and Module Specifications.....	10
Significant Experience – Year in Industry/Industrial Placement; Semester/Year Abroad (Campus only) ..	11
Coursework Submission.....	12
Change of Course/Module.....	12
Changes to Your course	12
Marking and Assessment Practices	12
Feedback and the Return of Work from Staff	12
Progression and Classification of Awards	13
Referencing and academic integrity.....	14
Mitigating Circumstances.....	14
Ethical Approval of Student Projects (if applicable).....	15
Personal Support for Students	15
School Student Support Arrangements	15
Equal Opportunities	15
University Student Support arrangements.....	15
Student Services Centre	15
AccessAbility Centre.....	16
Student Welfare Centre	16
Counselling and Wellbeing Service	16
Health Care and Registering with a Doctor (campus only).....	16
Careers and Skills Development.....	16
Feedback from Students.....	16
Student Voice: Giving us your feedback.....	16
Student Feedback Questionnaires.....	16
Student Staff Committees.....	17
School/Course Prizes	17

Societies.....	17
Safety and Security	17
Personal Belongings (campus only).....	17
Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedures	17

Welcome/Introduction

- Provide a welcome message from the Head of Department/School or (for handbooks for taught postgraduate programmes) from the Postgraduate Tutor or Course Director, in addition or instead;
- Define the purpose of the handbook and its length of life (i.e. whether it is designed for use throughout the course or for a shorter period).
- The welcome message should specifically mention students on single, joint, major and minor programmes, where appropriate.

Induction

- Give details of induction activities – introductory courses, welcome lectures, social gatherings – or other forms of induction. Include information about induction for joint students where available. Alternatively, advise how students will receive induction information and/or provide the webpage address of where this information can be found.
A standard text entry applicable for campus based first year students is provided for schools to customise.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Special equipment (if applicable)

- Give a reminder about any specialist equipment or clothing students are required to purchase
 - State any opportunities for purchase at special rates offered at the beginning of term.

Note: Non-programmable calculators approved for use in written examinations in 2019/20 will be specified on the Student and Academic Services website (see www.le.ac.uk/sas/assessments/examsguide)

For international students

- Give details of any specific induction programme;
- Identify who a student should contact if they arrive late and miss the induction session(s).

For Joint Degree Students (CB only – delete if not appropriate)

Include any specific information for new students on Joint degrees, such as links to the relevant sections of <https://le.ac.uk/study/welcome/advice/prepare-to-study> and <https://le.ac.uk/study/welcome/advice/joint-major-minor>.

Students studying on Joint and Major/Minor degree programmes should receive handbooks for both subjects.

Your University Calendar and Teaching Timetable

- State the procedure for notifying students about any timetable alterations;
- Give explanatory notes about the operation of the timetable (if necessary);
- Confirm the timing and describe the purpose of reading week(s), where offered.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Distance Learning Teams (DL only - delete if not applicable)

Please note that the information in the Distance Learning Teams standard text entry is subject to change. Clear communications highlighting the change will be sent to affected students, schools and other key stakeholders in due course. Redirection messages will be present for email address as applicable.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

School Details

- Give the URL of the webpage where a brief description and history of the school can be found or provide a summary in the handbook;
- State where the school is physically located (refer to www2.le.ac.uk/maps if appropriate);
- Give the URL of where information about staff research areas can be found or provide a summary in the handbook.

School Communications

- Provide information about:
 - pigeon-holes and noticeboards;
 - arrangements for students contacting:
 - Head of Department/School
 - other academic staff
 - personal tutors
 - administrative staff;
 - school office hours.

Staff List and Key Contacts

- Provide the webpage address of a full staff list for the school (academic and administrative);
- List the key roles in the school, the associated member of staff in the role, together with a brief description of their duties:

Example:

	Duties	Member of staff	Contact details
Head of School			
Programme contacts			
•			
Officers and Tutors:			
• Senior Tutor			
• AccessAbility Tutor			
• Examinations Officer			
• Equal Opportunities Officer			
• Postgraduate Tutor			
• Joint Degree Tutor/Advisor			
Administrative Staff			
• [key contact(s)]			

Student Communications and Personal Details

- State how students should inform the school of a change of contact details (if applicable).

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

School Facilities

- Provide information about:
 - photocopying and fax arrangements (if any);
 - computing facilities;
 - workspaces for students (if any)
 - associated rules/requirements about student conduct
 - additional computer facilities available for disabled students in the AccessAbility Centre;
 - laboratory arrangements (if applicable);
 - any special collections of books or materials held by the school;
 - any charges made for consumables or services, together with arrangements for payment.

Learning Support

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

University Library

- Give the location of the relevant subject specific information on the University Library website. For a list of the subject pages, visit www.le.ac.uk/library/find/subjects. For example, this is the information page for Law: www.le.ac.uk/library/find/subjects/law

Text for Undergraduate handbooks:

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Text for Taught Postgraduate handbooks:

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

IT Services

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Student Learning Development

- Describe study skills of particular relevance to subject/discipline (*optional*);
- In addition to referring students to Student Learning Development's resources and services, you should also refer to examples of collaborative, curriculum-level work. For example, it is very common for academic schools to work closely with Student Learning Development on the design and delivery of modules. Student Learning Development also frequently works with schools to support mainstream curriculum activities such as dissertation projects, group work projects, presentations etc. It is important to refer to such collaborative activities as these because this represents a much larger proportion of Student Learning Development's work than central resources and services and demonstrates the academic school's commitment to providing relevant and tailored academic support to its students.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Learn a language with *Languages at Leicester* (Campus only – delete if not applicable)

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry.

Your Students' Union

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Other University Facilities

- Draw students' attention to these services (*optional*):
 - English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) www2.le.ac.uk/offices/eltu ;
 - University Chaplaincy and Prayer rooms for students www2.le.ac.uk/institution/chaplaincy .

University Regulations

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Practice **must comply** with Senate Regulations (www.le.ac.uk/senate-regulations) unless special dispensation from a particular regulation has been formally granted by the **Quality and Standards Sub-Committee**, or previously the Academic Policy Committee.

Handbook editors are responsible for liaising with programme directors to make sure that all information contained in student handbooks is compatible with regulations.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Student Responsibilities and Conduct

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Attendance and Engagement Requirements (Campus only)

Campus-based programmes

- Describe any school or course specific attendance requirements that apply;
- Warn students of the consequences of unauthorised absence, especially where maintenance of a specific level of attendance or submission of work in practical classes is required for the purpose of progression (refer students to Senate Regulation 4: governing student obligations. Editors should also consult the Policy on Attendance at Timetabled Teaching Events – see www.le.ac.uk/senate-regulations for both documents).

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Engagement Requirements (DL only)

Distance learning programmes

- Alert students to the existence of any requirement for attendance at specific learning and teaching sessions, if relevant – e.g. summer school.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Neglect of Academic Obligations (campus only – delete section if not applicable)

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Examination regulations (for courses that involve examinations only)

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Suspension of Studies

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Withdrawal from Studies

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Course Details

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Departments must pay close attention to Senate Regulations when preparing student handbooks. Handbook editors are responsible for liaising with programme directors to make sure that all student handbook content is compatible with regulations, excepting where special dispensation from a specific regulation(s) has been formally granted by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee, or previously the Academic Policy Committee, to a particular course/school.

Editors should check in particular that course information in student handbooks complies with [Senate Regulations](#) relating to:

- normal and maximum periods of registration (see **Senate Regulation 2**, paragraphs 2.20 to 2.29);
- mitigating circumstances procedure (see **Senate Regulation 7**, paragraphs 7.97 to 7.113);
- late submission of coursework (see **Senate Regulation 7**, paragraphs 7.91 to 7.96);
- scheme of progression and award (for undergraduate students, see the version of **Senate Regulation 5 particular to the student cohort**; for taught postgraduate students, see **Senate Regulation 6**);
- student discipline (see **Senate Regulation 11**);

and

- ensure that course and module particulars match those specified in relevant programme specifications and module specifications (see the Student and Academic Services website for the formally approved versions of these documents: www.le.ac.uk/sas/courses/documentation).

Please contact your College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office to discuss any additional text proposed relating to regulatory issues.

Programme and Module Specifications

Note: Programme and module specifications are the official source of information about learning and teaching arrangements for a programme/module. Their contents are formally approved at school/college/University-levels as appropriate. Refer students to programme and module specifications in preference to duplicating in handbooks the information that they contain.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Significant Experience – Year in Industry/Industrial Placement; Semester/Year Abroad (Campus only)

Significant Experience – Undergraduate courses

The University's employability strategy is for all undergraduate students to gain experience and undertake some form of work related learning whilst at university.

As part of this, the University instructed all schools to embed within their degree programmes the Leicester Award in year 1 and Leicester Award Gold in year 2, both providing a spine of support for students to secure a significant experience.

- Where you offer a significant experience you should give information about this, or refer to where details can be found.

Typical opportunities programmes offer include:

- a semester or a year abroad
- a year in industry or an industrial placement
- work-related learning modules
- opportunities to work on employer/real-work projects

Please customise the appropriate standard text entry following the additional guidance given below and delete entries that do not apply.

For Year in Industry (UG)/Industrial Placement (PG) courses:

- You should insert within the standard text entry information about:
 - relevant contacts to students including;
 - Key contacts such as Placement Tutor, and Placement Adviser
 - how to register/transfer to attend the Placement Preparation modules
 - Define any special course transfer arrangements that apply (e.g. from three- to four-year programmes).
 - any course specific deadlines or requirements.
 - Eligibility Criteria (requirements for year 1 or 2 as appropriate)
 - Deadline for application
 - UG - 1st September
 - PG (September intake) – 1st June
 - PG (January intake) – 1st January

For degree modules that are work-related learning modules or opportunities to work on employer/real-work projects:

- You should ensure that this information is clearly referenced in the degree module where the student will have access to work-related activity.

For Semester/Year Abroad courses:

- You should insert within the standard text entry information about:
 - relevant contacts to students, including: key contacts such as school Study Abroad co-ordinator
 - school eligibility criteria and course transfer procedure

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Coursework Submission

- Give details of school systems for submission and distribution of assessed work.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The penalties for late submission defined in Senate Regulation 7 were updated in August 2017. Please discuss any edits to this section with your College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office to check that the regulations have been correctly interpreted.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Change of Course/Module

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Changes to Your course

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Note: This section provides information to students regarding how the University will handle changes to a course. It refers to terms and conditions which provide more detail on the types of changes the University could make and the reasons for making them. It also provides students with an anticipated timescale of when they are likely to be notified of changes.

Marking and Assessment Practices

IMPORTANT NOTE

Editors must pay close attention when compiling this section to the assessment regulations ([Senate Regulation 7](#)) and [Senate Regulation 5](#) governing undergraduate programmes of study, or [Senate Regulation 6](#) governing taught postgraduate programmes, as appropriate.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Provide or state where students can access the assessment criteria, rubrics or marking grids that apply to their programme of study.

Editors should note that Senate Regulation 7.5 states that: “Marking shall be undertaken in accordance with agreed written criteria. All marking schemes and processes, regardless of format, should secure reliability and transparency through the use of assessment criteria, rubrics or marking grids to which all markers and students have access.”

- State any other relevant school procedures about marking practices (for example, if a project supervisor cannot also be an examiner of the project);
- Describe how the Board of Examiners conducts its business (optional but information of this sort can reinforce the message that procedures are transparent and robust; refer closely to [Senate Regulation 7](#) when composing any such entry).

Feedback and the Return of Work from Staff

IMPORTANT NOTE

Ensure that student handbook editor added content complies with the University’s [Policy on the Return of Marked Work](#). Editors should note in particular that the Policy now features a selection of schemes for **provision of feedback on examination performance**.

- Ensure students are notified in programme/module handbooks of the submission and return dates for all coursework;
- Indicate the amount of feedback that will normally be provided for assessed work and the various forms in which feedback will be given (e.g. written feedback, verbal feedback at the end of a lecture/seminar, etc.);
- Announce the procedures for the issue of examination results and for giving feedback on examination performance;
- State the opportunities provided by the school for the discussion of a student's performance (e.g. consultation with the personal tutor, etc.).

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Progression and Classification of Awards

IMPORTANT NOTE:

When preparing text for this section, editors should pay particularly close attention to [Senate Regulation 5](#) or [Senate Regulation 6](#) as well as any approved course specific progression or award requirements that are stated within the programme specification.

Decimal places: Editors should note recent changes about the expression of the marks of modules, their component assessments and credit weighted average (CWA) marks for all students from 2019/20. Contact Student Records or your College Academic Advisor if you require assistance.

Provide information about:

- school requirements concerning compulsory elements (e.g. laboratory work) and pre-requisites (if any);
- the possible outcomes should a student fail to achieve a pass mark for an assessment:
 - at first attempt (e.g. a July/August re-sit);
 - at a subsequent attempt (e.g. the possibility they will not be permitted to proceed to the next year of their course in 2020/21 or will not meet the requirements for the award for which they registered).

Undergraduate Handbooks:

IMPORTANT NOTE:

There are now two versions of Senate Regulation 5. There are important differences between the two (examples are 'pass for credit' and 'compensated fail'). Where a school is providing handbooks to new and returning students the editor should make sure to **reflect the correct regulations and terminology for the particular student group.**

Please consult the table below for help in identifying the correct version of Senate Regulation 5.

Student group	Applicable SR5 by publication date
Students commencing their studies in 2016/17 or earlier	2017/18 regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2017/18 and successfully proceeding into year 2 (Level 5) in 2018/19	2017/18 regulations
Direct entry students into year 2 (Level 5) in 2018/19	2017/18 regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2017-18 but undertaking a repeat year in 2018/19	2018/19 regulations

Students commencing their studies in 2018/19	2018/19 regulations
Students transferring into the first year of a new programme in 2018/19	2018/19 regulations
Students commencing their studies in 2019/20	2018/19 regulations

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Taught Postgraduate Handbooks

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Revisions to Senate Regulation 6 were approved by Senate in July 2015, and apply to all PGT students commencing their studies in the 2015/16 academic year or later. Students who commenced their studies between September 2012 and June 2015 will be considered under the regulations that were in place when they registered.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Referencing and academic integrity

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Editors should pay particularly close attention to the assessment and disciplinary regulations ([Senate Regulation 7](#) and [Senate Regulation 11](#), respectively) when preparing additional content for this section.

It is strongly recommended that handbooks provide links to the relevant sections of the regulations rather than including copied extracts. This is to ensure that there is a single definitive source of the regulations.

- Describe the rules the school operates in relation to the presentation of assessed essays, dissertations, presentations and project and practical work and correct referencing (alternatively direct students to where this information can be found);
- Advise if Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used. In addition, provide a statement regarding copyright/intellectual property with regards to Turnitin (further details available here: http://www.turnitin.com/en_us/usage-policy);
- State any requirement to give a written undertaking that their work is original (student declaration on academic honesty);
- Provide (or refer students to a webpage or other source where they can find) an explanation of what plagiarism means in the context of the particular academic subject. Give examples of good and bad practice (*strongly recommended*). Departments should also consider including information for students regarding any sessions of formal teaching related to academic integrity as well as referring students to relevant resources provided by the Library and Student Learning Development;
- Where appropriate refer to specific resources designed to help students understand the principles and practices of academic integrity, referencing and avoiding plagiarism.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Mitigating Circumstances

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Include details of the School's Mitigating Circumstances Expert.

- Editors should refer to Senate Regulation 7 and the Mitigating Circumstances Policy if adding any additional text to the standard text entry:
 - www.le.ac.uk/senate-regulation7
 - [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)
- If a course makes use of small scale assessments, such as regular labs or class assessments, editors should describe when it is appropriate for a student to self-certify and for how many attempts. This is in line with section 7 of the Policy.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please discuss proposed additions to this section with your College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office.

Ethical Approval of Student Projects (if applicable)

- Where ethical approval may be required for research work, state the process by which students apply for and receive such approval;
- The University Protocol for Ethical Approval of student work is available at:
www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/protocol-for-ethical-approval-of-student-work-non-clinical-research-on-human-subjects

Personal Support for Students

School Student Support Arrangements

- Describe the school arrangements for pastoral support, with particular reference to the role of the personal tutor;
- Give details of how students find out who their personal is and how to contact them (or refer to Departmental Communications section of the handbook if this where this information is given);
- State arrangements for dealing with students requiring immediate advice or assistance when a personal tutor is not available (e.g. Senior Tutor, Head of Department);
- Confirm willingness to provide opportunities for students to discuss personal matters with staff other than their personal tutor where appropriate.
- Include guidance for joint, major, and minor students
- Note: students should be allocated a personal tutor in their Major department and they should have a nominated point of contact in their Minor department.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Equal Opportunities

- Identify the Department/School's Equal Opportunities Officer;
- Advise how students should raise any concerns related to equal opportunities (ethnicity, gender, disability, etc.)

University Student Support arrangements

Note: Departmental handbooks provide an opportunity to remind students about the holistic service offered by the University to meet their needs in the major areas of student life, health and well-being, practical matters, and learning and career development.

Student Services Centre

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

AccessAbility Centre

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Refer to any school facilities for students with disabilities
- Identify the school AccessAbility Tutor

Student Welfare Centre

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Counselling and Wellbeing Service

Student Counselling Support

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Student Mental Wellbeing Support

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Student Healthy Living Service

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Health Care and Registering with a Doctor (campus only)

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Careers and Skills Development

- Mention the Leicester Award is a core component of the first year designed to help students enhance their employability. Mention the ways in which the school collaborates with the Career Development Service in this respect;
- Describe the Careers Tutor's responsibilities, identify him/her, and provide contact details;
- If you need any further information please contact Jay Hardman (jh626@le.ac.uk or 0116 252 2317).

See Section 3: Template

Feedback from Students

See Section 3: Template

Student Voice: Giving us your feedback

If available, provide details or links to any school pages about how student feedback was enacted upon in previous years.

Student Feedback Questionnaires

- Describe school procedures for the issue and consideration of feedback questionnaires:
 - how often they will be expected to complete module or course questionnaires;
 - the ways in which the school will use the feedback;
 - how the school will report back to the students on any action taken.

Student Staff Committees

IMPORTANT NOTE

Departments must operate Student Staff Committees in accordance with procedures set out in the [Code of Practice on the Work of Student Staff Committees](#). Please consult the Code when preparing text for this section.

- Describe (or direct students to a webpage where the information can be found) the operative arrangements of the school Student Staff Committee, including:
 - election arrangements for the student chair and course representatives;
 - meeting frequency/dates;
 - methods of raising business;
 - distribution arrangements for minutes.

School/Course Prizes

- Give details of any school/course prizes, travel awards or bursaries, providing this information is approved by your college for release in student handbooks.

Societies

- Give details of any subject-based societies which may be of interest to students, and include meeting dates or contact names as appropriate.

Safety and Security

- Include a general statement about safety (evacuation procedures, first aiders, no-smoking policy, etc.);
- Refer to where information about laboratory safety procedures can be found (*laboratory-based schools only*);
- Explain how identity badges (if required) are issued and how replacement procedures operate;
- State any restrictions on access to buildings or parts of buildings and related procedures.

Personal Belongings (campus only)

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedures

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

¹ The Guidelines on the Production of Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes (Sections 1 and 2) and accompanying additional resources are published at: www.le.ac.uk/sas/quality/handbook-production.