Guidelines on the Production of Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes

The Guidelines on the Production of Student Handbooks for Taught Programmes are produced, on behalf of the Academic Policy Committee, to assist departments in the preparation of student handbooks for taught programmes and ensure that students receive information about their departments 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 departments are free to present to their students in the format that they feel best reflects the departmental culture 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.

Campus-based/distance learning text variants

Standard text entries are available for handbooks for distance learning students. If no separate text is supplied for campus-based or distance learning handbooks then the entry is considered suitable for all taught students.

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.
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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, major and minor students where available. Alternatively, advise how students will receive induction information/provide webpage address of where this information can be found.

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 2018/19 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 and Major/Minor students (UG Pathways Students only – delete if not appropriate)

Include any specific information for students on Joint or Major/Minor combinations, 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 handbooks should receive handbooks for both subjects

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

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Department Details

- Give the URL of the webpage where a brief departmental description and history can be found or provide a summary in the handbook;
- State where the department 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.
Departmental Communications

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

Staff List and Key Contacts

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

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Member of staff</th>
<th>Contact details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme contacts</td>
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<td>Officers and Tutors:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Senior Tutor</td>
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<td>• AccessAbility Tutor</td>
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<td>• Examinations Officer</td>
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<td>• Equal Opportunities Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Postgraduate Tutor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Major/ Minor Tutor/Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint Degree Tutor/Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Staff</td>
<td>[key contact(s)]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Communications and Personal Details

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

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

Departmental 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 department;
  - any charges made for consumables or services, together with arrangements for payment.
Learning Support

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

University Library

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

- 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

IT Services

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Student Learning Development

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- 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 departments to work closely with Student Learning Development on the design and delivery of modules. Student Learning Development also frequently works with departments 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 department’s commitment to providing relevant and tailored academic support to its students.

Learn a new 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 Training 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:**
Departmental practice must comply with Senate Regulations ([www.le.ac.uk/senate-regulations](http://www.le.ac.uk/senate-regulations)) unless special dispensation from a particular regulation has been formally granted by 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

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

**Campus-based programmes**

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

**Distance learning programmes**

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Describe any specific departmental 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 11: governing student discipline [https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/Senatereg11-discipline.pdf](https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/Senatereg11-discipline.pdf)).

**Distance learning programmes**

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

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

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 Academic Policy Committee to a particular course/department.

Editors should check in particular that course information in student handbooks complies with the 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);
• PGT scheme of progression and award (see Senate Regulation 6 NB: applies to students who commenced their studies in the 2015-16 academic year or later);
• 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

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

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 departmental/college/university levels as appropriate. Refer students to programme and module specifications in preference to duplicating in handbooks the information that they contain.

Significant Experience - ERASMUS Exchanges, Years Abroad, Industrial Placements/Year in Industry

Significant Experience

The University believes it is important for all students to gain experience and undertake some form of work related learning whilst at university. The Career Development Service is working to promote opportunities for students to gain some form of experience and achieve this through completion of the Leicester Award and Leicester Award Gold. Students should be signposted to the Career Development Service.

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:

• ERASMUS exchanges
• years abroad
• industrial placements also known as “year in industry”
• work-related learning modules
• opportunities to work on employer/real-work projects

Example: ‘Year in Industry’:

➢ Year in Industry, or industrial placements, are provided in association with the Career Development Service who in conjunction with the Department support placement preparation and placement approval and management processes. You should give information about year in industry contacts including placement tutors, how to register, and any department specific deadlines or requirements. You should also give information or refer to where details can be found on placement preparation support, placement approval processes, on-placement support and post-placement arrangement, referencing the Careers Development Service.

➢ Define any special course transfer arrangements that apply (e.g. from three- to four-year programmes).

Teaching Timetable

➢ Advise how the students will find out their 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.

**Coursework Submission**

- Give details of departmental 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

**Course changes**

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

*Note:* This section provides information to students regarding how the University will handle course changes. 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 programme level marking criteria, or in the case of joint degrees, appropriate marking criteria for each subject area within the degree;
- State any other relevant department 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);
- Identify the relevant External Examiner, their institution and term of appointment, or alternatively refer students to the SAS website where this information can be found (see below). Advise that it is not appropriate for students to contact the external examiner for their course.
  - For undergraduate programmes - www.le.ac.uk/sas/assessments/external/current-undergraduate
  - For taught postgraduate programmes www.le.ac.uk/sas/assessments/external/current-postgraduate-external-examiners
- Provide a link to where External Examiner reports for the programme(s) can be accessed
For all programmes

https://exampapers.le.ac.uk/xmlui/

Feedback and the Return of Work from Staff

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

**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 department for the discussion of a student’s performance (e.g. consultation with the personal tutor, etc.).

Progression and Classification of Awards

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**
Editors should pay particularly close attention to Senate Regulation 5 or Senate Regulation 6, as appropriate, when preparing text in this section.

**Text for Undergraduate Handbooks:**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**
Revisions to Senate Regulation 5 were approved by Senate in November 2017. There are now two versions of Senate Regulation 5 – one that applies to students who commenced their studies before the 2018/19 academic year, and a version that applies to new entrants in 2018/19. Where a department is providing handbooks to new and returning students the editor should make sure to reflect the correct regulations for that entry cohort.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

**Text for 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. Students who registered for their current course in 2011-12 or earlier will be assessed under the previous Schemes A and B.

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Provide information about:

- departmental 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 September 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 2019/20 or will not meet the requirements for the award for which they registered).

### 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 department 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](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

- Departments should include details of their Mitigating Circumstances Expert.
- Departments must make reference to Senate Regulation 7 and the Mitigating Circumstances Policy at the links below:
  - [https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/senatereg7-assessment.pdf](https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/senatereg7-assessment.pdf)
  - [https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/allied-policies/MitigatingCircumstancesPolicy201718.v4.2.pdf](https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/regulations/documents/allied-policies/MitigatingCircumstancesPolicy201718.v4.2.pdf)
- If a department makes use of small scale assessments, such as regular labs or class assessments, they 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 departmental additions to this section with your College Academic Advisor in the Quality Office.

Ethical Approval of Student Projects

- 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](http://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

Departmental Student Support Arrangements

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Describe the departmental arrangements for pastoral support, with particular reference to the role of the personal tutor;
- 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.

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.

AccessAbility Centre

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

- Refer to any departmental facilities for students with disabilities
- Identify the Departmental 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 – delete section if not applicable)

Text for Undergraduate student handbooks – campus-based programmes
See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

Text for Postgraduate student handbooks – campus-based programmes
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 department 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 Anna Flatt (anna.graves@leicester.ac.uk) or 0116 252 2318.

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 departmental pages about how student feedback was enacted upon in previous years.

Student Feedback Questionnaires

- Describe departmental procedures for the issue and consideration of feedback questionnaires:
  o how often they will be expected to complete module or course questionnaires;
  o the ways in which the department will use the feedback;
  o how the department 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 departmental Student Staff Committee, including:
- election arrangements for the student chair and course representatives;
- meeting frequency/dates;
- methods of raising business;
- distribution arrangements for minutes.

**Departmental Prizes**

Give details of any departmental 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 departments 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**

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

**Complaints and Academic Appeals Procedures**

See Section 3: Template for standard text entry

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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](http://www.le.ac.uk/sas/quality/handbook-production).