



# STUDENT CHARTER

May 2020

## UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK STUDENT CHARTER

### INTRODUCTION

The University's mission is to build on the expertise of our scholars in creating, harnessing and imparting knowledge for the benefit of our students and the enrichment of our community.

Our goal is to foster a student-centred learning and research environment to enable students to develop as independent, creative and critical thinkers, which will help them to become engaged citizens, professionals and potential future leaders.

This Student Charter describes what students can expect from the University and what the University expects of its students. The Charter is guided by the principles of quality service as set out in the Code of Governance for Irish Universities.

This Student Charter does not constitute a Charter pursuant to Section 31 of the Universities Act, 1997.

### WHAT STUDENTS CAN EXPECT FROM THE UNIVERSITY

#### 1. Quality Service Standards

The University of Limerick believes that teaching, learning and research is a partnership in which the University and students have a shared responsibility. The aim of this Student Charter is to ensure that this shared responsibility is clearly stated such that both the University and its students can achieve a high level of satisfaction from the teaching, learning and research process. This Charter has been discussed and agreed with students and staff, endorsed by Academic Council and approved by Governing Authority.

The University recognises its responsibility to provide students with an environment which is conducive to intellectual growth, personal and professional development and is underpinned by the principles of fairness, equity and integrity.

The University of Limerick is committed to the development and implementation of a holistic approach to sustainable development, in partnership with the communities we serve, locally and regionally, and through our national and international alliances. We aim to enable our students, graduates and staff to engage as 'active citizens' who contribute to the well-being and future of our planet and our communities

The University is dedicated to providing taught students with an educational experience of a quality that will enhance their ability to participate in their chosen career. Wherever appropriate, programmes will be vocationally relevant and will endeavour to address the cultural, social and economic needs of society and the world at large, and, if required, will satisfy the particular requirements of accrediting professional bodies. Programmes are designed where possible, and within the requirements of professional accreditation, to include a range of optional modules.

The University is committed to ensuring that postgraduate research (PGR) students have access to learning activities and professional advice that will support the fundamental requirements of research education, and career development.

The University is committed to ensuring that PGR students are appointed a supervisor and are supervised in accordance with the [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) and policy and procedures on supervision and research student progression outlined in the [Postgraduate Student Handbook](#).

The University is committed to providing, where practicable, a range of suitable and accessible support and guidance services, including information and learning resources. Health services, personal counselling, career advice, chaplaincy, childcare facilities and various educational services will be provided. The University will support Student Life (the University's undergraduate students' union) and UL Postgraduate Students' Union (ULPSU) in their complementary provision of services.

The University will endeavour to provide a range of reasonably priced and good quality accommodation and catering. The University also seeks to provide access to a broad range of arts, culture, leisure and sporting facilities geared to the size and diversity of its student population.

The University is committed to supporting on- and off-campus learning through the adoption of new and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and equity of teaching and learning experience.

The University is committed to ensuring that all staff are qualified and experienced to levels commensurate with the responsibilities of their post.

The University recognises its statutory responsibility for maintaining procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of its services. In line with international good practice and national statutory requirements, the University of Limerick undertakes periodic quality reviews of its educational, research and related services every seven years. Coordinated by the Quality Support Unit, the quality review process represents one cornerstone institutional quality assurance and enhancement mechanism. Information relating to the current cycle of quality review activity is available [here](#). Evaluation of service delivery is conducted through student feedback and the quality review process.

The University adopts an integrated approach to service delivery. All professional service units have, or in the case of new units, are working towards, implementing a quality management system (QMS) modelled on the ISO seven principles of quality management. As part of the QMS, each unit publishes a customer charter which outlines the services provided to both internal customers and external stakeholders.

## **2. Human Rights, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The University of Limerick recognises the real benefits of having a diverse community of employees and students. To this end, the University is working towards building and maintaining an inclusive environment, which promotes equality, values diversity and respects the rights and dignity of all. The University Equality and Diversity Policy is available [here](#).

The University's Access and Widening Participation [Policy](#) seeks to provide entry mechanisms, programmes and support services that ensure equality of entry, participation and outcome for all student groups at the University of Limerick.

The University operates primarily through the medium of the English language. However, the University has made significant developments in its provision of Irish medium and bilingual services. Further details are available from the [Corporate Secretary's website](#).

## **3. Access to Buildings and Resources**

The [Buildings and Estates](#) Department at the University of Limerick develops and maintains the physical environment and infrastructure that enables the University to carry out its mission of excellence in teaching and research. Work and study places comply with occupational and safety standards. The

University endeavours to provide physical access for people with abilities that required additional support and other specific needs.

Departments/Schools and service divisions ensure that students have the necessary facilities and access to the appropriate academic resources to complete their programme of study. Appropriate facilities will be provided to ensure that approved student projects can be completed. Appropriate facilities for research students, including an adequate study space and access to appropriate equipment and support facilities will be provided.

#### **4. Timely and Accurate Information**

The University takes a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available to all points of contact and meets the requirements of people with specific needs.

The University provides accurate and up-to-date information about its educational programmes. This information is contained in the undergraduate prospectus, the postgraduate prospectus, the student handbook and specific information distributed by those involved in the delivery of each programme. Students are provided with full and detailed information about their programme of study, including the nature and goals of the programme, and any prerequisite skills and knowledge required.

Students will be invited to avail of introduction and orientation sessions which will be provided by both faculty and graduates (where available) of the programme. This will usually happen by the first week of the programme, including the provision of course outlines and any specific course regulations.

At the beginning of a semester and where relevant, each student will receive information detailing the modules to be taken, the methods of delivery and assessment, the choice of elective modules and, any arrangements for supervised work experience. Students will be made aware of procedures and deadlines for the submission of all course work, projects and dissertations. Should a change in the assessment procedure be necessary after commencement of the module, consultation and feedback from the class will be obtained before a final decision on change is implemented.

Information and advice will be provided to research students in relation to the annual progression process as outlined in the academic regulations and administered by his/her Department/Schools, and if necessary, the requirement for any subsequent Research Confirmation, and Research Progression Appeal Panels.

Where necessary, students will be provided with appropriate health and safety information and training e.g. manual handling, chemical handling and first aid.

Information will be provided to funded research students with respect to undertaking unpaid academic support (laboratory demonstrating, tutoring or other academic work) up to a maximum of six hours per week, provided that this does not conflict with any terms and conditions associated with their funding from external agencies. Where appropriate, information will be provided to research students pertaining to paid academic support opportunities up to a maximum of six hours per week that may exist from time to time in UL Departments/Schools. The availability of these opportunities is subject to the agreement and sign-off by the Supervisor and Head of Department/School.

Information will be provided to research students regarding the University's Intellectual Property policy, additional financial support available to undertake field research, presentation of papers at academic conferences, dissemination of research results and joining academic/professional networks.

## **5. Courtesy and Respect**

The University is committed to delivering quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a culture of mutual respect between staff and students.

## **6. Consultation on Decisions that Impact Students**

The University involves students in the decision-making process regarding academic and research matters and other aspects of student life. This is achieved through student representatives from Student Life and the Postgraduate Students Union who sit on various University committees. The systematic feedback of student opinion is achieved through the class representative system and via surveys and other feedback mechanisms distributed by the appropriate office within the University. The University supports and acknowledges the role of the Class Representatives Council.

The University is committed to gathering and responding to student and other stakeholder feedback. Departments and Schools will provide formal and informal processes for student evaluation of programmes, including written evaluations and opportunities to meet with external examiners where feasible.

## **7. Timely Complaints and Appeals Procedures**

The University recognises that, from time to time, students may have legitimate complaints about its provision, facilities, services and staff. The University aims to ensure that student complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. In addition, to improve service delivery and enhance the student experience, the University aims to learn from the outcomes of investigations into complaints. Complaints made or concerns raised will be treated sensitively and professionally. The University Student Complaints policy and procedures are available [here](#).

The University maintains independent and impartial procedures for dealing justly and in a timely manner with appeals of its decisions. The University's Admissions appeals process is outlined [here](#). The University's Grading appeals process is available [here](#). The Procedure for managing allegations of misconduct in research are available [here](#).

## **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY EXPECTS FROM ITS STUDENTS ON TAUGHT PROGRAMMES**

The University believes that teaching and learning is a partnership in which the University and students have a shared responsibility. To help us meet the principles outlined above, we would ask students on taught programmes to adhere to the following:

### **1. Responsibility for Learning**

Although the University assumes that each student will take responsibility for his/her own learning, it is expected that every student will attend lectures, tutorials and laboratory periods and supervision where relevant, and as required by their individual programme of study. Full-time programme classes normally operate on a Monday to Friday 09.00 to 18.00 basis and the University expects students to attend at any given time within these periods as required by their individual programme of study.

The University expects each student to take responsibility for his/her learning by managing their studies in such a way as to achieve their optimal performance in all subjects within their programme of study. When appropriate, students should endeavour to engage with each other and with academic staff in intellectual debate and enquiry.

## **2. Engagement with Information**

The University expects students to familiarise themselves with the [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) their relevant Student Handbook and perform any requested duties therein within the appropriate time span.

Students should make themselves fully aware of individual module assessment requirements and should respond appropriately to course work deadlines.

## **3. Engagement with Services**

The University expects students to attend orientation and induction sessions to familiarise themselves with the range of services available to them to support their learning and student experience. Students are responsible for ensuring that all registration procedures are completed prior to or during week one of each semester or within required timelines.

Students are expected to make themselves available for academic counselling and constructive feedback when requested.

## **4. Integrity**

The University expects students not to plagiarise (i.e., present another's ideas or writings as their own), fabricate or falsify data, commission others to complete assessments or engage in academic cheating in any form whatsoever. Project work undertaken by the student on a taught programme should be clearly defined, well-planned and where necessary, have Research Ethics approval.

## **5. Feedback and Consultation on Decisions that Impact Students**

The University invites students to constructively contribute, via their class representatives and other feedback mechanisms, to the improvement of all aspects of programme organisation and service provision.

## **6. Courtesy and Respect**

The University expects students to behave in an acceptable and considerate manner towards each other, towards University staff and towards its neighbours. The University expects students to respect all University property and that of the University's neighbours, act in a responsible manner and adhere to the highest ethical standards in behaviour and language.

## **7. Appropriate use of Buildings and Resources**

The University expects students to use the University facilities and resources in an acceptable and considerate manner which respects the needs and aspirations of others to learn, teach, research and work within the community of the University.

## **WHAT THE UNIVERSITY EXPECTS FROM ITS POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH (PGR) STUDENTS**

To help us meet the principles outlined in this Charter, we would ask research students to adhere to the following:

### **1. Responsibility for Learning**

The University expects PGR students to familiarise themselves with the scope and plan for research, and the academic support (including grading, laboratory demonstrating, tutoring etc.) and administrative requirements of the Department/Schools that they are registered with.

PGR students are expected to complete the requisite taught element, where appropriate, of their programme to the required standard and adhere to the progression requirements of their programme.

## **2. Integrity**

PGR students are expected to conduct their research within the ethical standards of the academic discipline(s) and in accordance with the standards detailed by the University. Students must adhere to all relevant policies of the University, including the [Research Integrity](#) policy.

PGR students must adhere to all relevant policies of the University; and are expected to undertake Research Integrity Training. Where relevant, PGR students must seek the appropriate ethical approval from the University for their research project.

## **3. Engagement with Information**

The University expects students to familiarise themselves with the administrative processes, codes of practice and Regulations as published on the [Graduate and Professional Studies](#) website, including the [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) as it relates to research students and the Postgraduate Handbook.

Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions pertaining to any scholarship funding offered during the period of the research, including the *Key Principles for University-awarded Funded Scholarships for Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs)*.

## **4. Engagement with services**

Postgraduate Research Students are expected to attend Postgraduate Research Student induction sessions to familiarise themselves with the range of services available to them to support their research, learning and student experience. Students should make themselves available for academic counselling and constructive feedback when requested.

## **5. Feedback and Consultation on Decisions that Impact Students**

The University invites students to constructively contribute, via the Postgraduate Students' Union and class representatives and other feedback mechanisms, to the improvement of all aspects of programme organisation and service provision.

## **6. Professionalism, Courtesy and Respect**

The University expects students to maintain a professional working relationship with their supervisor(s), follow the guidance provided by their supervisor and attend any arranged meetings, to agree in writing deadlines for submission of written work together with a plan to progress the research.

Students are expected to seek approval from their supervisor/Head of Department/School to carry out duties in the University that are outside their Department's/School's remit (e.g. invigilating, laboratory demonstrating/ tutoring for other UL Faculties Departments/Schools).

The University expects students to inform their supervisor, Department/School, or Student Administration as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days after the event of anything which might affect their research progress, for example, extended absence, illness etc.

The University expects students to respect all University property and that of the University's neighbours, act in a responsible manner and adhere to the highest ethical standards in behaviour and language.

## **7. Appropriate use of Buildings and Resources**

The University expects students to use the University facilities and resources in an acceptable and considerate manner which respects the needs and aspirations of others to learn, teach, research and work within the community of the University.

Postgraduate research students are expected to utilise facilities supplied to them, in the form of access to telephones, printing, photocopying, publications on-line, specialist research equipment, or any other service supplied by the University, only for the purpose of their research.

### **8. Support of Teaching Related Duties**

The University expects students to adhere to the terms and conditions of any scholarship they are in receipt of, and provide, if required, a maximum of six unpaid contact hours per week for academic support (grading, laboratory demonstrating, tutoring or other academic work) while also ensuring that this does not conflict with any terms and conditions associated with their funding from an external funding agency.

Students are expected to seek agreement and sign-off by the supervisor and Head of Department/School, for a maximum of six paid contact hours per week, if available within the University. This is in addition to undertaking the unpaid academic support contact hours, where the student is in receipt of funding.

*Please note this Charter does not supersede the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures*

### **Document Control**

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