



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Policy on Supporting Student Carers

1. Introduction:

This policy is for University staff who have a role in advising/supporting students who are already or who anticipate becoming carers. The policy is also for students who meet the criteria in our definition below.

This policy has been created in recognition of the obstacles faced by student carers in accessing and pursuing degree level study. It offers guidance to prospective and current students and BU staff on the processes and practices in place to support student carers throughout their learning journey at Bangor University.

Numbers of students with caring responsibilities within higher education are growing. Being a carer and a student can have negative effects, including finance, well-being and health, academic retention and progression. This policy concentrates primarily on the responsibility of caring and its impact on study-related matters.

2. Our definition of a student carer:

Someone who looks after (on an unpaid basis) a member of the family, partner or friend with a physical or sensory disability, learning disability, medical condition, mental health issues or someone addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Ordinarily, this does not include parents and carers of children, except where a child has particular care needs resulting from a disability.

A student carer has the responsibility for confirming his/her status as a carer.

3. Purpose and rationale:

Bangor University is committed to widening access and participation for all who have faced barriers to entering HE: first generation to go to HE, communities within the lowest 40% of the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), as well as Carers and Care Experienced. The latter may well have under achieved due to the pressures on their time. Student Carers can be faced with particular demands of time management due to possible stress with care and managing other related responsibilities. Carers also have

more limited opportunities for paid part-time employment during their course, as well as fewer opportunities for integration with peers at University. Bangor University believes that caring responsibilities in themselves should not prevent students from succeeding in their studies and is committed to providing as much flexibility as possible to facilitate this success, ensuring no student is disadvantaged whilst making sure academic standards are not compromised.

4. Policy:

4.1 Status: Student Carers who self-identify at the admissions stage, either by ticking the UCAS form box or via another application process will be informed of the support in place. However, it is recognised that some carers may not disclose this information at this stage, or their caring responsibilities may lead them to identify at a later stage in their course. It is the responsibility of the student carers to provide confirmation of their status if required. The diversity of caring responsibilities is recognised by Bangor University and a variety of supporting documentation may be accepted as confirmation of carer status:

- Self-certification regarding the nature of the caring duties and how study could be affected, with an indication of how long it is anticipated this will last;
- A doctor's letter confirming carer status and perceived impact on the student;
- A Local Authority's Carer's assessment / support plan / statement;
- A letter of support from the local agency, e.g. Action for Children
- Any other reasonable evidence.

Bangor University reserves the right to request further information or evidence to confirm carer status at any given time.

4.2 Widening Access: student carers are one of our widening access groups and are entitled to the additional support offered, in particular the Carers' Bursary.

4.3 Absences: absences related to caring responsibilities will need to be managed and penalties for absence may be inappropriate. Due consideration should be given to carers who may need to leave class at short notice due to caring responsibilities. Personal Tutors/Senior Tutors will need to have appropriate consideration for the circumstances of student carers.

4.4 Extenuating circumstances: on-going responsibilities can mean that there may be recurrent occasions when mitigating circumstances will apply to student carers. Due consideration should be given to carers who may need to have their mobile phones with them in class. Such responsibilities should not have to be repeatedly demonstrated.

Under 'My Bangor', all students (including student carers) can create a special circumstance in the Request Centre and this same circumstance can be used multiple times, e.g. for extensions, first sits etc. All relevant members of staff will then be aware of such a special circumstance.

4.5 Review of status: as caring responsibilities may change over time there should be opportunities, for example within personal tutorials, for support needs to be reviewed.

5. Responsibilities of staff and students:

- Head of Admissions: oversees admissions policy and processes
- Personal Academic Tutor: first point of contact for academic and nonacademic matters

- Carers are encouraged to self-identify during the application process and at registration so that information on appropriate support can be shared. Non-disclosure will limit Bangor University's ability to offer appropriate support to a student with caring responsibilities.
- It is the carer's responsibility to provide confirmation of status, please see 4.1 above.
- Carers should ensure that they inform their personal tutor of their caring status and discuss any issues affecting study.
- Staff need to be aware of the status of any carers wishing to wear the red wristband provided.

6. Guidance for staff:

- Staff should note and be aware of the particular issues affecting a student carer, in particular with regard to attendance and assessments.
- Staff should ensure that student carers have every opportunity to engage with their studies, including the opportunity to catch up and access any work missed.
- These provisions are not designed to give undue advantage, but rather to allow student carers to participate fully without being disadvantaged. Where requests for such support or consideration cannot be granted, clear reasons must be given.
- It is important to take the views and wishes of the student into account, rather than applying a standard set of arrangements.
- Whilst an appropriate degree of flexibility should be given, academic standards should not be compromised. A balance needs to be

achieved between ensuring the student is not disadvantaged and giving undue special treatment.