

## **RESIDENTIAL SERVICES– STUDENT CHARTER**

### ***Introduction***

This Charter sets out the standards of provision that the University aims to provide for its students in University residences. The University is committed to aiming for the highest quality possible and this Charter is one way of outlining that commitment to you. It should be read in conjunction with the “Home from Home” booklet.

Residential Services are committed to encouraging diversity and inclusiveness within University residences. The University’s policies have been screened under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 2001 and the University is committed to endorsing diversity in all of its forms.

#### **What this Charter does**

- ❑ Most of the provisions of this Charter are to ensure that we achieve and maintain the highest standards of provision. This is a statement of intent and is **not** a legal document and there may be occasions when the University or students are prevented or delayed from meeting the expectations outlined in this Charter through circumstances or delays beyond their control.
- ❑ This Charter also sets out what we expect of you. The quality of the service that we believe you are entitled to expect is, therefore, balanced with responsibilities placed on you as a student: both are intended to ensure that you gain maximum benefit from your time with us.

#### **Measuring our performance**

We regularly measure the effectiveness of our provision through student surveys and discussions with the Students Union. In addition, in drawing up this charter, we consulted with student Resident Assistants (RAs) and focus groups. As a result a number of key performance indicators were developed and these are included in the Charter. Performance will be measured against these indicators and the results will be reported annually via the Residential Services Annual Report and the internet.

#### **Consultation**

This Charter was developed in consultation with the Students Union, focus groups and input from student Resident Assistants. This was achieved by dissemination of the draft charter to student Resident Assistants and their comments included in the Charter. Focus groups were formulated and feedback included in the charter.

## **Key Areas**

Residential Services will endeavour to:

1. Provide quality, where reasonably practicable and subject to availability, conveniently located University Residences

### **You can expect Residential Services to:**

- Provide, where reasonably practicable and subject to availability, accommodation that is conveniently located to the University's Campuses
- Ensure, in so far as is possible, that the accommodation provided meets the needs of students in terms of quality and facilities
- Ensure that the accommodation meets statutory standards
- Ensure, in so far as is possible, that the accommodation provided is safe and secure

### **Performance Indicator**

- To achieve at least 75% satisfaction levels from surveys undertaken on the on the quality and location of accommodation provided.

### **We expect you to:**

- Provide feedback on the location, quality and price of University owned or managed accommodation
2. Provide and distribute accurate and relevant information at the appropriate times for student accommodation.

### **You can expect Residential Services to:**

- Provide accurate and understandable accommodation information through the "Home from Home" brochure and website\*
- Provide accurate costs on accommodation and facilities/services included
- Endeavour to distribute brochure information and application form to all applicants eligible for accommodation guarantees
- Guarantee students who apply for accommodation by the agreed dates an offer of a room in student accommodation once they are accepted on to their original course
- Facilitate, where possible, open days to allow students to view the accommodation available in advance of applying for or contracting for a room
- Ensure that if you have a disability or special requirement you are invited to discuss these needs

- Guarantee, where reasonably practicable and subject to availability, accommodation for international students who apply by the 1<sup>st</sup> August for semester 1 entry and by the 30<sup>th</sup> November for semester 2 entry
- Provide students with information on how to find private rented accommodation if requested

### **Performance Indicator**

- To achieve at 75% satisfaction levels from surveys undertaken on the distribution and administration of accommodation information and application processes.

### **We expect you to:**

- Read any information sent to you to ensure that you make an appropriate application and understand the contractual obligations to which you are signing
- Complete and return all documentation fully and promptly
- Abide by the terms of any contract you have signed with the University. Rules of Residences can be found: [www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation/Resrules.html](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation/Resrules.html)

## **3. To operate and manage University Residences**

### **You can expect Residential Services to:**

- Provide, where reasonably practicable, information on room allocation, cost, duration of contract and arrival information for those allocated a room on-campus\*
- Provide, where reasonably practicable, the facilities and services as agreed within the contract for accommodation, for example, housekeeping, utilities and ancillary services
- Provide, where reasonably practicable and subject to availability on arrival information on the accommodation allocated\*
- Provide, in so far as is possible, an induction session including health & safety issues, fire safety and rules of residences
- Operate, with prior approval and subject to University sanction, flexible payment methods for residential fees
- Provide, in so far as is possible, an efficient responsive maintenance service
- Provide, where reasonably practicable and subject to availability, advice and assistance to students required to seek accommodation within the private rented sector
- Allocate, where reasonably practicable, a room to students under the “Conditional Firm Guarantee” and “International Student Guarantee” within 10 days of being accepted on to a place on to their original course

### **Performance Indicator**

- Allocate, where reasonably practicable, 90% of all available student accommodation by the 1<sup>st</sup> September and the remainder by the beginning of the academic year

### **We expect you to:**

- Respect your living environment and the needs of your co-tenants and neighbours
- Report promptly any damages needing repairs
- Abide by the health & safety requirements within the accommodation contract (Rules of Residences) and report to a member of staff any identified health and safety issues
- Submit any complaints promptly and in writing
- Provide access to your accommodation for Residences staff and contractors, where necessary for the proper management of the accommodation
- Pay your residential fees by the due dates in the manner agreed
- Notify the Accommodation Office if you are withdrawing from the University or suspending your studies
- Return your accommodation in a clean and undamaged state at the end of the contract period, otherwise pay costs of damage and cleaning required.
- Abide by the Rules of Residences, conditions of accommodation contract and statutes and ordinances operating within the University.

#### **4. Provide appropriate support structures for residents**

### **You can expect Residential Services to:**

- Aim to provide RAs from the students peer group throughout the academic term and to provide peer support to students
- Have RAs and Wardens available who are knowledgeable about the University and can refer students to Welfare Services, if required
- Have Wardens and RAs who encourage a community spirit within accommodation to allow all students to study, sleep and socialise as appropriate
- Have RAs and Wardens who can identify and address general health and safety issues within University accommodation
- Aim to establish and support a Residents' Committee

### **Performance Indicator**

- To achieve at least 75% satisfaction levels from surveys undertaken on the support structures available within student accommodation.

### **We expect you to:**

- Comply with any reasonable request made to you by an RA, Warden, Concierge or security personnel
- Ensure that you avail of the support structures available when required
- To treat other residents and staff with respect
- Get involved in the residents committees and appropriate activities for students in University residences

### 5. Community Relations and the Private Rented Sector

#### **You can expect Residential Services to:**

- Provide, where reasonably practicable, advice and assistance on finding accommodation within the local area
- Provide, subject to availability, advice and assistance on contractual arrangements and landlord/tenant disputes
- Respond, where reasonably practicable, to complaints from local residents, other students and community groups regarding student behaviour within the local community
- Facilitate, in so far as it is possible, initiatives to allow students to develop good relationships within communities

### **We expect you to:**

- Behave in a responsible manner in respect of the accommodation you occupy, relations with co-habitants and neighbours and the local community
- Respect your local community and environment and not engage in actions that bring the University into disrepute
- Recognise that contractual terms are legally binding
- Inform the University of your term-time address prior to the beginning of the academic year and inform the University of changes throughout the year

\* can be provided in alternative methods as requested and when required.

## ***What if things go wrong?***

We hope you will find little to complain about in our provision, but if you do have concerns and you do bring them to our attention, they will be treated seriously and every effort will be made to resolve them.

### **Complaints procedure**

The University has a Student Complaints Procedure for dealing with most complaints about any aspect of the academic or other services provided by the University. There are a number of types of complaint which are not dealt with under this procedure, such as where the complaint relates to academic

decisions or to sexual, racial or religious harassment or discrimination, for which separate procedures exist. Details of all procedures are outlined within the student complaints leaflet. Copies of the Student Complaints leaflet are available from University Libraries, Student Support Offices, the Students' Union or from the University website. If you would like advice on the University's procedures, you should contact the Student Complaints Liaison Officer. The Students' Union can also assist with providing advice and support to students.

No student will be disadvantaged because he or she has made a complaint in good faith.

### Disciplinary procedures for students

In addition, you should note that there are disciplinary procedures for students who break University regulations or fail to comply with instructions regarding conduct. Details are provided in the *Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations*.

	ADDRESS	CONTACTS	URL
<b>Students' Union</b>	Offices at each campus	<a href="mailto:Info@uusu.org">Info@uusu.org</a> +44 (0)28 7032 4373	<a href="http://www.uusu.org">www.uusu.org</a>
<b>Accommodation</b>	Accommodation Office at relevant campus	Jordanstown: +44(0)28 9036 6941  Coleraine +44(0)28 7034 4164  Magee, Londonderry +44(0)28 7137 5233	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation">www.ulster.ac.uk/accommodation</a>
<b>International Office</b>	International Offices at Jordanstown or Coleraine	+44 (0)28 9036 8220	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/international_students">www.ulster.ac.uk/international_students</a>
<b>Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT)</b>	CELT Room L152 University of Ulster Cromore Road	+44 (0)28 7032 4383  celt@ulster.ac.uk	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/celt">www.ulster.ac.uk/celt</a>

	Coleraine BT52 1SA		
<b>Careers Service</b>	Careers offices on each campus	<a href="mailto:Careers@ulster.ac.uk">Careers@ulster.ac.uk</a>  +44(0)28 9036 6247 (Jordanstown)  +44(0)28 7032 4381  (Coleraine)  +44(0)28 713 75600  (Magee)  +44(0)28 9036 6247  (Belfast)	<a href="http://careers.ulster.ac.uk">http://careers.ulster.ac.uk</a>
<b>Student Support</b>	Student Support offices on each campus	028 7032 4397	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/student-support">www.ulster.ac.uk/student-support</a>
<b>IT User Services</b>	ITUS Helpdesk	028 9036 6777  <a href="mailto:helpdesk@ulster.ac.uk">helpdesk@ulster.ac.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus">www.ulster.ac.uk/isd/itus</a>
<b>Library</b>	24 hour information line	028 9036 8530	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/library">www.ulster.ac.uk/library</a>
<b>Alumni Office</b>	Alumni Relations Manager  University of Ulster  Shore Road  Jordanstown Newtownabbey  Co Antrim  BT37 0QB	+44 (0)28 9036 8350	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/alumni">www.ulster.ac.uk/alumni</a>
<b>Development and Alumni Relations Office</b>	Secretary to Director of Development, University of Ulster, Cromore Road, Coleraine, BT52 1SA	+44(0)28 7032 3510	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/development">www.ulster.ac.uk/development</a>
<b>Student Complaints</b>	The Student Complaints Liaison Officer University House University of Ulster Cromore Road	+44 (0)28 7032 4991	<a href="http://www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/complaints">www.ulster.ac.uk/quality/complaints</a>

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### ***Useful Information:***

The University has a wide range of information available to help you. You can access most of this information from the University's website:

[www.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.ulster.ac.uk) or our staff will be happy to help you.

<b>DOCUMENT</b>
University Student Handbook
Research Studies Handbook
Handbook for International Students
Counselling and Guidance Booklets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ About the Counselling Service</li> <li>▪ What you need to Know before your First Appointment</li> <li>▪ Protecting Yourself Against Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault</li> <li>▪ Understanding Depression</li> <li>▪ Settling into University</li> <li>▪ Mature Students</li> <li>▪ Supporting dyslexia</li> <li>▪ The Counselling and Guidance Service – Resource Guide for Academic Staff</li> <li>▪ Disability Matters – A Guide for Students and Applicants</li> <li>▪ Letting us know about disabilities</li> <li>▪ Information on Financial Support for Students</li> </ul>
Application Form – Student Hardship Fund
Student Complaints Leaflet
Guide to Library Services
Guide to IT User Services
Careers Service: Gateway Series – Guide to career planning and supporting publications