

# Student Handbook Part Two



## Faculty Handbook

### 1.0 Introduction

- First, welcome to the Faculty of Sciences at Staffordshire University. Whether you are embarking on an honours degree, professional doctorate, foundation degree, short course University certificate or a masters programme we hope that your time within the Faculty will be stimulating and successful.
- Inevitably at the start of all study programmes you will be bombarded with a host of well intentioned information. Some of that information is immediately important to start your studies and make sure that you are in the right place at the right time. Some information you will need later in your course e.g. about assessments, changing modules, extenuating claims etc. Whilst other information is about the services the University offers generally which you may need to make reference to in the future.
- To try to guide you through this deluge of information we have split it all into three 'student handbooks':

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**Part I:  
Award  
Handbook** Part I provides all the essential specific information about your award and study programme. Things like which modules are core and which are options, how the award is structured, who your tutors will be etc. Your **Award Handbook** can be accessed and downloaded from the *HelloSciences* website:

[http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student\\_information/new\\_undergrad.jsp](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student_information/new_undergrad.jsp)

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**Part II:  
Faculty  
Handbook** This second part provides general information about the Faculty of Sciences which is 'home' to your specific award. It will explain how the faculty is structured and what support you can expect from the Faculty, arrangements for course work submission and who you need to speak to discuss administrative issues involving progression on your course. This **Faculty Handbook** can be accessed and downloaded from the *HelloSciences* website:

[http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student\\_information/new\\_undergrad.jsp](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student_information/new_undergrad.jsp)

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**Part III:  
University  
Handbook** The final part provides information about the services that the University can provide to support your studies e.g. the Students Union, Financial Services, the Careers service etc. It also contains links to academic regulations, what constitutes academic misconduct and formal complaints procedures etc. The **University Handbook** can be accessed and browsed at:

[http://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses\\_and\\_study/student\\_life/student\\_handbook/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses_and_study/student_life/student_handbook/)

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- We suggest that you download the first two handbooks and keep them on a memory stick or on your lap-top for reference. You should familiarise yourself with the range of information that these handbooks contain early in your student career. Then you should dip into it them as and when necessary throughout your time at Staffordshire University.
- The Award and Faculty handbooks should be the first couple of documents that you should keep as an e-archive for yourself. Get into the habit of downloading essential documents like module descriptors and module handbooks when the course starts. Increasingly we are getting requests from our graduates to provide quite detailed information about their studies which they now need for job interviews, for further course application, even for emigration to other countries. We do not routinely keep historical versions of handbooks so it is much easier for you to download and collate this information for yourself.

Dr Rob Boast

Faculty Director for Learning, Teaching and Quality Assurance

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## 2.0: Who's Who in the Faculty

### 2.1: The Faculty of Sciences Office

- Faculty Office and Reception is located at the main entrance in the middle of the ground floor of the Mellor Building and should be your first port of call if you have any queries or problems relating to the Faculty or if you are unsure of how to deal with other queries. The Faculty Office team are responsible for managing the wide range of activities and processes necessary to support students and academic colleagues within the Faculty. Details of the key administration staff offering direct student support are:

<p>Sciences' Receptionist</p> <p>Mrs Sue Steele</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294573</p>	<p>Sciences' Student Guidance Advisor</p> <p>Mrs Jean Simpson</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294691</p> <p><a href="mailto:j.simpson@staffs.ac.uk">j.simpson@staffs.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>Award Administrators for Psychology and Mental Health: Psychology, Counselling and Early Childhood Studies</p> <p>Miss Karen Simpson</p> <p>Mrs Anne-Marie Thorley-Walchester</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294475</p> <p><a href="mailto:psychadmin@staffsa.c.uk">psychadmin@staffsa.c.uk</a></p>	<p>Award Administrator for Applied Sciences: Biology, Forensics and Environment / Geography subject areas</p> <p>Mrs Lindsay Dodd</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 295802</p> <p><a href="mailto:appliedsciadmin@staffs.ac.uk">appliedsciadmin@staffs.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>Senior Clerical Assistant – Psychology</p> <p>Mrs Cynthia Adam</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294643</p> <p><a href="mailto:psychadmin@staffs.ac.uk">psychadmin@staffs.ac.uk</a></p>	<p>Senior Clerical Assistant – Applied Sciences</p> <p>Mrs Jo Brindley</p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294859</p> <p><a href="mailto:appliedsciadmin@staffs.ac.uk">appliedsciadmin@staffs.ac.uk</a></p>
<p>Award Administrator for Distance Learning Awards and Research Degrees across Applied Sciences and Psychology</p> <p>Ms Amanda Dinnivan</p> <p><a href="mailto:a.m.dinnivan@staffs.ac.uk">a.m.dinnivan@staffs.ac.uk</a></p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294857</p>	<p>Sciences' Disability Support / General Student Support</p> <p>Mrs Lorraine Berks</p> <p><a href="mailto:l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk">l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk</a></p> <p>+44 (0)1782 295765</p>
<p>Sciences' Extenuating Circumstances</p> <p>Mrs Jackie Campbell</p> <p><a href="mailto:j.a.campbell@staffs.ac.uk">j.a.campbell@staffs.ac.uk</a></p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294855</p>	<p>Sciences' Administration Manager</p> <p>Mrs Achen Bowers</p> <p><a href="mailto:achen.bowers@staffs.ac.uk">achen.bowers@staffs.ac.uk</a></p> <p>+44 (0)1782 294858</p>

- Any of the office team will be more than willing to help with any query so don't worry too much about not knowing who specifically to contact. They will put you in touch with the right person to advise on:
  - Modules
  - University regulations
  - Your credit and progression status
  - Referral opportunities
  - Claims for extenuating circumstances for assessment
  - General guidance / support about any aspect of University
  - Information about your study here: award and module records, local and home address information, etc.
  - Any changes to your award or programme of study
  - Registration events
  - Disability support
  
- It is important that you get to know staff in the Faculty Office as they are responsible for keeping all the information on your time with us accurate and up-to-date. In particular, make sure that you:
  - Check your University e-mail account regularly for any information or queries sent to you by Faculty administrators or by academic staff. ***It is your University e-mail account which we will use for all University correspondence.***
  - For on-campus students check your post-trays (located on your subject's floor) regularly for the same reason. For off-campus distance learners information and feedback will be conveyed by e-mail or through the Blackboard VLE.
  - Always let the Faculty Office know of any changes in your contact details. This includes phone numbers as well as home and term addresses. It really is important that we know how to get in touch with you – for example not telling us of a change of address might mean results / referral information do not get to you (which in turn might mean you do not attempt an assessment stop your progression on your course).
  - Always ensure that the Faculty Office is aware of any changes you make to your academic profile (modules / award) by completing the appropriate module amendment / award transfer forms.
  
- The reception and office **Opening Times** are:                    **Monday - Friday**                    **8.45 am – 4.40 pm**

Please feel free to call into the Faculty Office between these times. All queries, no matter how small are welcome to ensure that your records are always correct as this does prevent delays or difficulties in confirming results at the end of each Academic Year. If the Faculty Office can't help you directly, they usually know somebody who can.

## 2.2 The Faculty Management Team

### *The Dean of Faculty*

- At the head of the Faculty is the Dean, Dr David White

David has responsibility for the strategic development, operation and management of the Faculty. Should you need to speak with him, you should normally contact his personal assistant, Fiona Beardmore. Fiona can be found in Room S021, Mellor Building and her telephone number is +44 (0)1782 294614 (e-mail [f.j.beardmore@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:f.j.beardmore@staffs.ac.uk))

### *Faculty Directors / Managers*

- The Dean is supported in running the Faculty by:
  - Dr Rob Boast, Director of Teaching, Learning and Quality Assurance (S023, +44 (0)1782 294033, [r.boast@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:r.boast@staffs.ac.uk))
  - Dr John Wheeler, UniQ Science & Technology Centre Development Project Manager (S020, +44 (0)1782 294690, [j.w.wheeler@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:j.w.wheeler@staffs.ac.uk))
  - Mr Andy Willits, Business Manager (S019, +44 (0)1782 294607, [a.r.willits@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:a.r.willits@staffs.ac.uk))
  - Ms Audra Jones, Technical Manager (S412a, +44 (0)1782 294283, [a.a.jones@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:a.a.jones@staffs.ac.uk))

### *Programme Areas*

- The Faculty of Sciences is divided into two Programme Areas, each managed by a Programme Area Manager:
  - The 'Applied Sciences' Programme Area (containing the subject areas of Biology, Forensic Sciences and Environment / Geography) is managed by Professor Stephen Williams (S217, +44 (0)1782 294108, [steve.williams@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:steve.williams@staffs.ac.uk))
  - The 'Psychology and Mental Health' Programme Area (containing the subject areas of Psychology, Counselling, Clinical Psychology and Early Childhood Studies) is managed by Dr Judy David (S233, +44 (0)1782 294280, [j.j.david@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:j.j.david@staffs.ac.uk))
- The award / course which you have enrolled on will belong to one of the Programme Areas – and this programme area will therefore be responsible for managing issues relating to your academic progression and welfare during your time with the Faculty. Subject areas are managed by 'Subject leaders' within Programme Areas and individual awards in subjects are managed by 'Award Leaders' (details of your own subject and award leader can be found in award handbook). ***Your Award Leader is always the key person for any information relating to your programme of academic work at Staffordshire University.***
- Your award handbook will also identify all other key tutors, technicians and other support staff involved in your subject area.

## 3.0 Faculty Administration

### 3.1 Award Enrolment

- Once you have been offered a place on one of our awards by our admissions team and have formally accepted the place then you will be provided with information on how to enrol before the start of the course.
- Most of our students will enrol online and you will be provided with instructions on how to log on via the University web portal, and confirm your personal and award details. When you have completed the process you will receive an email, in your University e-mail account, containing your enrolment certificate. This enrolment certificate will include information on how to collect your Student Card, arrange release of your first student loan instalment (if applicable) into your bank account. You will be asked to provide proof of identity when you collect your Student Card. International students will be required to bring your original passport along with a copy of your passport personal details page and visa entry.
- A small number of students on non-standard courses may be asked to complete a paper enrolment form when they arrive in the first week of term. You will then take your enrolment form to the next stage where you will collect your Student Card after providing proof of identity.
- Off-campus distance learning students will be provided with specific alternative arrangements through an e-enrolment induction process.

#### Amendments to Personal Details

- It is important that you notify the Faculty Office of any changes to your personal details such as your home or local address, your name, or your landline or mobile telephone number. The personal details we hold on you will be displayed via your 'My Portal' account. You can email any changes throughout the academic session. Notification of your end of year results, or of any referral requirements, will be sent to the home address we have on file. *Please tell the office if you will not be there over the summer and want your results sending elsewhere.* Your final award certificate will bear your name as it appears on your student record – make sure it is correct long before graduation.

#### Data Protection Act

- Throughout your time at the University, we will gather data about you, from your initial application to us, through to your graduation and beyond. When you enrol, you will be asked to sign or confirm online a consent form for the release of data under the Data Protection Act 1998. This is to allow us to disclose information to prospective employers or other universities. This consent will remain in perpetuity unless, at any time, you tell us that you wish to withdraw your permission.
- The data we gather will be used in accordance with our registration under the Data Protection Act 1998. We have a statutory and legal requirement to supply some of the data to third parties, such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Statistics Agency, Social Security, your Local Education Authority (to allow us to claim tuition fees, for instance), the Student Loans Company, and the Police (in connection with potential criminal offences). Under our registration we are able also to pass your data to other named categories of third parties such as the Students' Union (to enable you to have membership), your term-time Local Education Authority or Borough Council (to enable you to claim exemption from Council Tax), our Alumni Office, and Professional Bodies. This list is not exhaustive.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Award enrolment / MyPortal / Student cards / Data protection and privacy*

### 3.2 Welcome Week and Award Induction

- You will be provided with clear information about induction processes at the start of your award. **Welcome Week and Induction Schedules** can be found at the *HelloSciences* ([http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student\\_information/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/sciences/student_information/)) web-page along with, for most under-graduate awards, **pre-arrival activities**.

#### Registering Modules

- During induction you will meet your award leader, your course structure will be explained and you will be required to register the modules that you are going to study during your first academic year.
- All our modules are credit rated and are multiples of 15 credits representing 10 hours of learning per credit. So a single 15 credit module = 150 learning hours, a 30 credit double module = 300 hours etc.. The number of credits that you will study will depend upon the nature of the award that you have registered on. Some awards are completed within one academic year whilst others, whether full-time or part-time, may take a number of years. The information provided to you for module registration will indicate the type of modules in your award structure and their credit rating. There are three types of module:
  - Core – you must take these modules. Some awards may be comprised of just core modules.
  - Award-Specific Option – you make your module choice from a group of options specifically associated with your award. You will be informed how many options you have to choose from a specific option list.
  - General Credit (Non-Specific) Option – depending on your award you may be able to study modules from any subject (and from any lower level) provided you can fit them into your timetable. Your award specific handbook will detail which general credit modules are available to you. There are also some useful modules available offered by other Faculties. Details of all the modules available can be found on the University's web pages (go to <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/modules/options/>).
- Most undergraduates will be required to use a module registration form to record your core, specific option and general credit modules. Your personal tutor or Award Leader will check that you have done this correctly, will sign the form, and will either return it to the Faculty Office (reception) themselves, or ask you to do this.
- For most post-graduate / distance learning students, because many awards are made up of just core modules you will be pre-registered on the correct modules automatically when you enrol.
- The Faculty's administrators will take your module registration information to establish your academic profile on our electronic data management system (THESIS+). It is extremely important that your profile is accurate and *so you do need to inform the Faculty Office if you change any of the modules you originally registered for (see below 'Amending Your Module Choices')*.
- If your award extends over more than one academic year then you will be usually required to make your choice of the next level's modules either at the end of the preceding academic year or at the start of the next year. Your award leader will contact you about this in good time.

#### Amending module choices

- Sometimes, if your award allows it, you may wish to amend your module choices. To do this, if you are an on-campus student, you will need to collect a module amendment form from the Faculty Office. You also need to obtain the signature of the tutor whose module you are leaving and the one whose

module you wish to join. The form must then be signed by your Award Leader before handing it in to the Faculty Office via Reception.

- If you do not complete the paperwork, your student profile will not be correct and it may be that we are unable to process your results properly at the end of the year. You may, for example, be told by the Faculty Office that you have failed, and must therefore resubmit work for modules you never actually took – or, that you have not got credit for modules that you in fact completed.
- Distance learning off-campus students should contact via e-mail your award leader if you have any queries about your module selection. They will then guide you through an alternative process.
- At Level 4/C (Certificate), any changes you make to your choice of modules must be made within 3 weeks of the start of module. At Levels 5/I (Intermediate) and 6/H (Honours), the time limit is 2 weeks. For post-graduate awards (Level 7/8), because the awards mainly consist of core module, changing modules, if possible at all, needs to be negotiated as soon as possible.
- It is your responsibility to ensure your correct enrolment on the required number of credits for your award in the year's study and it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that these modules are the appropriate ones, as specified by your award structure.
- Note that, for students on full-time awards at the University, you must be registered on a minimum of 105 credits for the academic year. Anything less than this and the University will regard you as a part-time student.

### **Changing Awards**

- The ability to change awards will vary depending on which type of award you are on.
- If you are able to change award tutors need to satisfy themselves that you have met, or will be able to meet, the learning outcomes of your new award. Generally, the sooner you make the decision to change award, the easier it is. In any event, your personal tutor or Award Leader can advise.
- It is worth noting that a change of award may be the only progression route available to you should you fail for the second (and final) time one of the core modules on your original award. If you find yourself in this situation seek the advice of your Award Leader as soon as possible.

### **Personal Communication**

- Tutors and the administration teams will communicate with you in various ways which will be partly determined whether you are studying on- or off-campus.
- Tutors will normally use a combination of e-mail (either individual e-mails or e-mailing module / award groups) and via our Blackboard, the University's virtual learning environment. E-mails will be sent to your University e-mail account.
- As explained already, the admin team will, if needed contact you through your University e-mail account or if necessary send letters to term time and / or home addresses.
- Of course, you may give tutors and admin staff a phone call but clearly this can be a bit hit or miss as staff may be away from their desks throughout the day (giving lectures or dealing with admin issues). So if the phone rings and rings, e-mail instead.
- Your award handbook will let you know arrangements for returning course work and, if an on-campus student, the location of student post-trays for your subject area. Please note that the Faculty is only able to deal with internal mail for students. You should not give correspondents the Faculty's address because we cannot guarantee your receipt of anything that is sent to you via Royal Mail. Always use

your term or home address for any correspondence likely to come to you via mail from external contacts.

- Whilst most staff now inform students about modules and class announcements via the Blackboard VLE you will, if an on-campus student, be shown your subject notice-boards.
- General notices for all on-campus students in the Faculty of Sciences, including the examination timetable and end-of-semester results, will be posted on the notice-boards along the ground floor near reception.

***It is essential that you regularly check your University email account and also up-date the Faculty Office of any changes to term or home addresses.***

*Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:*

*Modules registration / Changing Awards / Under- and post-graduate regulations*

*The Student Health Service / The Student Enabling Centre*

## 4.0 Faculty Student Support

### 4.1 Personal Tutors

- All students will be assigned a Personal Tutor as soon as they start their new award. Depending upon your award your personal tutor may stay with you for a module (if a Distance Learning post-graduate student), for a year or for the whole of your award. Your award handbook will outline how your subject area's personal tutoring process will work.
- Your personal tutor is there to do two things – (1) review with you your academic progress, and provide you with academic guidance (for example, on module choice, on changing award routes, on developing a strategy to recover failed modules, or on improving your performance following your assessment results at the end of each teaching block), and (2) provide pastoral support.
- You should always keep your personal tutor informed of any circumstances which are impeding your progress and achievement on your award. What you discuss with your personal tutor will be confidential and your personal tutor can offer valuable advice in terms of claiming 'extenuating circumstances' (see below) when something happens (like illness, for example) which affects your ability to meet assessment deadlines.
- Where the issues are serious and beyond the competence of your personal tutor to deal with you will be referred to an appropriate University Support Service (see the **University Handbook** section on University Services) – but your tutor will make a note that you have discussed any circumstances affecting your academic or personal well-being and put this on your file.
- *The best advice we can offer you is to seek help early if you feel you have a problem - most problems are solvable*

*Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:*

*Personal Tutoring*

### 4.2 Student Mentors

- For students on our under-graduate awards the Faculty of Sciences also offers a student mentoring system for new Level 4 students. As a Level 4 student you will be assigned a Level 5 or 6 student from your subject area who can answer questions about your subject or the University generally. Further

information on Sciences' mentors will be provided during Welcome Week and can be found at: <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/schools/sciences/ementoring/>.

### 4.3 Student Guidance Advisors

- The Faculty's Student Guidance Advisor is Jean Simpson and is here if you need advice, guidance or information on the academic side of your student career. Jean is situated within the Faculty Office but offers a confidential and impartial service if you do not want to discuss issues with your personal tutor or award leader. Feel free to drop-in for initial advice or make an appointment if you . . .
  - are concerned that you have chosen the wrong course?
  - are considering taking time out (intermitting) or leaving your course?
  - need advice on how to appeal against your examination results?
  - need advice on how to make a complaint?
  - need advice on submitting extenuating circumstances?
  - need advice on any aspect of the University's Regulations?
- There is also a Student Guidance Officer based in the Information Centre in Stoke (Flaxman Building, College Road). This Officer provides the same service as our Advisor and can be used as an alternative.

*Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:*

*Student Guidance / Faculty Guidance Advisors*

### 4.4 Supporting Students with Disabilities

- The University and the Faculty have embraced the implications of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (now effectively Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), and of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. We recognise that under this legislation we have a duty to anticipate the needs of any disabled student and to make reasonable adjustments to enable you to achieve the learning outcomes of your programme of study.
- We want to make sure that, if you tell the University that you are a disabled person, we work together with you to meet your individual support needs. This is a shared responsibility between yourself and the University community and reflects our commitment to promoting equality for disabled people.
- For the Faculty and the University to discharge these duties effectively, however, means that you need, first, *to declare* your disability – either before you start your programme of study or during it. We would then further encourage you to seek an assessment of your learning support needs (a 'learning support agreement') from the Student Enabling Centre. The agreement will also highlight any need for a '**personal evacuation plan**' in the event of any emergency. Once tutors, technical and administrative staff have a clear statement and understanding of your needs, we can give you the best possible chance of achieving the competencies associated with your programme of study.
- In Sciences we have a number of specific tutors who co-ordinate the support we are able to offer. Each subject area has a subject DisCo (disability co-ordinator) and they will liaise with their subject area's students and with Faculty DisCo:

Dr Dave Skingsley (Mellor S518, +44 (0)1782 295757, e-mail [d.r.skingsley@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:d.r.skingsley@staffs.ac.uk)).

Dave is supported by Mrs Lorraine Berks in the Faculty office (+44 (0)1782 295765, [l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk)). In particular Lorraine co-ordinates any specific arrangements for exams and oversees support for coursework assessments.

- If your Learning Support Agreement says that you may need extra time to complete assignments, you will be expected to negotiate any extensions with your personal tutor / Award Leader.
- If you experience any difficulties in terms of day-to-day support (for example, some tutors might be forgetting to provide you with copies of teaching material prior to the class), then you should, in the first instance, remind the tutors concerned of your needs, and then see either your Personal Tutor, Award Leader or the subject Disability Co-ordinator.
- The Faculty has a committee to review its practice in support of students and staff with disabilities and we welcome student participation. So if you wish to be considered as a student rep on our Faculty Disability and Equality Committee then contact the chair Dr Dave Skingsley.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*The Student Enabling Centre*

#### 4.5 Study Skills and Resources

- All Faculty of Sciences awards provide embedded support in how to learn and successfully complete assignments. The way this is embedded will vary between awards – some awards have core subject specific study skills modules, other modules will provide specific advice on their assessments and some modules / awards will sign-post to web support sources.
- The University also has a dedicated Study Skills Centre located in the library. For further information see the **University Handbook**.
- On awards with General Option module slots (typically under-graduate awards) there is also the option of taking study skills modules offered by the Faculty of Arts, Media and Design. Details of all the modules available can be found on the University's web pages (go to <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/modules/options/>). You will find details of modules dealing with these aspects of your skills development in the 'employability' section of the **University Handbook**. This section also summarises university policy in this area and the range of other resources and opportunities which you can exploit to enhance your employability.
- Sciences also has its own dedicated **Learning Resource Centre** which houses specific learning resources such as map / aerial photo-collections collection, subject specific reports and documents, DVD's, a reference archive of past student dissertations, second-hand textbook sale service. The LRC is on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Mellor Building in S429 run by Susan Collingwood.
- The Learning Resource Centre is in addition to the main University library in Stoke which is situated in the Cadman Building on the other side of College Road opposite Sciences' Mellor Building. Early in your studies you will be told about the library services, both the on-campus and e-resources, available to you (see <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/uniservices/infoservices/library/>). Each subject area has their own dedicated librarian who can help you with all matters relating to finding information – see your award handbooks for details about your subject's librarian.
- We also have dedicated **IT facilities** for Science students where you can find generic and subject specialist software. These rooms are open-access facilities when formal Science classes are not being taught in them. The rooms are located on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the Mellor Building and are managed by:
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor - Mark Jennings & Jon Ranford
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor - Paul Gallimore

## 5.0 Teaching Learning and Assessment

### 5.1 Attendance and Absence

- Attendance for all **formal teaching** is **compulsory**. On some occasions, owing to illness or other commitments, your absence may be unavoidable. All tutors recognise this, and on such occasions you should tell the tutor concerned rather than to assume that he/she has noticed. If you cannot contact your tutor, you should leave a message with the Faculty Office. In the case of absence for a period of up to and including five working days, full-time students **must** complete a self-certification form. These can be obtained from the Faculty Office.
- Longer periods of absence due to illness will be need to be covered by a sick note from your GP. In these cases you might need to claim extenuating circumstances (see below) in relation to your learning and assessment. Discuss this with your module or personal tutor. Your doctor's note will be a key piece of evidence required by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in considering your claim.
- If a tutor notices that you are absent from a class they will normally try to get in touch with you to make sure that everything is OK. If you are absent from a class on two consecutive occasions Faculty policy is for the Faculty Office to write to you asking you to make contact with the tutor to explain your non-attendance. If you do not reply to this letter the tutor may withdraw you from the module / award. The University regulations state that after four consecutive absences then you can, in the absence of a valid reason such as illness, be automatically withdrawn from the module.
- *If you are withdrawn from a module you will be required to re-take the module with attendance as a referral (i.e. you can only achieve a maximum of Grade Point 4 = 40% = minimum pass mark in the assessment for that module is you are an under-graduate or a Grade Point 7 if a post-graduate)*
- The University has a legal obligation to inform Local Authorities of students whose attendance or academic progress is not satisfactory, and payment of monies may be terminated. It is important that you discuss any difficulties with your Personal Tutor at an early stage so that you do not find yourself in this position.
- For on-campus international students from outside the EEA, you will most likely have entered the UK under Tier 4 of the Points Based System for immigration. Included in this new immigration system is the requirement for the University to have a Tier 4 sponsor licence. As part of the conditions of obtaining the licence, **we are required, by law**, to inform the Home Office UK Border Agency if you are not engaging in your studies, withdraw, transfer institution, go onto a placement or return to your home country without permission. We want to make this as simple and straightforward a process as possible for you. **You will receive a letter at enrolment, detailing the arrangements for monitoring your engagement with your studies.** If you attend your studies on a regular basis and complete your assessments as required for all courses at the University, you have absolutely nothing to worry about. It is very important that you comply with these arrangements, as your student visa depends on this.

*Go to the on-line **University Handbook** and in the Learning Teaching and Assessment section select the FAQs for Attendance and Absence.*

### 5.2 Assessments

#### Deadlines for coursework

- The deadlines for the submission of coursework will be stated in your module handbooks which you should check carefully. If you have any queries, ask the module tutor concerned for clarification. It is important that you note that tutors cannot give deadline extensions beyond these dates (unless under a Learning Support Agreement you are able to negotiate extended deadlines – see below).

- Written assignments must be submitted on or before the date / time you have been given by your submission deadline date. If you are unable to hand in a piece of work by the given deadline for a reason such as illness, you should talk to your tutor who will be able to advise you what to do (see 'Extenuating Circumstances' below). If you are making a claim for late submission due to extenuating circumstances, you have 10 working days from the original deadline in which to hand in your assignment. If you hand in work beyond the 10 working days, it will normally be classed as a non-submission even if your claim is upheld.
- Should you submit late work? The section below on 'attempting all assessments' makes it clear. It is better to submit a half-finished assignment on time than a perfect assignment late. Late work, without a successful claim for extenuation will be given a zero-grade.

### Ethical Clearance

- In a few cases you will need to make sure that the work that you do for a particular module has appropriate ethical approval. This will only apply to cases where the activities you undertake to achieve the learning outcomes of the module involve research or work with other people where the issues of consent, confidentiality and the research participants' welfare are involved.
- Most modules involving this kind of activity occur at Level 3 where project or dissertation work is undertaken. You will be asked to agree to 'abide by Staffordshire University Code of Conduct for Research and Enterprise' ([www.staff.ac.uk/images/code\\_conduct\\_research\\_tcom68-24423.pdf](http://www.staff.ac.uk/images/code_conduct_research_tcom68-24423.pdf)) when you enrol. Your subject tutors will include in module handbooks details of how appropriate ethical scrutiny of any work you need to undertake has been, or needs to be, ensured.
- *This is particularly important for final year students: where the University has not given ethical clearance for project or dissertation work being undertaken by students at Level 6, then such students will be withdrawn from the module(s) concerned until such time as compliance with the required ethical clearance procedure has been demonstrated. If no such compliance is forthcoming, then such students will not be able to graduate with an Honours degree at the end of the academic year.*

### Handing in Your Assignments

- You will normally be required to hand in written assignments relating to Faculty of Sciences modules to the Faculty Office reception or via the Blackboard VLE for distance learning modules. Instructions for the submission of assignments will be included in the relevant module handbooks. **It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit assignments on time and at the appropriate place.**
- The Faculty Office is open to take your assignments at the following times:  
Monday to Friday                      9.00 am – 4.00 pm
- Written assignments to be submitted to the Faculty Office should have stapled to them an *assignment receipt cover-sheet*, available from the Faculty Office. Similarly, all electronic submissions via Blackboard should have an e-version of the coversheet cut-and-pasted into the front of your assignment document. Please ensure that you fill in *all appropriate* sections and if submitting assignments at the Faculty Office then cover-sheets forms should be completed in advance to avoid unnecessary delays.
- Note that most assignments are marked anonymously, and that you are asked to fold and stick down the top-flap of the assignment receipt form to conceal your name before handing in your work. This is an important tool in helping to safeguard the integrity of the assessment process. Anonymous marking, however, may not be appropriate certain kinds of assessment (for example, an artefact or presentation).

- If you have a learning support agreement which recognises dyslexia as a disability make sure that you ask for one of the yellow stickers (available from the Faculty Office) to attach to your work to signal to the tutor that the assignment needs to be marked on content and understanding rather than on syntactical and grammatical criteria.
- Similarly, if your learning support statement specifies that you can negotiate the submission dates of your assessments then please ensure that you have agreed new submission dates with your tutor in advance of the original deadline. On the Faculty assignment cover-sheet there is a box for stating the agreed negotiated deadline and the tutor's signature. Please be mindful of the fact that you may need to complete the cover-sheet in advance of the submission date to ensure you get the tutor's signature – rather than assume the tutor will be available on the day / time you intend to submit.
- If you hand work in after a negotiated deadline, it will be treated as 'late', and will be marked at zero. So, if having once negotiated a deadline you find that, as it approaches, you are going to need a further extension, you will need to go back to your Award Leader / Personal Tutor to authorise this. Your Award Leader / Personal Tutor will use the test of 'reasonableness' in agreeing to any further extension.
- If you need to adjust the assignment schedule agreed with your Award Leader / Personal Tutor for reasons that are unrelated to your disability, then you will need to use the normal Extenuating Circumstances procedure (see below).
- The paper form of the submission cover-sheet you will complete is in duplicate. It is most important that you use a biro so that both copies are marked. On submission the Faculty Office will date stamp both copies of the form and return one copy of it to you. **KEEP THIS RECEIPT SAFE! IT IS PROOF THAT YOU HAVE SUBMITTED YOUR ASSIGNMENT ON THE STAMPED DATE – IT MAY BE NEEDED TO DEMONSTRATE YOU DID SUBMIT ON TIME IF THE WORK IS MISLAID.**
- We would normally expect you to hand in your work in person, but recognise that this may not always be possible. If you are unable to hand in your written assignments in person, you can submit them via the post, using recorded delivery. This is important as should your work not arrive, we need to be able to find out what happened to it. All work which is submitted in this way will be dated according to the postmark.
- Finally, of course, it is good practice to keep a hard or (backed-up) electronic copy of any assignment you submit. Should the assignment you submit get lost, then you will have the receipt to prove that you handed it in, and a copy to replace what has been lost.

### Examinations and Other Timed Assessments

- Your award may require you to sit examinations and other timed assessments (class-test, presentations, lab-test) which require the assessment to be taken at a specified place / time. Examinations may be of any length from 1 to 3 hours; may consist of short and / or essay style questions and be wholly unseen or seen or a part unseen / seen depending on the module and the award's assessment strategy.
- For under-graduate awards the main examination period occurs during May at the end of teaching block 2 and for this period the relevant timetable details will be posted in the Faculty (on the ground floor notice-boards near Faculty reception) as soon as these have been confirmed by the Examination Office. The University publishes a draft examination timetable in January which will be posted on the notice board outside the Faculty Office and on the University's web pages. You should look at this draft timetable to see if any of your examinations clash. If they do, you must report this to the Faculty Office by the deadline given. After this deadline, the university will make any necessary changes and a final version of the timetable will be published in March. You must check this in case any changes have been made to your examinations.

- Examinations, class-tests, presentations etc. can also be scheduled at the end of teaching-block 1 or at any other time during the teaching period. Your award and module tutors will provide clear, advanced warning of when and where these timed assessments are scheduled in module handbooks and on within Blackboard. **It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the date, time and venue for your examinations.**
- If you have a medical circumstance or disability (as stipulated on a learning support statement), which might necessitate special examination arrangements, you should notify the Faculty Office (contact Ms Lorraine Berks: +44 (0)1782 295765, [l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:l.a.berks@staffs.ac.uk)) well before any examination, so that appropriate arrangements can be made (the Faculty will normally require at least 5 working days notice to respond appropriately to any special examination requirements). You should also ensure that you inform your Personal Tutor or subject disability co-ordinator.
- Whilst you may have undergone a formal assessment for a disability which indicates that special examination arrangements are required (for example, extra time or separate invigilation or a note taker) it is still always a good idea to check with the Faculty Office to make sure that the arrangements are underway.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Examinations Timetable / Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Disability /  
Special Examination Arrangements*

### Attempting ALL Assessments

- It is important that you attempt ALL assessments for all your modules. The Faculty of Sciences does not allow any module to be passed or compensated if an assessment in that module has not been attempted. You should ensure that the appropriate coursework is submitted on time and required timed assessments (including exams, class-tests, presentations, vivas) are attended.
- The University has changed its regulations to minimise the number of students who do not complete modules. ***Now, your right to a second (referral) attempt at a failed assessment(s) will be conditional on whether you have or have not made a first attempt (unless a successful claim for extenuating circumstances has been made) at the assessment(s).*** The award board will have the discretion to NOT offer a referral for any assessments not attempted.
- What does that mean? It means that in most cases, unless a successful claim for extenuation is made, students who have not attempted assessments, at the discretion of the award board . . .
  - . . . may not be allowed a referral for the module,
  - . . . so fail the module
  - . . . and if a core module, fail the award!

### **Attempting all assessments is therefore ESSENTIAL.**

- DO NOT think it is better to ignore some modules and concentrate your efforts on other modules.
- This re-enforces the fact that it is always better to submit a half-finished assignment than not submit anything or attempt an examination you are not confident about than not attend – you may gain sufficient marks to pass the module or at least allow the possibility for compensation between modules (if allowed by your award).
- If there are **extenuating circumstances** that prevent you from submitting / attending assessments then **ensure you gather evidence to support an extenuating claim.** Again, submitting a draft assignment by the required deadline is better than nothing and if the extenuation claim is successful a further assessment opportunity can always be offered.

- If you are unable to attend a timed-assessment then you should **inform the Faculty Office at the earliest opportunity** and then if appropriate make an extenuation claim.
- So there are 5 clear pieces of advice:
  - 1) Attempt all assessments
  - 2) It is better to submit something on time than nothing (DO NOT think 'it is better to submit the finished assignment late')
  - 3) It is better to attend a 'timed assessment' than not attend
  - 4) Let the Faculty Office know immediately if you do miss a timed assessment
  - 5) If extenuating circumstances apply get evidence and make a claim

### 5.3 Extenuating Circumstances

- We recognise that there may be times when you are unable to complete work due to circumstances beyond your control e.g. personal illness or personal difficulties. If you find yourself in such a position, you must make a claim for extenuating circumstances (EC). This is a system operated across the University to ensure that all students are treated fairly.
- Claim forms can be collected from the Faculty Office or the Information Centre, or downloaded from the web (under policies and procedures) and once completed should be handed in to the Faculty Reception (or e-mailed to your award leader if on a distance learning programme). The form includes full instructions on how it should be completed and what kind of evidence you will need to support your claim.
- For further information on criteria for a successful claim, what evidence is required and the process please see the link from **University Handbook** on the web. If you help completing the form please ask for advice from your subject tutor, from the Faculty Office, the Students' Union Advice Centre or from the Faculty Student Guidance Advisor.
- All claims are considered by the Faculty's Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Only the Chair person and the administrator(s) preparing the information will know the identity of any students submitting a claim.
- Always remember to submit your claim for extenuation by the due dates advertised by the Faculty Office on Mellor Notice Boards. Watch out for reminders on 'MyPortal'. Claims submitted after these dates are only considered at the discretion of the Chair of the ECP or as appeals to the Dean of Students, Francesca Francis.
- You will be notified in writing of the result of your claim. If you are not happy with the Panel's decision, we suggest that you contact the Faculty Office in the first instance (ask for Jackie Campbell). If you still feel that the situation has not been satisfactorily resolved, then you can appeal in writing to the Dean of Students, Francesca Francis ([F.Francis@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:F.Francis@staffs.ac.uk)).
- Note also that if you are waiting for an assessment of your learning support needs from the Student Enabling Centre, you should continue to use the Extenuating Circumstances procedure (see above) to claim any additional time you need as a consequence of your disability. When you have had an assessment of your learning support needs completed, however, and this *does not* explicitly state that you should be allowed extra time to complete coursework, then you will be expected to meet the normal deadlines. In this instance deadlines cannot be 're-negotiated' either via tutors or via the Extenuating Circumstances procedure.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Extenuating Circumstances*

## 5.4 Grading and Progression

### Summative Assessment Feedback Return Period

- Getting feedback from tutors on your coursework is a vital part of your learning process. Once a module tutor has finished marking your work, and internal moderation has been completed, they will let you know that it is available for collection. Distance learning students will be sent feedback electronically.
- The University's Academic Board has been considering the outcomes of the last National Student Survey and discussing how it can provide quicker feedback to students. It has agreed that you will receive feedback on your coursework and class test summative assessments normally within 20 working days following the coursework submission date or date of the class test.
- For some assessments the feedback period will be less than 20 working days. However, it may be the case that the 20 day rule for some assessments cannot be met for justified reasons (for example, modules on which a large number of students are enrolled). However, it is anticipated that this will apply to only a small number of modules on your award and, in those cases, the feedback return period will not exceed 25 days.
- The anticipated feedback return times for all assessments will be published in your Module Handbooks. Subject areas and award teams will also outline its assessment return strategy at the start of your award outlining which, if any modules will need the longer period to return assignments.
- In order to ensure that feedback is provided within 20 days, in some cases, the marks for your work will be provisional and will be subject to final ratification by the appropriate Assessment Board in due course.
- The University hopes that you will also play your part by ensuring that you collect feedback from your module tutor as soon as it is available. Tutors will outline in module handbooks how and by when work is to be returned.
- If work has not been collected from post-trays by the start of the next academic year then it is likely to be destroyed.

### How is my work marked?

- Assessments are graded on a scale of 1-15: at under-graduate level with grades 4-15 being passes and 1-3 fails. At post-graduate level grades 7-15 are passes and 1-6 are fail.
- For a full explanation of the grades go to the **University Handbook** for the 'Academic Award Regulations: Undergraduate Modular Framework' or the 'Regulations for post-graduate certificate, diploma or masters awards'.
- Your Module Handbooks will provide you with *marking criteria* i.e. an explanation of what you need to do to achieve these grades in relation to particular kinds of assessments.
- All conventional forms of assessment (examinations, essays etc.) are marked anonymously. Student work is also 'internally moderated' (sample second marked, including all fails and firsts) as well as 'externally moderated' by a subject based 'external examiner' – someone who is an expert in the field, and usually a senior academic at another university.
- The external examiner is responsible for ensuring that the marking is appropriate across the range of modules comprising a particular subject area, and that the standards achieved by students on those modules are comparable with those of students on similar awards at other universities, as well as with the level and subject benchmarks established at the national level by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education.

- Assessment Boards, attended by the relevant external examiner(s), confirm the marks for all modules in particular subject areas.
- Award Boards determine:
  - if your profile of results is strong enough to compensate up to 30 credits of undergraduate modules failed at Grade Points 3 and 2 per level. For post-graduate awards up to 30 credits can be compensated if Grade Points 4, 5 or 6,
  - the date by which any non-compensated failed modules must be recovered,
  - whether you have sufficient credits to progress to the next Level of your award,
  - the classification of your degree / award.

### What if I fail a module?

- First, you cannot pass a module unless you have attempted **all** of the assessment components.
- Normally you are allowed 2 attempts at any one module: i.e. the original attempt and one referral opportunity. A referral opportunity will usually mean you will be required to **resubmit** coursework (the original or alternative assignment) and / or **resit** an examination depending on which assessments were failed. You will not be required to repeat any elements you have passed.
- As outlined above it is at the award board's discretion whether referral attempts are offered in cases when the original assessment has not been attempted and extenuating circumstances have not been upheld.
- The conditions for retrieving a failed module will be confirmed by the Award Board, which will have access to your profile across all modules. The Award Board also has the power to compensate up to 30 credits of failed modules per level of your award (see above: 'how is my work marked?') but this is *discretionary and depends upon many other factors. You should never assume that compensation will occur.*
- If you are referred in any assessment then the maximum grade point awarded for that assessment will be a 4 at undergraduate level (7 at postgraduate). The overall grade point for the module will have an 'R' attached to show that it is a retrieved module.
- However, if there are documented extenuating circumstances which have been upheld (see above) which explain an assessment being failed or not attempted, then the Award Board will allow you a further assessment opportunity 'as if for the first time' without penalty or to improve your performance on assessments that have passed.
- The Award Boards will set the date by which you are required to retrieve the failed modules. This will vary between awards but typically for under-graduate programmes award boards will ask you to retrieve this either mid to late August, or by May of the following year. The exact dates will be on the University Calendar which is drawn up each year – and the Faculty Office will, anyway, inform you of the dates when it contacts you about your results and any referral recommendations.
- It is important that you identify when the referral period will be so that you do not miss the referral opportunity because you might be on vacation. A missed referral exam or assignment would have major consequences for your ability to progress any further on the award – and award failure if it is a core module.
- If your referral (second) attempt to retrieve a failed module is not successful, you will fail the module. The Award Board may, however, *at its discretion*, offer you one third and final attempt. However, this is not automatic and is conditional on:

- only up to 30 credits having being failed for a second time (and all your other modules for the level having been passed) i.e. this second failure is exceptional.
- for the problematic module(s) you should have attempted the failed assessments at least once at the previous two opportunities (the original or referral).
- This discretion is very important where you have failed a core module for (you must pass all the core modules on your award to get your degree) for the second time. Should you find yourself in the position where you have failed a core module for the second time and have not been allowed a third attempt, or have failed a core module for the third time, then you will not be eligible to progress and have failed your award. You should see your personal tutor or award leader as a matter of priority to see if there are other possibilities, such as changing awards, which still might allow you to progress and achieve a degree.
- If the module you fail is an *option* module, then you may choose to *replace* it with another option module with attendance (however, this will depend on availability of other options and your timetable.) Award-specific option modules may only be replaced by modules from the Award Specific Option list, and if you fail all the modules in that list you will not be able to continue on your award.
- If you replace a module, then you regain the 'lives' allowed, but if you do this, the maximum grade point you can achieve is 4 at under-graduate level (7 at post-graduate) and this will be recorded at 4+ (or 7+) to indicate that it is a replacement module.

## Results and Progression

- After award boards the Faculty Office will send to you a formal letter and transcript with details of any referrals – this will be sent to your home address. This process assumes that you have provided us with your current home address. You should notify the Faculty Office if you would like your results sent to another address.
- You will be notified of the dates by which you should receive a results letter. If you do not receive your letter within 48 hours of the published date you should contact the Faculty Office to find out where the letter is and if necessary a replacement letter can be sent.
- For Under-graduates on-campus students award results will also be posted at the end of June on the Notice Board on the ground floor of the Sciences Building. The results are anonymised as they list students by registration number in order to be compliant with the Data Protection Act.
- *Please note: If you are classed as a debtor by the University, your results will not be considered by the Award Board. Once your debt has been paid your results will be forwarded to the next scheduled Award board. This may impact on your progression to the next level of your award.*
- For information on progression rules – how many modules you have to pass to get into the next level – and how degree classifications are determined refer to the **University Handbook** (Academic Award Regulations appropriate to your award) and also your **Award Handbook** for specific regulations that may over-ride the University's general regulations.

## 5.5 Cheating, Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism

- Clearly, the whole reason for coming to University and studying modules and awards is to learn new knowledge, new skills and create for yourself new knowledge and understanding (for example, in project work). You will be asked to demonstrate what you have learnt and what you know through assessments and the University assumes the assessments you complete are produced by you.
- Therefore, the University takes very seriously the issue of cheating in assessments and passing-off the work of others as your own. The University has a whole set of **Academic Misconduct** regulations about this covering things like cheating in exams, commissioning (buying or getting others to produce work

for you e.g. from the internet), collusion (working with another student to produce work which should have been an individual assignment), making-up data for projects, copying another student's work with or without their permission etc.. The Academic Misconduct regulations can be found by following the 'Appeals, Complaints & Conduct' link in the **University Handbook** ([http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/academic\\_misconduct\\_tcm44-26770.pdf](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/academic_misconduct_tcm44-26770.pdf)).

## Plagiarism

- One particular aspect of academic misconduct is **Plagiarism**. Plagiarism is defined in the University Regulations as: 'the representation of another person's work, without acknowledgement of the source, as his/her own for the purposes of satisfying formal assessment requirements for coursework. Plagiarism is the use of the ideas and/or words of others without acknowledging where you got those ideas/words from. Plagiarism is an assessment offence, and carries major penalties.
- This is often a tricky area for students because the whole idea about studying is learning from other people about their ideas and bringing together in assessments those ideas from a variety of sources – academics, researchers, politicians, the media, peoples accounts etc. – along with your own views on the topic to create your own unique answer to the assessment brief.
- Guidance is available on avoiding plagiarism. The **University Handbook** has a link for 'plagiarism' and you should consult the Study Skills website (<http://www.staffs.ac.uk/studyskills/>). Award teams will also explain and explore with you what plagiarism is and how you can avoid being accused of it by referencing / acknowledging your information sources correctly. For further advice on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism also see <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/refzone>.
- Note too, that the University has introduced plagiarism detection software called 'Turnitin' which will be used by the Faculty. You will be told which assignment(s) you will be required to submit **via** Turnitin and you will be given guidance as to how to use the software.
- The Faculty takes a very serious view of plagiarism and if it is suspected then there is a set process to be followed. The tutor suspecting plagiarism will consult with the Subject Leader and the Faculty Director for Learning and Teaching. If they feel there is a case to be answered the Faculty Director will request the student to attend an interview with the Faculty's Assessment Offences Panel. The Panel will normally be chaired by the Faculty Director for Learning and Teaching and attended by the module tutor.
- At the interview the student will be shown the source(s) from which the plagiarised passages in their assignment has been taken, and asked to explain how and why this occurred. If plagiarism is admitted the student will be asked to sign a declaration to that effect and the result will be reported to the Assessment and Award Boards and the Dean of Students / Academic Registrar. Where it is not admitted and reasonable explanation cannot be provided the case will be forwarded for the consideration of the University's Assessment Disciplinary Committee.
- The Assessment Offences Panel will make a recommendation to the Award Board in relation to any penalties to be imposed for the offence, and any resubmission requirements. The Award Board, however, will confirm the final decision on the appropriate penalty prescribed by the University's regulations. The penalties for plagiarism can be severe especially where the standards of professional accreditation need to be defended (for example, in Clinical Psychology), or repeat offences have been committed, a student can be dismissed from their course. The Faculty of Sciences has not hesitated to do this where appropriate.
- Remember: plagiarism is easy to spot and increasingly easy to trace.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Undergraduate Modular Framework / Post-graduate Regulations /  
Appeals, Complaints and Conduct*

## 6.0 Student Experience

### 6.1 Student Representation

- The Faculty is committed to obtaining feedback from its students regarding the quality of their learning experience to improve your future experience. We obtain your views in a number of ways including questionnaires and representation on various Faculty committees.

#### Student Staff Liaison Groups (SSLGs)

- Each subject area has a Student Staff Liaison Group which is chaired by the Subject / Award Leader. These may be face-to-face meetings for on-campus students or via 'virtual discussion boards' for distance learning students.
- Meetings of the SSLGs are an effective way of monitoring awards in the Faculty and allow:
  - identification of any award learning, teaching or assessment issues and their resolution
  - identification of things that are working well or could be enhanced further
- New students will be asked in the first few weeks to nominate representatives to join continuing student reps. For on-campus students training for this role is available from the Students' Union. We inform the Student's Union of the names of elected representatives and they will arrange training events (usually scheduled mid October to early November just prior to the first SSLG meetings of the year).
- The SSLG for your award usually meets at least once during each teaching block, though at the reps request it can be convened more frequently. Its remit is a wide-ranging discussion about your learning experience. If you are a representative you should discuss with other students on your award their experiences so that you can fairly reflect their views. Let fellow students know how they can contact you.

#### Field Boards

- The core membership of Field Area Boards consists of all Award Leaders, tutors, together with technician representatives if appropriate, a library representative, and a number of student representatives from each Level relevant to the subject area. These Boards will meet at least twice per year to consider issues affecting the running of awards to which the Programme Area contributes. Again it is expected that some of the students reps from the SSLG would also attend the subject area Field Board

#### Faculty Committees

- At the Faculty level there are a couple of committees where we want to hear student views from reps in attendance:
  - Faculty Disability and Equality Committee – this meets about 4 times a year to discuss any issues and good practice with regards disability support and equality issues.
  - Faculty Student Experience Group – this group meets about 4 times a year to look at general support that is provided to students including welcome week, student retention strategy, student viewfinder and national student surveys.
- If you are interested in becoming a student rep on any committee then please talk to your award leader.

## Questionnaire Surveys

- At the end of each module you will be asked to evaluate the learning and teaching on that module. The analysis of the questionnaires will inform the process of Faculty Award Annual Monitoring that takes place in the following autumn term.
- Other University surveys include the annual Student Viewfinder Survey for Levels 4 and 5 undergraduates; the National Students Survey for Level 36 undergraduates and the Post-graduate Taught Experience Survey which all take place in the spring.
- The results of the various surveys are scrutinised by the Faculty and action plans are created for the following year to improve the student experience.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Student Feedback / Student-Staff Liaison Groups*

## 6.2 Appeals, Complaints and Conduct

- Any issues that you are not happy about in relation to your individual experience, whether it be to do with the teaching you receive or as a consequence of administrative processes, can usually be resolved informally by consultation with your Personal Tutor, with a Module Tutor, with your Award Leader or with the Faculty Office. Typical examples here might be that you have been unable to find a particular member of staff to obtain feedback on your assignment, or that the Faculty Office promised to return your telephone call and failed to do so, or gave you some wrong information, or failed to amend your record on THESIS+ in line with your written instructions.
- In general, it is always a good idea to try to resolve issues informally. But where this has not been successful, or is not appropriate, (for example, you want to appeal against the decision of an Assessment or Award Board or of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, or you need to complain) then you always have the option of using the University's formal processes.
- For further information about the University's appeal and complaints procedures go to the **University Handbook**.
- Equally the Faculty and University expect its students to abide by its academic and general regulations, links to which can again be found in the **University Handbook**. The 'student charter and behaviour policy' can also be found on the *HelloSciences* website.

Go to the on-line **University Handbook** for further information about:

*Appeals, Complaints and Conduct*