

## GSE Student Support & Welfare Services Guide

### 1. Introduction

This guide provides an overview of the student support and welfare services that are available to CAT students and provides a number of links to specialist external resources e.g. for emotional support, debt advice etc. The Student Support team is based in the Graduate School of Education (GSE) and provides information and non-academic support services for prospective students and students studying at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT). Our academic partners are responsible for validating programme content and monitoring academic standards. Currently these are the University of East London (UEL) and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

CAT's student welfare policy and guidance is a broad based approach to account for the majority of health concerns and barriers to learning that are most common amongst the student population. However there will be some students that present with health issues which can affect their learning opportunities, which require individual attention. In line with our approach to inclusivity, wherever possible CAT will make reasonable adjustments to support students in their learning. These reasonable adjustments will be discussed with the student, and reviewed on a frequency appropriate to CAT and the student's requirements. Any intervention and discussion will be recorded on the reasonable interventions form (see Appendix 1). Where intervention is not appropriate for CAT staff, we will endeavour to signpost the student to relevant professional support mechanisms, to support the student with their learning.

### 2. Contact Details

#### 2.1. CAT Student Support Office

The Student Support Office at CAT is staffed during core office hours (10am-4pm, Mon-Fri) and contact details are given below:

##### Student Support Officers

E-mail: [student.support@cat.org.uk](mailto:student.support@cat.org.uk)

Tel: 01654 70 (4989) / (5974) / (5981)

##### Student Support Manager

E-mail: [martin.skelton@cat.org.uk](mailto:martin.skelton@cat.org.uk)

Tel: 01654 70 4985

## 2.2. Student Finance Officer

The GSE website contains lots of information about our course fees and bursaries, postgraduate loans and other sources of funding. Our Student Finance Officer is part of the CAT Finance team and be contacted as follows:

E-mail: [student.finance@cat.org.uk](mailto:student.finance@cat.org.uk)

Tel: 01654 70 4981

## 2.3. WISE Reception Desk

The WISE Reception desk is staffed during usual office hours every day. Reception staff can be contacted for general enquiries and to report problems with accommodation etc. Should you require any assistance outside normal office hours whilst staying at CAT the Caretaking staff can be contacted via the WISE Reception desk.

Tel: 01654 704978

Email: [wise.reception@cat.org.uk](mailto:wise.reception@cat.org.uk)

## 2.4. Academic Partnership Services

The Student Support team will be happy to liaise with UEL or LJMU on your behalf, please let us know if we can be of assistance ([student.support@cat.org.uk](mailto:student.support@cat.org.uk)).

## 3. **Equality and Diversity**

CAT is committed to building a learning community founded on equality of opportunity, celebrating the diversity of our student and staff populations and in which discriminatory behaviour is challenged and not tolerated.

Within the spirit of respecting individuality and difference, we promise fair treatment and equality of opportunity for all regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, caring or parental responsibilities, age, or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics.

### 3.1. Equality and Human Rights Commission

Expert information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues and the applicable law can be obtained from the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS):

[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

Tel: 0808 800 0082

## 4. **Data Protection**

CAT needs to collect and keep certain information about its students in order to carry out its day-to-day operations, to meet its objectives and to comply with legal obligations. We are committed to ensuring any personal data will be dealt with in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Data Protection Act (1998). To comply with the law, personal information will be collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. For more information about how your information is used please see CAT's [Privacy Notice](#).

## 5. Health & Safety

CAT is pledged to operate a clean, safe and appropriately equipped learning environment: the CAT site complies with all Health and Safety requirements and all students have appropriate insurance.

Students are advised to inform us of any significant physical or mental health problems, personal or financial issues, which might impact on their ability to undertake their chosen academic studies in a timely manner. For students with disabilities CAT will make reasonable adjustments to support their learning, wherever possible. Students are required to satisfactorily complete an ethics form and risk assessment prior to commencing their dissertation research work.

Whilst onsite at CAT, any accidents, adverse incidents or safety concerns should be notified in the first instance to the Student Support Team, or if it involves a teaching activity, the Academic in charge. Outside office hours please contact the Caretaking staff via the WISE Reception desk (see 2.4).

### 5.1. GP/Dental Services

See Additional Resources Section (13.1) for information about local healthcare services.

### 5.2. First Aid & Minor Injuries

A number of staff at CAT are trained to provide first aid, including the Porters who are available onsite at all times. If you require first aid please alert a member of staff in the first instance and they will call for assistance, or go to the WISE Reception desk to seek assistance.

There is a Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) available in Dolgellau (open 8am-8pm, 7 days a week) should you require any urgent medical treatment (Dolgellau Hospital, Tel: 01341 422479)

## 6. Safeguarding & PREVENT Training

### 6.1. Safeguarding Policy

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) takes a proactive stance with regard to safeguarding our students and visitors. We believe that not only do we have a statutory duty; we also have a moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm in our care.

The CAT Safeguarding Policy and Procedure can be found in the Student Policies & Procedures section of the GSE website.

### 6.2. PREVENT Training & Policies

Higher education institutions have a duty of care to students, staff and visitors. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a statutory duty for higher education institutions to have "due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism". This means that institutions have a statutory duty to engage with the government's Prevent agenda. Further information about Prevent is available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

CAT's 'Prevent policy for Freedom of Speech' and 'Prevent policy for Speakers and Events' can be found in the [Student Policies & Procedures](#) section of the GSE website.

## **7. Student Support Services**

This section gives a brief overview of pastoral support services at CAT. Additional information can be found in the Programme Handbooks available from the [Student Policies & Procedures](#) section of the GSE website.

### **7.1. [Student Support Team](#)**

The Student Support team is based in the WISE building at CAT and can assist students with their enquiries and administrative matters. The key duty of the Student Support Officers (SSO's) is to provide students with administrative support including, where necessary, liaising on student's behalf with our collaborative partners (UEL and LJMU).

SSO's also collect and collate feedback from students, which is used to evaluate and develop course modules. CAT also has a Student Finance Officer who is available to assist with enquiries and payment of tuition and other fees e.g. food and accommodation charges.

### **7.2. [Personal Tutors](#)**

Each student is allocated a personal tutor who provides academic and pastoral support throughout their period of study. Personal problems can be dealt with in private by making an appointment with the personal tutor and/or with the Programme Leader at any time during a residential teaching week, by telephone or email.

Courses and modules are designed such that contact with staff occurs on a regular basis, providing opportunities for close and immediate support together with help and advice as required.

### **7.3. [Student Charter](#)**

CAT's Student Charter is available from the [Student Policies & Procedures](#) section of the CAT website. Our Student Charter outlines the services and standards students can expect from CAT and what we expect from students in terms of their expected commitment to studying with us and their personal responsibilities.

## **8. Supporting Students with Disabilities or Additional Needs**

All higher education institutions are expected to be proactive in supporting students with disabilities in accordance with The Equality Act (2010). A disability can be defined as:

*'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*

While reasonable adjustments can be made to the course of studies, and to the manner of assessment, they cannot be made to any competence standards that must be demonstrated for successful progression or graduation.

### **8.1. [General Advice & Support for Students with Disabilities](#)**

In line with our Equal Opportunities policy statement, at CAT we offer all students a generous amount of time to complete and submit their assignments (typically eight weeks).

This is significantly more than many other higher education providers and should allow students with disabilities sufficient time to complete work by the published submission deadlines. ***This means there is no extra time available and deadlines are the same for all students.*** Students are encouraged to discuss any specific problems in achieving submission deadlines with the Student Support Officers or their personal tutor at the earliest opportunity.

Lectures resources and video/audio files are available to all students via our Virtual Learning Environments (Moodle & Canvas). These resources enable all learning outcomes to be achieved by distance learning and can be referred to if you are attending modules onsite and have missed some lectures due to illness or other circumstances.

The Student Support team and tutors can advise where help is available from, and can give advice on time management and report writing tips in a Skype or onsite tutorial. Students with additional needs are advised to discuss them with their personal tutor at the earliest opportunity. Students who require additional help may be eligible to apply for Disability Student Allowance (see 8.6).

We recognise that some disabilities such as dyslexia or dyspraxia are not visible, and encourage students to disclose information about these disabilities as soon as possible so that appropriate support can be offered at the earliest opportunity. In order for us to adequately assess the likely impact of any declared disabilities, and thereby consider what if any reasonable adjustments may be required to support the student, we may ask for independent evidence of the disability or impairment such as a letter or assessment from a general practitioner or specialist healthcare practitioner.

See Additional Resources section (13.2) for links to external support websites for students with disabilities.

#### 8.2. 'Flagging' of Work Submitted by Students with Disabilities

Where certain reasonable adjustments have been agreed, students may be provided with a unique, amended coversheet to be submitted with their coursework. Such coversheets will include the student number (and not their name) together with any specific guidance for markers.

#### 8.3. Dyslexia & Unseen Disabilities

Students with dyslexia or other unseen disability are required to provide a statement from a qualified practitioner stating the nature and degree of their disability. Where appropriate, a unique, amended coversheet will be provided to the student for submission with their work. Markers may be advised to ignore spelling and grammatical errors etc.

#### 8.4. Hearing Impairment and Deafness

Most lectures and some practical sessions are recorded and audio files are available for playback via Moodle / Canvas at any time. Skype sessions can also be recorded or have nominated note takers.

The Sheppard Lecture Theatre in WISE has an infra-red hearing assistance technology. Students with hearing impairments are advised to notify the Student Support team and the Module Leader who will make sure that any reasonable adjustments are in place. If you are able to lip read, it is also important to let tutors know, so that your needs are catered for e.g.

we can arrange for you to sit as close to speakers as possible. It may be possible to claim DSA for note takers (see 8.6).

#### 8.5. Mental Health Issues

If you have, or have had, a mental health difficulty that you think might affect your studies, we encourage you to inform us of this. We understand it can sometimes be difficult to discuss mental health issues; however your personal tutor or the Student Support team will be able to offer and guide you towards confidential support. Additional sources of information and support for students with mental health issues are available in the Additional Resources Section.

#### 8.6. The Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

The Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is available to postgraduate students. For most students with disabilities this will be the main source of your support, whether that be technological or human. The DSA is administered by local education authorities, although the money comes from central government.

The DSA is a non means-tested grant that all students with disabilities can apply for. The DSA is designed to bring you to a 'level playing field' and as such should not be used to provide you with equipment that will give you an unfair advantage over other students on the programme. Further information on the DSAs is available from the Department for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>).

Alternatively the UK charity AbilityNet offer a range of disability support services including an online checking system to help you assess your suitability for receiving DSAs (<https://abilitynet.org.uk/HE-support-checker>).

#### 8.7. English Language Support

The Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) is not able to offer English language support. Please see our programme specific entry requirements for English language competency requirements.

### 9. **Chaplaincy & Faith Support**

Whatever your background or faith, we will endeavour to support your needs, including the provision of prayer facilities. Please contact Dr Frances Hill, Senior Lecturer and volunteer Lay Chaplain, if you would like to know more about chaplaincy and faith support available at CAT.

E-mail: [frances.hill@cat.org.uk](mailto:frances.hill@cat.org.uk)

### 10. **Attendance & Absence**

In order to be successful in your studies it is important that you participate and engage with all your scheduled activities such as lectures, workshops and seminars. We therefore regard attendance as essential, and also value punctuality (if you turn up late you may find you will not be allowed to enter a lecture; late attendance causes disruption for others).

We are obliged to keep records of your attendance for all of your required teaching activities (e.g. workshops, seminars, practical's etc.) and you must ensure that you can demonstrate your attendance through this recording process. If you are unable to attend classes or other

required activities for any reason you must inform the Student Support Officer as soon as practicable.

## **11. Pregnancy and Maternity**

Students who disclose pregnancy will be treated sensitively, and supported on an individual basis to meet course requirements and graduate successfully. CAT will be flexible in identifying solutions which best meet the student's needs and wishes, and also the requirements of the course of study; keeping in mind the legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and guidance on its application to the higher education sector. There will normally be a meeting with an appropriate member of staff to discuss the following:

- Communication with the student and others
- Health and safety implications / Risk Assessment
- Impact on course requirements including assessment
- Impact on placements
- Planning of absence for appointments and maternity leave, including arrangements for return to study

As a general rule students can expect to have similar maternity, paternity and adoption rights as those laid down in employment law, although that legislation does not apply formally. Students should be aware that the options need to be discussed individually, since they will vary with the specific needs of the course of study and the dates involved. CAT will only approve arrangements which can be realistically predicted to lead to successful completion of the degree programme.

Depending on the course significant periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave may prevent the student being supported to meet the requirements for successful progression or graduation unless they return to the following academic year. Financial support arrangements may be affected, and those are matters for the relevant funding body and not CAT. International students with visas will still need to meet the conditions of their visa.

## **12. Intermission and Extenuation**

Students are expected to take reasonable steps to mitigate for commonly occurring circumstances (e.g. backing up work in case of computer failure) however we recognise that on occasions students are unable to undertake a booked module or submit assignments by the required submission date due to changes in their circumstances e.g. health, family or work-related issues.

Depending upon the nature of their particular circumstances, students may apply for intermission (temporary pause of their study) or extenuation. It should be noted that our partner universities (UEL & LJMU) have different policies relating to intermission and extenuation and you are advised to contact the Student Support team in the first instance if you have any questions about the procedures that apply to you.

### **12.1. Intermission / Leave of Absence**

If owing to work, financial, family or other personal or professional commitments, you find that you do not have sufficient time for your studies, you may apply to take a study break. UEL refer this as 'Intermission' and LJMU refer to this as 'Leave of Absence' and they are essentially the same. Intermission extends the time limits for study on the programme for

the period of the intermission unless prohibited by Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body requirements.

In the first instance you should discuss your intention to intermit with your personal tutor or the programme leader. For further information about intermission please refer to the Programme Handbook, available from the [Student Policies & Procedures](#) section of the CAT website.

#### 12.2. Extenuating Circumstances

There are some significant differences between UEL and LJMU policies for extenuating circumstances:

**LJMU** - LJMU student may apply for an extension of up to 15 working days in the first instance. Applications will be considered by the Programme or Module Leader. Agreed extensions to coursework submission will be notified to LJMU by the Student Support Officers. Should the maximum 15 day extension not be sufficient or appropriate, students can formally apply for extenuation. This allows students to proceed to their next attempt without a penalty being applied.

**UEL** – Where an application for extenuating circumstances is agreed UEL students can submit coursework up to 7 days after the submission deadline (but not within 24hours of the deadline) or to proceed to their next attempt without a penalty being applied.

In all cases, in order for a mitigation claim to be considered it is the student's responsibility to ensure that, for each component affected, they submit details of their circumstances with supporting third party evidence.

#### 12.3. Sudden and Severe Change in Circumstances

Students wishing to change their mode of study; transfer from full to part-time; apply for intermission; or apply to change their chosen modules **without incurring the financial penalties that might normally apply**, may submit a 'Sudden and Severe Change in Circumstances' application.

### 13. **Additional Resources**

CAT is not responsible for the content of external Internet sites

#### 13.1. Access to GP / Dental / Optician / Pharmacy Services

Healthcare in Wales is delivered through a variety of providers, ranging from Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts to community pharmacies and opticians. To obtain further information about healthcare services in Wales please visit the **Health in Wales** website (<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices>)

#### 13.2. Support for Students with Disabilities

**Disability Rights UK** promotes opportunities for young people and adults with any kind of disability in post-16 education, training and employment across the UK: (<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/>) (Tel 0330 995 0400)

**Disability Rights Commission** (<http://www.drc.org.uk/>) (Tel: 08457 622 633)



**AbilityNet** is a UK charity that helps people of any age and with any disability to use technology to achieve their goals at home, at work and in education. They provide specialist advice services and free information resources. (<https://abilitynet.org.uk/>) (Tel: 0800 269 545)

### 13.3. Emotional & Mental Health Support

**Community Advice & Listening Line** offers emotional support and information on mental health and related matters to people in Wales (<http://www.callhelpline.org.uk/>) (Tel: 0800 132 737)

**Mental Health Foundation** provides a guide to Mental Health problems, topical issues and treatment options via their website (<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>)

**Samaritans** is available 24 hours a day for anyone struggling to cope and provide a safe place to talk where calls are completely confidential (<http://www.samaritans.org/>) (Freephone: 116 123)

**Switchboard** provides an information, support and referral service for anyone who needs to consider issues around their sexuality (<http://switchboard.lgbt/>) (Phone: 0300 330 0630, 10am-10pm)

**National Centre for Eating Disorders** provides advice and information on compulsive eating, anorexia, bulimia and weight problems (<http://eating-disorders.org.uk/>) (Phone: 0845 838 2040)

### 13.4. Substance Misuse

**Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline** is a bilingual helpline providing information or help to individuals, their families, carers, and support workers (<http://www.dan247.org.uk/>) (24/7 Phone: 0808 808 2234)

### 13.5. Crime & Domestic Violence

**National Domestic Violence Helpline**, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge is for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends and others calling on their behalf (<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>) (24/7 Phone: 0808 2000 247)

**Victim Support** provides emotional and practical help to victims or witnesses of any crime, whether or not it has been reported to the police (<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>) (Phone: 0808 16 89 111 (weekdays 8pm-8am; weekends 24 hour service))

### 13.6. Financial and Debt Advice

**Citizens Advice Service online** with information on benefits, employment and housing and help on debt, credit and legal issues (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>)

**Money Advice Service** provides free and impartial money advice. An independent service originally set up by government (<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>) (Phone 0800 138 7777 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm; Sat 9am-1pm)

**GOV.UK** site provides general advice for students on all aspects of student finance (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance>)

13.7. UEL Policies

A suite of policies for UEL students can be found using the link below. Where applicable more specific references are included in this document.

<https://www.uel.ac.uk/Discover/Governance/Policies-Regulations-Corporate-documents/Student-Policies>

13.8. LJMU Policies

A suite of policies can be found using the link below. Where applicable more specific references are included in this document.

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/student-regulations>

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## Appendix 1

### Reasonable Adjustments Form

This form should be used to document agreed actions in meeting reasonable adjustments for students with individual health problems that fall outside of the student welfare policy. The form also allows for the recording of feedback meetings with the student to assess the effectiveness of the implemented reasonable adjustments.

**Student number:**

**Date:**

<i>Issue (exemplar)</i>	<b>Addressed/ Not yet addressed (Date.)</b>	<b>Suggested Actions:</b>	<b>Comments - student/CAT feedback (dated)</b>
<i>Confidentiality</i>		Student agrees to relevant staff sharing information in order to help ensure relevant support is given. Information is to be considered confidential and will not be shared with student body	
<b>Barriers to study - examples</b>		<b>Solutions agreed by CAT team</b> <b>Date:</b>	
<i>Health and Safety/ Duty of Care (DOC)</i>	Identified by CAT / student	If student withdraws from an onsite session can they contact student support?  Risk assessment will be used to assess if student is safe when withdrawing from a session outside the WISE building.  How best to exercise DOC? Medical support / emergency arrangements? Who to contact? GP/family/hospital? Student to provide contact details. Reasonable support contact (Student Support) when away from CAT for protracted periods	<b>Student to provide external health support contact details:</b> Contact points: <u>General Healthcare provider</u> <u>Tel:</u> <u>Address:</u>  <u>Named health care managers:</u> <u>Name:</u> <u>Address:</u> <u>Tel:</u>  <u>GP</u> <u>Name:</u> <u>Address:</u> <u>Tel:</u>  <u>Family contacts:</u>

			<u>Name:</u> <u>Relationship:</u> <u>Address:</u> <u>Tel.:</u>
<i>Frequency of ill health episodes is often sudden with little advance warning</i>		<p>Recommend DL where possible: Student access to the module is less intrusive than on-site delivery (and see below).</p> <p>Onsite: Module leader will contact student to explain format of teaching week and main reading 2 weeks in advance of Module starting</p> <p>Reasonable support contact will email module leader to initiate initial contact.</p> <p>Where sessions are clearly identified efforts, will be made by CAT to record sessions*.</p>	<b>Student comments:</b>
<i>Difficulties delivering assessed work such as face to face presentations and debates</i>		<p><u>Presentations (several modules):</u> assignments may be submitted electronically with a recorded voiceover with a cover sheet rather than face to face</p>	<b>Student comments:</b>
<i>Communications strategy – minimise anxiety</i>		<p>Some general communications have to be sent to all students. These are often requests for information which are required for service provision requirements by CAT. However when communicating with the student directly, all staff aim to communicate clearly in the subject line if there is going to be any sort of request or potential confrontation. Staff will always inform Reasonable support contact / SSOs before sending individual emails.</p>	<b>Student comments:</b>

**Document to be reviewed by:**

Advice sought from:

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/adjustments-disabled-students>  
Equality Challenge Unit

Details regarding Disabled Student Allowance eligibility can be found at:

- <https://www.ucas.com/finance/additional-funding/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>
- <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/eligibility>
- <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/undergraduate-students/new-students/what-financial-support-is-available/disabled-students-allowances.aspx>
- <https://abilitynet.org.uk/HE-support-checker>

A copy of this form will be retained on file at CAT, whilst the student is studying at CAT in accordance with CATs published data and privacy policy <https://www.cat.org.uk/privacy-notice/>

Student Name: (Print)		GSE Authorised Person	
Signed:		Signed:	
Date:			