

CHARTER OF STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Charter has the status of a Policy of the University,
(Senate Resolution 224/2000 and 19/2006)

Preamble

The Mission¹ of the University of Western Australia is:

To advance, transmit and sustain knowledge and understanding through the conduct of teaching, research and scholarship at the highest international standards, for the benefit of the international, Australian and Western Australian communities.

Core values¹ underpinning the University's activities include a commitment to:

Academic (intellectual) freedom to encourage staff and students to engage in the open exchange of ideas and thoughts.

Fostering the values of openness, honesty, tolerance, fairness, trust and responsibility in social, moral and academic matters.

Equity and merit as the fundamental principles for the achievement of the full potential of all staff and students.

To help achieve this Mission and to facilitate the underpinning of the core values, this Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities sets out the fundamental rights and responsibilities of students² and their organisations³ at The University⁴ of Western Australia.

It recognises that excellence in teaching and learning requires students to be active participants in their educational experience. It upholds the ethos that in addition to the University's role of awarding formal academic qualifications to students, the University must strive to instil in all students independent scholarly learning, critical judgement, academic integrity and ethical sensitivity.

The Charter also recognises that students are central to a dynamic University community. In doing so, the University recognises the importance of student rights, responsibilities and opinion and encourages diversity within the student body.

Students retain their fundamental rights as set out in relevant legislation and in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Everything in this Charter is limited by anything to the contrary in relevant State and national legislation, and the University's statutes, by-laws, regulations and rules.

This Charter is a statement of principles that the University shall take all reasonable and practicable steps to put into effect. The University expects the same of students. Many clauses contain references to particular University policies and guidelines which explain the manner in which the University will take those reasonable and practicable steps.

The breach of any student responsibility does not automatically invalidate any student rights. Consideration of a student's rights and responsibilities will be dealt with through the appropriate University policies and procedures.

1. General and Fundamental Rights and Responsibilities

1.1 Every student has the right:

- 1) to be recognised as an individual member of the University community, with all associated rights of access to University services and facilities;
- 2) to be treated fairly and ethically, with respect and dignity;
- 3) to study in a supportive and encouraging environment;
- 4) to pursue resolution when the individual student's rights referred to in this Charter are in tension with the rights of others, under the rights of representation and grievance specified within the Charter;
- 5) to assemble in a peaceful manner in the general open spaces of the campus⁵;
- 6) to be free of University censorship of material they publish, whether for distribution on the campus or elsewhere⁶;
- 7) of access to their records;
- 8) to have the University's records concerning them dealt with in ways that are secure, with access limited to designated persons, and with content restricted to material defined as relevant by

University policy or legislation;

9) to protection against retrospective amendment of any statute, by-law, regulation, rule, policy or administrative guideline;

10) to have access to the statutes, regulations, rules and policies of the University which apply to them; and

11) to be informed of the existence of this Charter and to have adequate access to it.

1.2 Every student has the responsibility:

1) to recognise the rights of others, including the rights of every other student covered by this Charter as well as the rights of staff and visitors;

2) to obey the laws of the land;

3) to respect and uphold principles of scholarly integrity;

4) to make themselves aware of and comply with statutes, regulations, rules and policies of the University which apply to them;

5) to ensure that their student record is accurate at all times;

6) to uphold the reputation of the University while engaged in University activities; and

7) not to purport to speak or act on behalf of the University unless explicitly authorised to do so.

2. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

2.1 Every student has the right:

1) to study in an environment committed to the principles of [equity](#) and equality of opportunity, the recognition of diversity, and the fulfilment of affirmative action obligations⁷;

2) to have access to education, services⁸ and representation regardless of: gender or gender history, sexual orientation, race, relationship status, pregnancy, political conviction, religious conviction, impairment, family responsibilities or family status, age, language, ethnicity, national or social origin, socio-economic status, property, or birth or other status;

3) to be free from all [sexual, physical and racial harassment](#) and from other inappropriate behaviour;

4) to have consideration given to the making of alternative arrangements for academic commitments to allow for religious or other cultural observance, or family responsibilities; and

5) to have consideration given to the making of alternative arrangements for academic commitments to allow for any impairment [or any medical condition](#).

2.2 Every student has the responsibility:

1) to act at all times in a way that respects the rights and privileges of others;

2) to respect the equity and diversity of all members of the University community;

3) to respect University property and the property of others; and

4) to make requests for alternative arrangements in a timely manner in order to facilitate consideration.

3. Access to Education

3.1 Every student has the right:

1) to be considered for selection into courses or units on the basis of criteria that are valid, explicit, fair and reliable;

2) to be free of course-related fees and charges other than those in accord with the [Higher Education Support Act](#) and the University's Policy on [Ancillary Fees and Charges](#);⁹

3) to reasonable access to academic staff for assistance as well as to the various academic support services; and

4) to access relevant information provided by the University, including that concerning financial assistance provided or promoted by the University, such as grants, scholarships and loans.

3.2 Every student has the responsibility:

1) to disclose to the University (or its agent) all information required for assessment of an application for admission to a course and other requests for services and provide truthful statements about their qualifications and experience; and

2) to complete administrative obligations in a timely manner and pay any fees, charges or fines as they fall due or in the case where the student is unable to pay, to contact the relevant staff member in order to make alternative arrangements for payment.

4. Quality of Education

4.1 Every student has the right:

- 1) to expect the University to provide a high quality of education including a high quality of teaching, supervision, curriculum and unit content, a commitment to inclusivity, and good access to staff;
- 2) to access accurate, timely and sufficient information regarding enrolment and other administrative procedures;
- 3) to access accurate, timely and sufficient information concerning each unit in which they might enrol, including timetabling, [assessment](#) details, fees and attendance requirements;
- 4) to have the content and outcomes of each unit, and any relevant information communicated effectively and clearly in the language(s) approved for that unit;
- 5) to [assessment](#) that is valid, educative, explicit, reliable and fair;
- 6) to have their [intellectual property](#) and [copyright](#) recognised;
- 7) to be able to communicate freely, to voice alternative points of view in rational debate, and to have their intellectual freedom¹⁰ protected;
- 8) to expect the University to provide a [safe and accessible environment](#), including facilities, equipment and grounds;
- 9) to transparency regarding agreements and funding arrangements, between the University and any other entity, which might inappropriately impact on a unit or course in which they are enrolled, or research project on which they are engaged; and
- 10) to have the opportunity to contribute feedback on the teaching and supervision they experience and to make suggestions for future course planning and to do so under full protection of intellectual freedom.

4.2 Every student has the responsibility:

- 1) to bring an open and enquiring mind and enthusiasm to their studies;
- 2) to participate actively in the teaching and learning and research environment, in particular by attending classes as required, complying with workload expectations, and submitting required work on time;
- 3) to be aware of all [unit or subject information](#) made available to them and to raise any questions or concerns with the appropriate staff member in a timely manner, also to make their learning needs known to appropriate staff members in a timely manner;
- 4) to take an active part in the management of their enrolment with the University and monitor their own progress within the teaching-learning environment;
- 5) to understand that despite all efforts to promote successful teaching and learning outcomes, a student's work may still not reach the standard required to pass a unit;
- 6) to recognise the fundamental principle of intellectual freedom¹⁰ and to seek to safeguard this principle and freedom;
- 7) to adhere to the principles of [ethical scholarship and academic integrity](#) during the course of their studies; and
- 8) to contribute fair and honest feedback on the teaching and supervision they experience when requested to do so.

5. Student Representation

5.1 Every student has the right:

- 1) to have their opinion represented through the Student Guild on all matters affecting students.
- 2) to representation on major decision-making bodies of the University either through direct election or by nomination through a recognised student body ; and
- 3) to have the right, notwithstanding the existence of formal representation, to convey personal or collective opinion to the Vice-Chancellor.

6. Procedures for Grievances, Appeals and Complaints¹¹

6.1 Every student has the right:

- 1) to be able to appeal or register a complaint or grievance against any academic assessment, academic procedure, administrative procedure, perceived discrimination or harassment, or the abrogation of any right stated in this Charter;
- 2) to a clearly-documented process for dealing with an [appeal, complaint or grievance](#) which is confidential, non-discriminatory, unbiased, and accountable; offers the opportunity for them to be accompanied to hearings by a person of their choice; and leads to resolution within a reasonable time;
- 3) in respect to an appeal, complaint or grievance, to receive reasons for resulting decisions; to be

advised of opportunity for further appeal; and to experience no repercussions as a result of participation in the process; and
4) to seek guidance from a [Guild Education Officer](#), [faculty staff](#), and/or an [Equity and Diversity Adviser](#) as appropriate when submitting an appeal, complaint or grievance.

6.2 Every student has the responsibility:

1) to familiarise themselves and comply with the appeal, complaint or grievance procedures.

¹ Extracted from "Strategic Directions (a concise version of the UWA Strategic Plan) - October 2004" - <http://www.registrar.uwa.edu.au/page/65557>

² Unless specified to the contrary in specific policies referred to in this Charter:-
"Student" means an individual enrolled in an award or an enabling course at the University of Western Australia, and where specified in the relevant policy, an individual in respect to their previous enrolment in an award course.

³ Unless specified to the contrary in specific policies referred to in this Charter –
Student "organisations" means the Student Guild, which includes organisations within the Guild such as the Postgraduate Students Association.

⁴ The word "University" includes any of the University's constituent entities, whether in Australia or elsewhere, and any person acting in the capacity as a representative of the University or any of its constituent entities.

⁵ The "campus" is all the land vested in the University, zoned for educational purposes, and not assigned to other entities, such as the Colleges. Open spaces on the campus do not include areas that have been booked for specific events.

⁶ This right applies only when a student may reasonably be seen to be expressing their personal values and attitudes as an individual citizen or when opinions are presented collectively through student organisations, groups and societies. The University may exercise control over material disseminated through its own organs, such as websites, emails, its publication outlets, or its public displays of student work. This right is subject to racial vilification provisions in various pieces of legislation including the Racial Discrimination Act.

⁷ As specified in State and national legislation.

⁸ Except for certain targeted equity and support services.

⁹ Not applicable to Offshore Students.

¹⁰ Intellectual Freedom as it pertains to students includes the right to express opinions about the operations of the University, and higher education policy more generally; to pursue critical and open inquiry and to discuss freely, publish and research; to participate in public debates; to participate in professional and representative bodies including unions and to engage in community service without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment; and the right to express unpopular or controversial views. However, Intellectual Freedom is accompanied by a responsibility not to harass, vilify, intimidate or defame the University or its community.

¹¹ University policies use "appeal" in some places, "complaint" and "grievance" in others. In this Charter the three terms are interchangeable in their general application, and the principles of the Charter apply to all such situations.