

## Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities

Some students combine their university studies with caring responsibilities, such as caring for children, disabled or elderly parents, or other adult dependants such as a family member (e.g. sibling) or close friend who is disabled, elderly or has a long term illness and who depends on them for care and support. This may involve going shopping, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, bathing or dressing the person. The student may also be providing emotional support or help in a crisis. Juggling caring responsibilities with studies can be challenging; the student may be living at home and continuing to provide the same level of care in addition to undertaking their studies; or they may be 'caring at a distance' by returning home on weekends or holidays to provide care.

The University's guidance on working whilst studying is found at <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/personnel/generalinformation/policiesprocedures/recruitmentandselection/studentemployment-guidelines/>. Clearly a student with caring responsibilities is likely to be working well above the hours stipulated in this guidance.

The University would encourage any student with caring responsibilities to discuss the impact of this on their studies with someone within their College, such as their Personal Tutor, who will then be able to provide appropriate advice and support.

If you are a student with caring responsibilities the information in this page offers some details that may be useful. There is also information on our Students with Children web page <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/student-services/childcare/>.

Please bear in mind that student carers who are supporting a disabled relative would be protected under the Equality Act 2010 (discrimination by association) and therefore consideration for 'reasonable adjustments' has to be made.

If you are an international student who is caring for a friend, even on a voluntary basis, this may count as working and they should seek advice from the International Student Advice Service (ISAS) as it will impact on their Tier 4 student visa.

*Please note that under 16s and/or vulnerable adults should not accompany students whilst they are attending formal teaching, be left unsupervised or unsupported on campus whilst students are attending formal teaching or accompany students whilst they are working in laboratories or clinical areas on campus.*

## Academic Matters

### Attendance

We appreciate that a student may experience difficulties in keeping up with attendance if problems occur at home. If these problems have an adverse impact on your studies, for example you have to miss a tutorial, it is important that relevant staff in the College are made aware as soon as possible.

The University has an attendance policy which applies to all students <http://www.swan.ac.uk/registry/academicguide/assessmentandprogress/policyonattendance/>. If

you have clashes between your timetable and your caring responsibilities you need to discuss this to see what the alternative options may be. It may not always be possible for timetables to be changed but by talking this through with appropriate staff in your College you may be able to find other solutions.

### *Assessment*

Students with caring responsibilities may face difficulties with meeting assessment deadlines if the person they care for is suddenly taken ill. In certain circumstances this may be taken into consideration under the Extenuating Circumstances policy. To find out more about extenuating circumstances follow this link:

<http://www.swan.ac.uk/registry/academicguide/assessmentandprogress/policyonextenuatingcircumstances/>

Deadlines – Swansea University operates a fixed policy on late submission of coursework. For further information on the University's Late Submission of Assessed Work policy see <http://www.swan.ac.uk/registry/academicguide/assessmentissues/penaltiesforthelatesubmissionofassessedwork/> .

### **Student Support**

For students whose caring responsibilities combined with the pressures of studying are affecting their emotional, mental or physical health, you may find it helpful to contact the Wellbeing Service for advice <http://www.swan.ac.uk/wellbeing/> .

### **Financial matters**

Carers may be eligible for a range of financial support,; the information that follows is a guide as to what may be available but we would encourage you to contact the University's Money Advice and Support Office (MASO) <http://www.swan.ac.uk/money-advice/>, telephone 01792 606699 for any finance related issue. Alternatively the Student Union Advice Centre or local Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to provide advice relating to welfare benefit related queries.

**Carer's Allowance** is not available to students in full-time education with 21 hours or more a week of supervised study but part time students may be eligible. For more information and to check eligibility follow the link <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/overview>.

**Financial Contingency Funds:** The Financial Contingency Fund is money made available to institutions by the Welsh Government to provide discretionary financial help to support vulnerable students, in particular to help them access and remain in higher education. Assistance is given in the form of a non-repayable grant. For more information and an application form please visit the Student Services, Money Advice pages on BlackBoard or contact the Money Advice and Support Office (MASO).

Full-time students in higher education with an adult who depends on them financially can apply for an **Adult Dependents' Grant** of up to £2,732\* (£2,642\* for English domiciled students). (\* figures relate to 2013/14 funding). Students can apply for this grant on top of any other student finance and they don't have to pay it back. To find out more visit:

Welsh Domiciled Students –

[http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=616,6201789&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=616,6201789&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

English Domiciled Students - <https://www.gov.uk/adult-dependants-grant/overview>

Scottish Domiciled Students [http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms/funding\\_guide.pdf](http://www.saas.gov.uk/forms/funding_guide.pdf)

NHS Funded Students - <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/816.aspx>

Further information can also be obtained from MASO or refer to [www.swan.ac.uk/money-advice](http://www.swan.ac.uk/money-advice) or their BlackBoard pages (under Student Services).

**Council Tax** - full time students are exempt from paying council tax. If the only other adult in the property is disabled or severely mentally impaired then the whole property may be exempt. If there are other adults living in the house too then you may still qualify for a reduction. If you have left your own property empty in order to live with and care for someone then you may not have to pay council tax on your empty property. Further information on Council Tax exemptions may be found at <https://www.gov.uk/council-tax/working-out-your-council-tax> .

### **Welfare Benefits & Council Tax**

Entitlement to state benefits (e.g. Income Support, tax credits, and housing/council tax benefit) will depend entirely on a student's personal circumstances.

Please contact MASO in Student Services, the Student Union Advice Centre or the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

You can also obtain information on benefit entitlements on the following websites:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/>

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRRedirect/index.jsp?LGSL=69&LGIL=0>

<https://www.gov.uk/income-support/overview>

<http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/>

Benefits advice for you or the person you are caring for is also available from the Citizens Advice Bureau in Swansea <http://www.swanseaneathportalbotcab.org.uk/contact/swansea-office/>

### **External Links**

By law, anyone who 'regularly provides a substantial amount of care' is entitled to an assessment of their needs. The assessment will help you find out how you can balance your own health and wellbeing with your role as a carer. A student may want to contact the social services department for the area in which the person you're caring for lives, and set up a meeting. The assessor will help you to identify what support you need and how you can access it. You may be eligible for respite care; membership of carers support groups; or access to a Carer's Emergency Scheme.

For more information about the *help and support available in Swansea* go to <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=50049>

### *The Princess Royal Trust for Carers*

This is the largest provider of comprehensive carers support services in the UK. Through its unique network of 144 independently managed Carers' Centres , 85 young carers services and interactive websites, <http://www.carers.org/> and <http://www.youngcarers.net/> , the Trust currently provides quality information, advice and support services to over 400,000 carers, including approximately 25,000 young carers. The Princess Royal Trust for Carers was created on the initiative of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal in 1991 to provide support for people caring at home for family members or friends with disabilities and chronic illnesses

### *Carers UK*

Carers UK <http://www.carersuk.org/HomeCarers> lobbies on behalf of and campaigns to promote the rights of carers in the UK. Carers UK is the voice of carers who provide unpaid care for an ill, frail or disabled family member, friend or partner.

*NHS Carers Direct* <http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx> provides information, advice and support for carers.

### **Care Leavers**

If you have been in care please contact the Money Advice & Support Office in Student Services who can help you access support through the University's Care Leaver Support Package which is detailed at <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/student-services/care-leavers/>.

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