

WELCOME TO WORCESTER



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER HAS NOW JOINED US AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER.

For them, this is the start of a new and exciting phase of their life where they will discover who they are and what they are capable of achieving.

We are aware that this transition can result in a new relationship between parent and child. This does not mean that your son or daughter will no longer need you, but it may mean that they involve you less in their daily life and in the decisions that they make.

As parents you may feel excited by the new opportunities for your son or daughter, whilst also experiencing some anxiety or concern. We want to help you by recognising these tensions and working with you to ensure that the transition to university is a positive experience for both you and your child.

In our experience, anxiety and concern usually stem from having questions and not knowing the answers. These may be questions that your son or daughter asks during a call or a visit home, or they may be questions that you have about how best to support them now they are at university.

In this guide we have brought together some of the questions which parents most frequently ask us. We hope that this will provide you with the information you need, and will reassure you that the university has staff and services who will listen, guide and support your son or daughter during their time with us.



You can also follow us on:
Facebook- UniversityOfWorcester,
Twitter- worcester_uni and
download our App – UW Mobile

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MY SON IS ENJOYING BEING AT UNIVERSITY BUT FEELS THAT HIS COURSE IS NOT RIGHT FOR HIM. WOULD HE BE ABLE TO TRANSFER TO A DIFFERENT COURSE? WOULD HE NEED TO START AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

He may be able to transfer, but it will depend on what course he is currently studying, if there are spaces available on the course that he would like to transfer to, and whether he fulfils the entry requirements. Your son should book an appointment with a Programme Adviser who will be able to discuss all of these things with him and guide him through the transfer process which includes completing a Course Change Request Form. Appointments can be booked via **firstpoint** or online through Timecenter.

Whether your son would need to start again next year would depend on a number of factors; these would also be discussed during his appointment.

I HAVE RECENTLY CHANGED JOBS AND THIS HAS ALTERED OUR FAMILY INCOME. WILL THIS AFFECT MY SON'S STUDENT LOANS? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The amount of loan that your son receives for this year should not be affected as it will have been awarded based on your declared income for the previous tax year. However, it is important that your son contacts Student Finance to inform them of the change. There is a free phone in **firstpoint** that he can use and advisers are on hand should he need help.

If you are supporting your son financially and your income has fallen by 15% or more, you can request a new assessment for the current academic year. Details of how to do this are available from www.gov.uk/student-finance

OUR DAUGHTER HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DYSLEXIA. WHAT DOES THE DIAGNOSIS MEAN? AND WHAT HELP WILL SHE GET?

Now that your daughter has a diagnosis, she will be invited to meet with one of our disability advisers who will discuss the assessment, answer her questions and arrange support.

Dyslexia affects people in different ways. Some may experience difficulties with reading or spelling whilst others may find that it affects their short-term memory, writing or organisational skills. Some people may be affected a lot and others just a little.

The help she receives will depend on how she is affected and what the disability adviser recommends, but common types of support are extra time in exams, class notes in advance, specialist academic tutoring, or assistive software.

MY DAUGHTER IS FINDING HER COURSE DIFFICULT. IS THERE SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP HER?

There are a number of people who can help. If she is struggling with the course content, advise her to speak to her Personal Academic Tutor. If she needs help with more generic study skills such as referencing or academic writing, the study skills website worchester.ac.uk/studyskills offers a range of materials that your daughter may find useful and also has contact details for other staff and services that can help. These include Writers in Residence who provide tutorials on any aspect of academic writing and the Language Centre, which offers one-to-one support sessions on Academic English.

Using the library and learning how to reference work are all study skills that students new to university can struggle with. If your daughter needs help with finding books, journals and online resources, any of the staff at The Hive library will be able to assist. If she has questions about referencing or more complex library enquiries she can contact her subject librarian at askalibrarian@worc.ac.uk or visit the helpdesk on level 3 at The Hive, where staff will be happy to help.





OUR SON IS NOT HAPPY AND IS THINKING ABOUT LEAVING UNIVERSITY. WE WANT HIM TO STAY. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Try to focus on the cause of your son's unhappiness rather than on whether he should stay at university. Encourage him to contact **firstpoint**, where an adviser will listen to his concerns, discuss options such as changing courses or accommodation, and can also make a referral to another service, such as Counselling or Student Support and Wellbeing.

Although you may want him to stay, try not to let your own feelings influence his decision as it is important that he makes choices that are right for him. Choosing to leave is a big decision so should your son need time away from university to decide what he wants to do, it may be possible for him to temporarily withdraw and resume his studies at a later date.

After considering all of his options, if he does decide to leave, a **firstpoint** adviser can help him to complete a Withdrawal from Study form and advise on repaying his loans, closing his student bank account, and terminating his tenancy if he lives in student accommodation.

THE SHOWER IS NOT WORKING IN OUR SON'S ROOM IN HALLS. WHAT DOES HE NEED TO DO?

Your son should log this as a maintenance request using the portal on his SOLE page. He needs to click 'maintenance request' and state where the problem is e.g. 'Avon Halls, Flat B' and what the problem is e.g. 'no hot water', and then click 'submit'. The request will then be forwarded to our maintenance team.

I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY MY DAUGHTER IS SPENDING.

It is not unusual for students to overspend during their first few weeks at university, as many costs need to be paid at the beginning of the semester. However, we also know that some students can become a bit "spend happy." Our Money Advisers and the Students' Union run events and offer advice on how to budget, and can also support students who get into debt. Speak to your daughter; ask if she is managing. She may well have a budget plan, but if not, remind her of the help available and encourage her to contact **firstpoint**.

OUR SON DOESN'T DRINK ALCOHOL OR LIKE 'NOISY' NIGHTS OUT AND WE ARE WORRIED THAT HE WON'T FIT IN OR WILL STRUGGLE TO MAKE FRIENDS.

It's important that your son feels that he can be himself and enjoy the student life that he wants rather than try to be someone he isn't. He won't be alone, and may be surprised by just how many events and activities don't involve alcohol or noisy nights.

During Welcome Week your son will have lots of opportunities to get to know other students with a range of different activities and classes to attend.

Clubs and societies are a good way to make friends and he will probably be able to find at least one that interests him from the wide range available in the Students' Union. Or he could attend one of the many events that are regularly held at The Hive library. These are open to students and to the public, and include films, exhibitions and lectures.

Most students settle and find friends quite quickly but if he does find it a struggle, he can visit one of our 'Fancy a Cuppa' sessions. Held in **firstpoint** throughout the year and every day during the first couple of weeks of each semester, this informal event provides a friendly space to chat with staff as well as a free hot drink, biscuits and fruit.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE ACCOMMODATION? MY DAUGHTER IS NOT GETTING ON WITH THE STUDENTS SHE IS LIVING WITH.

It is possible to change accommodation (although not always immediately). Your daughter will need to complete a Room Change Request Form, which she can download from worc.ac.uk/accommodation

She can then either email it to accommodation@worc.ac.uk or hand it in at **firstpoint**.

You might also want to suggest that your daughter speaks to a Student Support Adviser. Part of their role is to support students living in university accommodation, offering mediation if there are disputes and a listening ear for any student who needs to talk. All support services can be accessed via **firstpoint**.

WE RECENTLY SUFFERED A FAMILY BEREAVEMENT. OUR DAUGHTER MISSED A NUMBER OF CLASSES AND FELT THAT SHE DID NOT DO AS WELL AS SHE MIGHT HAVE DONE IN HER RECENT EXAM. CAN SHE RE-TAKE IT?

Your daughter will need to submit a claim for Mitigating Circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are events that happen suddenly to students over which they have no control and which can have a serious effect on their performance or capacity to complete assignments on time. Providing her claim is up-held, she should be able to re-take her exam and it would be marked as a first attempt.

The Academic and Welfare Advisor in the Students' Union can support students in submitting claims. Their contact number is 01905 543210.

If your daughter would like to speak to someone about her bereavement, either now or in the coming months, Counsellors and Student Support Advisers all offer a confidential listening service, and can be contacted through **firstpoint**.

OUR SON HAS A CLASS TODAY BUT ISN'T WELL ENOUGH TO COME IN. WHAT SHOULD HE DO?

He will need to contact the tutors of the classes that he will miss, and either his Personal Academic Tutor or Academic Support Unit. If he does not already have contact details, he can get them from the Staff Directory tab on SOLE.

It is worth checking that your son is registered with a local GP, in case he needs to make an appointment. A surgery is held on campus several times a week, or there are other surgeries in the local area. Contact details are available from **firstpoint**.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY DAUGHTER. I'VE NOT HEARD FROM HER IN 2 WEEKS. I'VE LEFT VOICEMAILS AND MESSAGES ON FACEBOOK, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO REPLY. THIS IS VERY UNLIKE HER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The lack of reply from your daughter may be a sign that she has settled in, made friends, and feels that she doesn't need to contact you as often. The first part of the academic year is very busy and exciting for students arriving at university for the first time, and in these circumstances it is unlikely that she will be aware of the upset or worry that this may be causing you. We would suggest that you keep trying to get in touch, explaining that you are worried and asking that she contacts you, another family member or a friend by a specific time, just to let you know that she is OK.

If you still do not hear from her, contact **firstpoint** and they will email and phone her and encourage her to make contact. They will also be able to offer her support if she is struggling. If she gives her permission, **firstpoint** will contact you to let you know that she has been in touch.

You can also contact **firstpoint** if you are particularly concerned that your daughter is at risk or may have come to some harm. They will take your concerns seriously, and take the appropriate action, such as arranging a wellbeing check to make sure your daughter is OK, and encouraging her to contact you. Please be assured that the welfare of our students is our priority, and that there is a range of support available if she needs it.

ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have questions that aren't covered in this booklet, you can contact **firstpoint** on 01905 542551 during opening hours, (Monday-Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm), or email firstpoint@worc.ac.uk

Advisers will be able to provide information about the support we provide as well as information about the university. However, because we have a duty to protect the privacy of our students, we will not be able to share information about your child with you, unless they have specifically requested that we do so. Should you need to speak to someone outside of these hours, please contact the University's Main Reception on 01905 855000, which is open for 24 hours.



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