

# A Guide for Parents, Guardians and Supporters of students at University of Worcester

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As a parent, guardian or supporter of someone studying at University of Worcester, we understand that while you may feel excited by their new opportunities, you may also experience some anxiety or concern. We want to assure you that we are here to support them every step of the way.

While our students are transitioning into their new lives at Worcester, it can result in a new relationship between them and you. This does not mean that they no longer need you, but it may mean that they involve you less in their daily life and in the decisions that they make.

In your ongoing role as parent, guardian or supporter, we encourage you to maintain open lines of communication and stay involved in their education journey. Encourage them to seek out resources on campus such as their Personal Academic Tutor, firstpoint advisors, and the Students' Union, which can help them adjust to university life and succeed academically.

University is a time of growth and self-discovery for our students; they may face setbacks and challenges, but these experiences can help them develop resilience and learn important life skills. We encourage our students to be independent, but as they navigate through this period, we remind them - and you - that help is available throughout their journey. We are committed to providing them with a supportive and enriching university experience.

In our experience, anxiety or concern usually stems from having questions and not knowing the answers. These may be questions that students ask 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 parents, guardians and supporters 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 our students during their time with us.

**What if the student is enjoying being at university but feels that the course is not right for them. Would they be able to transfer to a different course? Would they need to start again next year?**

They may be able to transfer, but it will depend on what course they are currently studying, if there are spaces available on the course that they would like to transfer to, and whether they fulfil the entry requirements. We recommend that students speak with a Programme Adviser, and they will be able to discuss all of these things and guide them through the transfer process, which includes completing a Course Change Request.

Whether the student would need to start again next year would depend on a number of factors; these would also be discussed with the Programme Adviser.

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**I have recently changed jobs and this has altered our family income. Will this affect the student loan? What should I do?**

The amount of loan that a student receives in the current academic 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 the student contacts Student Finance to inform them of the change. There is a free phone in **firstpoint** that students can use, and advisers are on hand should they need more help.

If you are supporting a student 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](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

If students have concerns about their finances, they can have a meeting with a specialist Money Adviser. Direct them to contact **firstpoint**, who can book them an appointment.

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**What happens when a student is diagnosed with dyslexia? What does the diagnosis mean? And what help will they get?**

Now that the student has a diagnosis, they will be invited to meet with one of our disability advisers who will discuss the assessment, answer their 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 they receive will depend on how they are 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.

If a student suspected they are dyslexic or have another specific learning difference, suggest that they contact **firstpoint**, who can guide them to the assessment process.

## What if a student is finding their course difficult? Is there someone who can help them?

There are a number of people who can help. If they are struggling with the course content, advise them to speak to their [Personal Academic Tutor](#). If they need help with more generic study skills, such as referencing or academic writing, the [firstpoint study skills page](#) has links to more support. This includes the [Library Services study skills website](#), which offers a range of materials that they may find useful, [Writers in Residence](#) who provide tutorials on any aspect of academic writing and the [Centre for Academic and English Skills](#), 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 students need help with finding books, journals and online resources, any of the staff at The Hive library will be able to assist. If they have questions about referencing or more complex library enquiries they can contact their subject librarian through the [Academic Liaison Librarians booking page](#) or by emailing [askalibrarian@worc.ac.uk](mailto:askalibrarian@worc.ac.uk).

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## The student has told us they are not happy and is thinking about leaving university. We want them to stay. What should we do?

Try to focus on the cause of the student's unhappiness, rather than on whether they should stay at university. Encourage them to contact [firstpoint](#), where an adviser will listen to their 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 them to stay, try not to let your own feelings influence their decision as it is important that they make choices that are right for them. Choosing to leave is a big decision so should the student need time away from university to decide what they want to do, it may be possible for them to temporarily withdraw and resume their studies at a later date.

After considering all of their options, if they do decide to leave, a [firstpoint](#) adviser can help them to complete the online Withdrawal from Study form and advise on repaying their loans, closing their student bank account and terminating their tenancy if they live in student accommodation.

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## The shower is not working in the student's room in halls. What do they need to do?

The student should log this as a [maintenance request](#) using the portal on their SOLE page. They need to click 'maintenance request' and state where the problem is e.g. 'Avon Halls, Flat B, Room 6' and what the problem is e.g. 'no hot water', and then click 'submit'. The request will then be forwarded to our maintenance team.

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**I am supporting a student and I am worried about the amount of money they are 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 tend to overspend more than others. Our Money Advisers and the Students' Union run events and offer advice on how to budget and can also support students who struggling financially. Speak to the student; ask if they are managing. They may well have a budget plan, but if not, remind them of the help available and encourage them to contact **firstpoint**.

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**If a student doesn't drink alcohol or like 'noisy' nights out, we are worried that they won't fit in or will struggle to make friends.**

It's important that students feel that they can be themselves and enjoy the student life that they want rather than try to be someone they are not. They 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 students 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 most students are able to find at least one that interests them from the wide range available in the Students' Union. Or they can 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.

Although most students settle and find friends quite quickly, it is not unusual for some to find it a struggle. Encourage them to visit one of our 'Fancy a Cuppa' sessions. Held in **firstpoint** throughout the year - and more often during the first couple of weeks of each semester - this informal event provides a friendly space to meet other students and chat with staff, as well as a free hot drink and biscuits.

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**Is it possible to change accommodation if a student is not getting on with the students they are living with?**

It is possible to change accommodation (although not always immediately). Students will need to contact the Accommodation Team to discuss what is available.

You might also want to suggest that they speak to a Student Wellbeing 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**.

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**After suffering a bereavement, the student I support feels that they did not do as well as they might have done in their recent exam. Can they re-take their assessment?**

The student 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 assessment on time. Providing their claim is up-held, they should be able to re-take their exam.

The Students' Union Advisers can support students in submitting claims. Their contact number is 01905 543210, or students can use their [online enquiry form](#).

If the student would like to speak to someone about their bereavement, either now or in the coming months, the University Counselling team and Student Support Advisers offer a confidential listening service, and can be contacted through **firstpoint**.

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**What if a student has a class today but isn't well enough to come in. What should they do?**

They will need to contact the tutors of the classes that they will miss, and either their Personal Academic Tutor or their course administrators. If they do not already have these contact details, they can request them from **firstpoint**.

It is worth checking that the student is registered with a local GP, in case they need to make an appointment. Contact details for local surgeries are available from **firstpoint** or on the [Student Wellbeing medical provision webpage](#).

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**I'm worried about a student. I've not heard from them in 2 weeks. I've left voicemails and messages on Facebook, but there has been no reply. This is very unlike them. What should I do?**

The lack of reply from a student may be a sign that they have settled in, made friends, and feel that they don'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 they 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 they contact you, another family member or a friend by a specific time, just to let you know that they are OK.

If you still do not hear from them, contact **firstpoint** and they will email and phone them and encourage them to make contact. The **firstpoint** advisers will also be able to offer them support if they are struggling. If they give their permission, **firstpoint** will contact you to let you know that they have been in touch.

You can also contact **firstpoint** if you are particularly concerned that a student 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 the student is OK, and encouraging them 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 they need it.

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### **Any other questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns that are not answered here, please reach out to us: you can contact **firstpoint** on 01905 542551 during opening hours, or email [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto: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 a student 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 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

You may also like to see the information on our webpages about [emergency support](#) and [out of hours support](#).