

CONTENTS	Page No
Further Education Student Charter	1-2
Student Disciplinary Policy	3
Student Disciplinary Procedure	4
College Attendance Policy	5-7
Grievance and Complaints Procedure	7
Academic Appeals Procedures	8
Anti-Bullying Policy	8
Misconduct and Anti-Bullying Procedures	9
Plagiarism & Cheating/Academic Dishonesty	10
Other College Policies	10

Further Education Student Charter

Introduction

Lews Castle College's mission is to provide quality education and training to meet the needs of the islands community it serves.

The Lews Castle College Student Charter will help students and staff to work together collaboratively to meet their shared objectives and responsibilities.

The purpose of the Lews Castle College Student Charter is to set down the standards of service that students registered on Lews Castle College courses can expect to receive. Students also have responsibilities and the Charter sets out Lews Castle College's expectations of its students in respect of the part they should play as active and independent partners in their learning experience.

If you are applying to be a Lews Castle College student you can expect us to:

- give access to accurate and impartial advice and guidance
- provide information on finance and funding, childcare, additional support needs
- provide clear, comprehensive and up-to-date information to help you choose the most appropriate course for your particular needs and abilities
- deal with your enquiries promptly and courteously
- consider your application fairly and efficiently, letting you know the outcome as soon as possible
- provide information about:
 - courses and awards on offer
 - entry requirements
 - how to apply
 - tuition fees and sources of financial help.

We will expect you to:

- provide us with full and accurate information in relation to your application
- plan how you will finance your time at College
- seek such support as you feel is necessary to your study at College.

When you enrol as a student on a course at Lews Castle College, you can expect:

- a Course Handbook that includes detailed information about the content, delivery, management, and assessment of your course
- a Student Handbook that contains general information about the College

- an induction programme to introduce you to the College and provide information on its structures, policies, and educational aims
- a Student Advisor assigned to you, once you have enrolled, who will be responsible for the oversight of your programme of study
- a minimum of at least two interviews with your Student Advisor per academic year
- written feedback on each piece of assessed course work from the responsible academic within two weeks of the date of submission of the work
- a secure logon which will allow you to access our computers and an email account
- access to the materials deemed necessary by the Course Leader for the study of your module/course
- the right to have any formal complaint made by you thoroughly investigated without undue delay. This would mean acknowledgement within five working days.

We will expect you to:

- read and keep this information so that you know what support and facilities are available, what is expected of you and what your rights are
- contact your Student Advisor, a member of your course team or Student Services should you need help at any time
- devise a personal study plan with the help of your Advisor
- meet the requirements of the course in terms of attendance and work set
- maintain high standards of conduct so as not to bring the College into disrepute.

At the end of your taught programme of study at Lews Castle College, you can expect us to:

- provide access to guidance on career opportunities and the availability of further courses of study.

We expect you to:

- request information in a timely and organised way
- respond to reasonable requests for information on your career plans or further studies to help us improve Lews Castle College as a teaching institution.

Student Disciplinary Policy

General Introduction

All students are informed about the College Regulations, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures at induction. Elements of these are also contained in the Learning Agreements signed by all students on enrolment, which emphasise courtesy, respect and individual responsibility at all times. It is the students' responsibility to read and understand them and ask for clarification if required.

All students are expected to maintain a certain standard of behaviour, to attend college regularly and to make progress on their course. Where students behave in a way that falls below this standard then the Disciplinary procedure may be used.

Any breach of the College Regulations or Code of Conduct may be treated as a breach of Disciplinary Policy. Whilst some issues can be resolved informally between Students and staff, there are times when this is not possible or appropriate and the formal Disciplinary Procedure needs to be used.

Purpose

The aim of this Student Disciplinary Policy is to provide a consistent approach to student disciplinary issues across the college and in so doing:

- Safeguard the students learning experience from disruption caused by their own or others misconduct
- Promote fair and equitable treatment of all students
- Clarify students rights in respect of any disciplinary action resulting from their misconduct
- Identify staff responsibilities in handling disciplinary issues.

This policy applies to all students whilst on College premises, work placement, college excursions or events, travelling in college transport or when engaged in any college activity.

College Code of Conduct

College rules and regulations exist to ensure good order and discipline. Good conduct is expected from all students. Details are in the Student Handbook.

College Regulations

These are available in the Student Handbook issued to all full-time students at the start of your course. Copies are also available from Reception on all sites, Student Services and on the College's website.

Disciplinary Procedure

Stage One - Verbal warning

College staff may issue a verbal warning and record it on a Student Discipline Form. The form must be signed by the appropriate member of staff, witnessed by another and countersigned by the student. If the student refuses to sign, this must be noted on the form. It is kept by the Student Advisor for that course.

Stage Two – First Written Warning

The next time there is an issue, College staff may issue a written warning, specifying the reason, on a First Written Warning Letter, which is either handed to the student or sent by recorded mail to their address, as soon as possible after the incident, preferably within one working day.

The student has seven days from receipt of the letter to appeal against the warning, by writing to the Head of Section, giving their reasons for appeal.

Stage Three – Second and Final Written Warning

Any further issue or incident will lead to College staff issuing a Second Written Warning Letter, specifying the reason, which is either handed to the student or sent by recorded mail to their address as soon as possible after the incident, preferably within one working day.

The student has seven days from receipt to appeal against the warning, in writing, to the Director of Academic Affairs.

Stage 4 - Dismissal

In the event of another incident or a continuation of below standard behaviour, the student is dismissed. A letter is sent by recorded mail outlining the reasons for dismissal and giving the dates of the previous verbal and written warnings. The student has seven days from receipt to appeal, in writing, to the Principal.

There is no further appeal process.

Note: Duration of warnings

Warnings will be disregarded at the end of an academic year. Where a student is dismissed, the dismissal will be disregarded after one calendar year, subject to the student signing an undertaking to conform to the college code of conduct on re-enrolment.

College Attendance Policy

The College is a community, and as with all communities, must have some basic ground rules if it is to function effectively. The College policy on attendance and conduct is similar to that found in any workplace. There are consequences if you fail to keep to it.

By taking up a place at College, you have agreed to attend your course in order to gain qualifications. In order to achieve those you need to attend regularly and punctually. Poor attendance affects your work. It can also affect other students in your group, especially where group or team work is involved.

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure you understand the policy and procedure. If you are on a Further Education course, absences are either authorised or unauthorised.

If you cannot come in to college you must phone Reception on 01851 770000 by 9 am clearly stating your name, course and the reason why you cannot come in.

If you are a student at Benbecula phone Reception on 01851 770500, or for Taigh Chearsabhagh phone 01876 770702.

Please note that EMA/Bursary awards could be withheld if this procedure is not followed.

Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is one which has been agreed **in advance** by your tutor. You must complete an Authorised Absence Form before your absence, get it signed by your Student Advisor and then take it to Student Services.

Absences will only be authorised in the following circumstances:

- To attend the funeral of a close family member
- To attend a hospital or dental appointment*
- To attend an emergency appointment with your GP
- To sit a driving test*
- To attend a job interview*
- To attend court*
- To care for an ill dependent child

For all of the reasons marked *, you must show evidence to your tutor e.g. an appointment card or letter. Absences will not be authorised if you do not present proof.

Appointments with your doctor, dentist etc. should be fitted into private study time or after College hours unless you need urgent attention.

You cannot request an authorised absence for:

- Driving lessons
- Missing the bus
- Routine appointments with your GP
- Sleeping in
- Holidays outwith college holidays

Non attendance for these reasons will be marked as unauthorised absence. Not letting the college know also counts as unauthorised absence. **More than three unauthorised absences will trigger the start of the Disciplinary Procedure.**

In exceptional circumstances not covered by any of the above, authorised absence may be given at the discretion of the Student Absence Liaison Group.

Sickness

- For periods of sickness absence of less than seven days, (inclusive of Saturday and Sunday) you should complete a **Student Sickness Absence Certificate** on your first day back. This should be returned to Student Services **within two days** of your return.
- If you are absent for seven days (including Saturday and Sunday) or more because of sickness, you will need to obtain a '**Statement of Fitness for Work**' from your doctor, which you need to bring into college on your first day back.
- Prolonged periods of absence due to illness or injury must be backed up by medical certificates which you should forward to your Student Advisor. Do not wait until you return to college.
- If you have an on-going medical condition which may affect your attendance, we will ask you to provide a letter from your GP confirming this.

Timekeeping/Unauthorised Early Departure

Late arrival or leaving early will be recorded in the register. Students are expected to account for late arrivals to their Student Advisors, in advance where possible. Early departure must also be agreed by the Student Advisor in advance.

Persistent unauthorised late arrival/early departure will lead to the Student Advisor meeting with the student. If no satisfactory explanation is received, it will count as a Disciplinary offence and the Student Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

Please note:

- If you are absent from College for a period of 2 weeks without explanation, your place will be withdrawn.
- If you are under 16 and absent without genuine reason or prior authorisation, your parent/guardian will be contacted by letter or by telephone, where appropriate.
- If personal or financial difficulties are the cause of your absence, you can discuss this in confidence with any of the Student Services staff.
- Persistent, unexplained absenteeism can lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.
- There is a limit to the number of times you can be absent from college including authorised absences. Only five college days' absence will be accepted in each semester (Sept- Jan and Feb – June). If you exceed this you will have an interview with the Student Absence Liaison Group to discuss your absences. You may receive a warning under the Disciplinary Procedure and any Bursary, EMA or Discretionary payments may be stopped.

Grievance and Complaints Procedure

The College has a procedure designed to protect students from unfair application of the Code of Conduct. The grievance procedure allows you to pursue a problem which you feel needs to be resolved.

If you experience a difficulty at College, you should make every effort to resolve the matter through informal discussion. Discussion in the first instance should be with the person directly concerned, whether it is another student or a member of staff.

If this is not possible, you should take the matter to your Student Advisor. If it is still unresolved, go to your Head of Section.

If having tried this, you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a formal written statement of grievance to the Director of Academic Affairs. The Director of Academic Affairs is obliged to provide a written response. If dissatisfied with this response, you have the right of appeal to the Principal, both in person and in writing, and through him to the College Board of Management if this proves necessary.

The Board of Management is the final recourse for appeal.

Academic Appeals Procedure for Further Education Students

This information and the supporting documents are available on the College web site at www.lews.uhi.ac.uk **If the candidate feels that he/she has been unfairly assessed he or she may appeal.**

The grounds for an appeal shall be:

1. Where the student can establish that his or her performance in the module/unit assessment was adversely affected by illness or some other factor. Such an appeal should be supported by a medical certificate or by other documentary evidence acceptable to the Panel.
2. Where a student disagrees with an assessment decision of an assessor and internal verifier.
3. Where it can be shown there has been an administrative error.

Where a student misses an assessment because of illness or other legitimate reason, the student will be given the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date. This will not prejudice the award of a merit pass.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is an act of aggression causing pain, discomfort or embarrassment to another. It includes name-calling, physical violence, emotional hurt, territorial ownership, put-downs, exclusion, demands for money or possessions. Lews Castle College is committed to providing an environment where students and lecturers have the right to learn and teach free from harm or intimidation. Each member of the College community is valued and respected; each has basic rights. Bullying is not acceptable behaviour at Lews Castle College.

To help counter bullying, all staff will:

- Provide information on the unacceptable nature of bullying to students via the curriculum and guidance periods
- Advise students of more appropriate behaviours – bullying will not be tolerated
- Be receptive and supportive to victims of bullying.

Students can also help by:

- Telling someone who can help, e.g. a member of staff **and** not joining in any bullying
- Keeping a record of incidents
- If bullying does occur, report the incident to your Student Advisor.

Bullying is unacceptable and disciplinary action will be taken against any student who bullies a fellow student.

Misconduct and Anti-Bullying Procedures

1. If a student is involved in a breach of College regulations or policy or an incident of misconduct or alleges that they are being bullied, then details of the breach, incident or allegation are recorded on pages 1 and 2 of the Incident of Misconduct/Allegations of Bullying Report and signed by College staff and the student. The procedure is explained to the student and a response guaranteed within a week.
2. The report is sent to the relevant Head of Section who investigates the incident/allegations and recommends a course of action. This information is recorded on page 3 of the Incident of Misconduct/Allegations of Bullying Report. The Head of Section's investigations will involve discussions with College staff and students. The Head of Section may consider that the incident is minor and may wish to resolve the matter within the section or in more serious cases they may recommend a course of action that the College Senior Management Team (SMT) consider and report back on.
3. If the Head of Section considers the incident to be resolved then the original is returned to the Student Advisor for retention. The student is then informed of the report's findings and any resulting actions.
4. However, if further action is recommended, the document should be passed to the Director of Academic Affairs who should, with the SMT investigate the incident/allegations, consider the course of action recommended by the Head of Section and record their finding and actions on page 4 of the Incident of Misconduct/Allegations of Bullying Report. The student is then informed of the report's findings and any resulting actions. This updated document is retained within the section and a copy is retained by Student Services.

Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

The College has a duty of care to all students and staff. We will treat any disclosure seriously and will take action if necessary to protect children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Plagiarism, Cheating and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is:

- Copying another person's exact words without acknowledgement
- Using another person's ideas without acknowledgement
- Copying another student's/person's work and passing it off as one's own either in paper or electronic form.

Cheating/Academic Dishonesty is:

- Giving answers to another student in any form
- Falsifying evidence/data
- Using the same piece of work for different assignments
- Sourcing assessment submissions from the Internet
- Impersonation of a candidate by someone else for sitting an exam
- Using equipment during an exam which is not authorised
- Bribery

The above list is not exhaustive.

Plagiarism and/or cheating/academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. Any student caught participating in it will be interviewed by the Course Team and may face suspension from classes or expulsion.

Other College Policies Available on the College Web Site

Listed below are other College policies which are available on the College web site at www.lews.uhi.ac.uk

- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- IT Policy Statement – including Acceptable Use
- Learning Support Policy
- Non-Smoking Policy
- UHI Policies
- Freedom of Information