# Tertiary Learner Support Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy reference number</th>
<th>SP003</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Tertiary Learner Support Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible committee and officer</td>
<td>Student Services Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original author:</td>
<td>Single Policy Framework</td>
</tr>
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<td>Current revision author: (if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
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## Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
<th>Approving committee</th>
<th>Individuals/groups to be notified (if relevant)</th>
<th>Committee officer signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18/12/18</td>
<td>Board of Management</td>
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## Version History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Purpose/change</th>
<th>Review date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>18/12/18</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Document creation</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td>This policy is required to set out a regional approach to learner support for Lews Castle College UHI and all academic partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands.</td>
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<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The policy will provide a framework for a consistent and coherent methodology for the support of learners</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scope</strong></td>
<td>This policy applies to all academic partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation</strong></td>
<td>This policy was developed by a Policy Ownership Group, made up of practitioners from across the University of the Highlands and Islands network. Endorsement was received from Senior Management Curriculum Team, Partnership Council and Further Educational Regional Board, before the policy went through local consultation and approval by College Boards of Management and UHI Academic Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation and Monitoring</strong></td>
<td>Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy. Analysis will be carried out of the policy’s impact by staff from the Vice-Principal for Further Education’s office and the Student Support team.</td>
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<td><strong>Risk Implications</strong></td>
<td>The policy reduces risk for the University and academic partners by reinforcing the existing community of practice for staff and creating a streamlined process. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Link with Strategy</strong></td>
<td>This policy is linked to individual Access and Inclusion strategies and the Regional Outcome Agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Impact Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Equality Impact Assessment: Assessed – No further action to be taken. Privacy Impact Assessment:</td>
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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Lews Castle College UHI is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment in which every student can make the most of learning and development opportunities available throughout their student journey. All students have different learning needs, regardless of level of study.

1.2 The College/Institution will comply with the Equality Act 2010, and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fair treatment for those with protected characteristics.

1.3 Students will be given the opportunity to achieve their full potential through anticipation of service provision, ensuring reasonable adjustments will be made when and where required by Lews Castle College UHI.

2 Definitions

2.1 Personal Learning Support Plan: A Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) is a functional and confidential document which details the nature of a student’s additional support need(s) and any support measures that have been agreed. PLSPs are drawn up in close consultation with students and regularly reviewed.

2.2 Access and Inclusion Strategy: Lews Castle College UHI has an Access and Inclusion Strategy, which can be found here. The purpose of this document is to ‘define the inclusive service we provide and how we monitor its effectiveness and impact. It outlines the inclusive service we provide for students and sets out our ambitions’ (from SFC guidance).

2.3 Reasonable adjustment duty: As set out in the Equality Act 2010, the reasonable adjustment duty is the legal obligation to remove as far as possible by reasonable means the disadvantage which a disabled student experiences because of their disability. Further information from the Equality and Human Rights Commission is available here.

3 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to create a supportive environment for learners in the College. This policy is intended to promote access and inclusion and wherever possible to provide parity of experience for learners at each stage of their student journey.

3.2 The College will work with learners to identify needs through a combination of pre-entry disclosure, on-course disclosure, needs assessment, student request, tutor identification and partnership working.

3.3 Students will be provided with a range of opportunities to disclose specific requirements. Disclosures of specific requirements will be followed up by staff at Lews Castle College UHI where reasonable and appropriate.
3.4 Disclosures can be made at any time from pre-application. All students and prospective students are encouraged to disclose any specific requirements at the earliest opportunity, in order that appropriate support can be identified as soon as is practicable.

3.5 **PLSPs**: The Partnership recognises the value of the PLSP as a functional and confidential document that details the support and adjustments, including those related to academic assessment, that have been approved in light of a student’s specific needs. PLSPs should be used where appropriate, where it supports the learner and the situation warrants and/or necessitates the use of this tool. PLSPs are one source of evidence used internally and by awarding bodies to support the identification of alternative assessment needs.

3.6 Planning for reasonable adjustments will be undertaken collaboratively between the student, support and academic staff. The student will always be regarded and treated as a central figure in this process and will be kept appraised of progress.

3.7 **Awarding Bodies**: When reviewing additional support requests validated by another awarding body, the awarding body website and/or policies must be referred to. For example City & Guilds qualifications which are accredited by SQA Accreditation would require us to refer to their website and contact policy@cityandguilds.com.

3.8 **Use of Personal Data**: Personal data collected through the Lewis Castle College Learner Support process will be handled in accordance with the University’s tertiary student document retention policy and the relevant privacy notice. Personal data will be anonymised and used for statistical purposes to monitor applications by age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, ethnicity, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or care experience.

4 **Scope**

4.1 This policy applies to students undertaking FE and HE courses at the College/Institution, regardless of mode or level of delivery.

4.2 Whether it is reasonable for an education provider to make any particular adjustment will depend on a number of factors, including:

- The effectiveness of making the adjustment and whether it is practical to do so
- The financial resources available
- The availability of grants, loans and other assistance to disabled students, such as Disabled Student Allowance, or charitable trusts
- The extent to which aids and services will be provided to disabled students from other sources
- Health and Safety requirements – this means if the adjustment increased the risks to the health and safety of another person
- The relevant interests of other people – this means where the adjustment results in significant disadvantage for other people
5 Exceptions

5.1 Student personal health care is outwith the scope of this policy. Please see Partnership Matters for further information.

6 Notification

6.1 All staff are responsible for supporting learners through their student journey and should be aware of the policy.

6.2 Staff members responsible for providing specialist learner support will be briefed and trained on the policy and procedures.

6.3 The policy will be publicly available on the College website, along with other current policies.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The College’s Student Services Manager has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 All staff have a responsibility to provide support for the learner through their student journey.

7.3 The College’s Student Services staff will provide services including, but not limited to:
   - Contact with students and assessment of need
   - Creation of PLSPs
   - Signposting and coordinating support
   - Liaising between student and academic staff
   - Implementation of support
   - Passing Summary of Support to Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)

7.4 The College’s Academic Staff will provide services including, but not limited to:
   - Reading the Summary of Support and appropriate cascading to relevant members of staff on a need to know basis
   - Compliance with Summary of Support
   - Implementing learning and teaching adjustments
   - Review and liaison with Student Services on impact of learning and teaching adjustments
   - Liaising with Student Services where a student has not made a disclosure but may require support
   - Adhering to confidentiality protocols

8 Legislative Framework
• Adult with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
• Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
• British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015
• Children (Scotland) Act 1995
• Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
• Data Protection Act 2018
• Disability Discrimination Act 2005
• Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
• Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009
• Equality Act 2010
• General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
• Human Rights Act 1998
• Mental Health Act 2007
• Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
• Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
• Scottish Strategy for Autism 2011
• Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
• Scottish Care Leavers Covenant (2015)

9 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

• British Sign Language (BSL): National Plan 2017 to 2023
• Lews Castle College Access and Inclusion Strategy
• Lews Castle College Admissions Policy
• Lews Castle College Corporate Parenting Plan
• Disability Processes Privacy Notice
• Partnership Matters - A Guide to Local Authorities, NHS Boards and Voluntary Organisations on Supporting Students with Additional Needs in Colleges and Universities in Scotland
• UHI Equality and Diversity Reporting
• UHI Fitness to Study Guidelines
• UHI Recording of Taught Sessions Policy
• UHI Tertiary Learner Support Procedures
Lews Castle College UHI Learner Support Procedures

The University of the Highlands and Islands operates to a common set of Learner Support procedures across all of the partnership institutes. These procedures are set out below:

Introduction

1. The University of the Highlands and Islands is a positive disclosure environment. Students are encouraged to disclose support requirements at any stage, including enquiry, application, enrolment or on-course during study. A disclosure will only be used to support the student in their application and studies.

2. Students who make a disclosure will have their information treated confidentially, and it will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, for example to make specific members of staff aware of an adjustment that is required for their learning.

3. The University of the Highlands and Islands encourages students to disclose learner support requirements as early as possible, so that the information can be used to provide appropriate support and to make reasonable adjustments.

If you have disclosed a disability in your application, the admissions and selection processes we follow are identical to those for all other applicants. It is only after a decision has been made on academic grounds as to whether we may offer you a place that we consider any support needs you may have.

If you are successful in the academic selection process, we will work with you to assess your support needs and will make reasonable adjustments to ensure you can access your chosen programme.

In the unlikely event that we are unable to provide the support you need, or if there are overriding concerns about health and safety or professional fitness to practice requirements, we will continue to work closely with you to explore all of the available options. Where appropriate, we will seek to assist you in finding an alternative programme of study.

If you have any concerns about whether your disability will impact on your ability to study on a particular programme, please contact the college to which you are applying as soon as possible.

4. It is in a student’s best interests to disclose any support needs at the earliest point in their student journey. This enables the opportunity for support to be put in place as timeously as possible and helps staff to better understand how to make the learning environment more accessible for all students.

Opportunities for Disclosure

5. Enquiries from potential students considering applying to a course in the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership can ask to speak to a member of Student Services staff at the relevant partner college. Staff will be able to discuss resources available at the college and how we may support the applicant dependent on their particular requirements.

6a. Further Education and Higher Education Direct applicants: During the application process, applicants will see a list of statements which they may
identify with. If applicants select one of the statements, this information will be provided to Student Services staff, who will contact applicants if appropriate. We will endeavour to remove any potential barriers to applicants being able to attend interview. If an applicant has any specific support requirements to enable attendance at interview then they will be contacted by Admissions Staff to discuss this.

6b. **UCAS Applicants**: UCAS applicants will have the opportunity to disclose any learner support requirements or disability. This information will be passed on to relevant staff at UHI and partner institutes, who will contact the applicant if appropriate. We will endeavour to remove any potential barriers to applicants being able to attend interview. If an applicant has any specific support requirements to enable attendance at interview then they will be contacted by Admissions Staff to discuss this.

7. **Enrolment**: During the enrolment process, students will see the same list of statements which they may identify with. If a student selected one of the statements during the application process, it will already be selected at enrolment. Should a student wish to select one of the statements and disclose a support need at this stage, Student Services staff will contact the student if appropriate.

8. Once a student has started their course, they may wish to disclose a support need to any member of staff. Students may choose to talk to their lecturer, or their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) or they can talk to a member of the Student Services team. Students who make a disclosure during their studies will have the same support made available to them as students who disclose prior to beginning their studies.

**Assessing Need, Personal Learning Support Plans and Informal Support**

9. A student’s needs can be assessed at any time before or during their course. College staff will assess a student’s needs through face-to-face conversations, telephone calls and email. The student plays a central role in this process and will be fully involved and informed at all times. Staff will inform students about informal support options that may be available (see Paragraph 11).

10. When certain adjustments are required in order to facilitate learning for a student a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP) may be required. More information about this process is available in the PLSP Staff Guidance, part of the Disability Practitioner Library site. Agreed adjustments will be made following the PLSP process.

11. All students (including those with PLSPs) are able to access informal support in order to help them succeed in their studies. Examples of informal support may include, but are not limited to:
   - Software and assistive technology
   - Drop-in sessions for students
   - Training for staff and students
• Classroom-based workshops
• Online support and training
• Signposting to external specialist services

12. A student who has accessed informal support but not formally disclosed a support requirement may be supported to have their needs assessed by a member of Student Services staff. This does not affect the student’s continuing access to informal support, but may provide them with other resources to support their learning.

Recording of Support

13. It is necessary to collect personal information about applicants and students who disclose support requirements. Students will be able to refer to the relevant Privacy Notices during the Application and Enrolment stages. The Disability Processes Privacy Notice covers the Assessment of Need and PLSP processes.

14. Statistical information about informal support may be collected by college staff. This could include data about usage of services, but this will not extend to personal information about students. This data is used to improve college services and measure informal support uptake.
Opportunities for Disclosure of Support Need

- ‘Self-serve’
- Enquiry
- Application
- Enrolment
- On-course

Contact with Student

Assessment of Need

Informal Support

UHI PLSP Staff Guidance

Agreed Adjustments Arranged

Recording of Support

Data for Reporting

Examples of Informal Support
- Software and assistive technology
- Drop-in sessions for students
- Training for staff and students
- Classroom workshops
- Signposting to external specialist services
- Online support and training