

5A – Welcome Guide and Programme/Level Handbooks: Procedure

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 This procedure is intended for all Bournemouth University (BU) staff engaged in programme delivery. It provides details on the format and content of the Welcome Guide and Programme/Level Handbooks.

1.2 Students should be supplied with information which specifies their programme, and guides their studies, at three levels:

- information about the University (and the partner in which their programme is delivered if applicable);
- information about the programme as a whole, including any Faculty specific issues;
- information about the units which make up the programme.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 **Academic Standards and Education Committee:** to approve new and revised procedures as necessary.

2.2 **Student Services:** to maintain and ensure students' access to the Welcome Guide (printed or electronic) and to inform students of any changes as necessary.

2.3 **Academic Quality:** to maintain and ensure student access to a relevant partnership version of the Welcome Guide for BU programmes delivered through the franchised model.

2.4 **Faculties:** to ensure that all students have access to Programme/Level Handbook(s) or equivalent up-to-date information pertaining to their programme of study and all relevant unit specifications.

3. ACCESSING OTHER RELEVANT BU DOCUMENTS

3.1 All documents can be accessed [here](#)

- 5D – Academic Advisor Policy
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Undergraduate Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Foundation Degree Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Higher National Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Integrated Masters Programmes
- 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Research Degrees
- 6F – Generic Assessment Criteria: Procedure
- 6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards
- 6J - Exceptional Circumstances: Policy and Procedure
- 4B - Programme and Unit Modifications: Policy and Procedure

- 11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards
- 11F - Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure

3.2 Other documents with direct relevance to this are:

- [Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy](#)
- [Important Information \(Student-facing Policy and Procedures\)](#)

Procedures

4. WELCOME GUIDE

4.1 Information common to all students will be provided in the Welcome Guide containing an introduction to the University together with:

An overview of the support available for students, including:

- information on provision for students with additional learning needs and disabilities;
- University computing, library and other facilities available to students;
- sources of academic and pastoral guidance and support.

NB: The content of the Welcome Guide is reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary in line with student feedback and changes to other pre- and post-arrival communications and (where applicable) centrally-led online, email and social media channels.

4.2 For all BU programmes delivered through the franchised model, students will be provided with a version of the Welcome Guide which will clearly set out which services will be provided by BU and which will be provided by the partner. This will include information about the appropriate channels for students to contact the University directly.

4.3 Students on the validated model will not receive the Welcome Guide, although partners must ensure partner-specific information on resources and support etc is provided to these students.

4.4 All students at partners will receive an overview of the University's rules and regulations. In addition, all students at partners should be issued with a Partner Handbook, produced by the Partner, as appropriate.

5. NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION OF PROGRAMME/LEVEL HANDBOOKS

5.1 Faculties are responsible for keeping all operational documents, including student handbooks, up-to-date in light of any changes to the governing programme documentation (i.e. programme/unit specifications) and for informing students of any changes as necessary. Staff roles within Faculties and the timescales for the production of programme and level handbooks should be made clear to all relevant programme team members.

Format and status of handbooks

5.2 All students should receive a Programme Handbook (or equivalent) at the commencement of their programme of study. All students in subsequent years of study should receive a Level Handbook (or equivalent) for each level of study. Handbooks may be produced in paper copy or in electronic format. Alternatively, access to equivalent information may be provided via the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or partner VLE. Where this is the case, the information should be presented in an accessible and user-friendly format which is easy for students to navigate and available to them within a timely fashion to ensure information is up-to-date.

- 5.3 The date and status of the Programme/Level Handbook should be clearly indicated at the front of the handbook. Alternatively, where information is provided via the VLE, any updates to the information should clearly indicate which cohorts are affected.

Approval of programme/level handbooks for partner students

- 5.4 Programme and Level Handbooks should be completed by the deadline set by the University in order for Link Tutors to approve them prior to issue to students to ensure that updates to Faculty and University information are incorporated.

Changes to programmes or units

- 5.5 To ensure currency of information, changes to the indicative sections of unit specifications (content; learning resources; and indicative assessment) need to be considered on an annual basis as matters of operational management.
- 5.6 Programme Leaders and Programme Support Officers should note that changes to Programme Specifications, and the definitive sections of unit specifications, may only be made through a formal review or modification process.
- 5.7 When modifications are made to Programme Specifications through these formal procedures, Programme Handbooks and unit guidance documents must be changed accordingly for those students affected by the modifications. Academic Quality should be contacted in any cases of uncertainty.

6. PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

- 6.1 The Programme Handbook provides students with relevant details of their whole programme in a user-friendly style, together with any Faculty-specific information. As all key information for the Programme is contained in the Programme Specification, this forms the foundation of the Programme Handbook and should be incorporated in its entirety. Additional guidance should be added to aid students' understanding.

6.2 Other content that must be provided within the Programme Handbook (or equivalent)

Some specific text must be added to Handbooks. Where such text exists, this is denoted by an * and can be found in Appendix 1.

Additional core requirements		Policy
Further information about Assessment	<p>Include a statement to compliment the link to the Standard Assessment regulations advising that these regulations are subject to change each year. Also include an explanation of any variation to Standard Assessment regulations as articulated in the Programme Specification (approved exceptions).</p> <p>Relevant generic assessment criteria*</p> <p>Assessment guidance and good academic practice, including details of how to reference assignments and avoid academic offences*</p> <p>Information about Exceptional Circumstances and what actions students</p>	<p><i>6A – Standard Assessment Regulations</i></p> <p><i>6F – Generic Assessment Criteria</i></p> <p><i>6H (Taught Awards) – Academic Offences</i></p> <p><i>8B (Research) – Research Ethics Code of Practice</i></p> <p><i>6J – Exceptional Circumstances</i></p>

	should take in relation to such circumstances	
Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements	A clear statement should be incorporated to advise students where a programme or part of a programme attracts PSRB accreditation. This should include explanatory information to assist students' understanding of the value of any PSRB accreditation, e.g. exemption from professional examinations or membership of professional bodies	
Current External Examiner information	Links to a list of External Examiners to include the name, position and institution of all current External Examiners including where they have been appointed on behalf of a professional body. Students should be advised that the appointments are listed for transparency and that students should not contact an external examiner directly. There should be a clear statement when an external examiner has been appointed on behalf of a PSRB.	
How to raise concerns about the programme*	Academic Appeals Student Complaints	<i>11A – Academic Appeals</i> <i>11F – Student Complaints</i>
Statement relating to possibility of changes to programme	Programme details may be subject to change during the delivery of the programme	
Clear statement relating to availability of option units	Students should note that not all option units may be offered or delivered in a given year	
Placement information and Sandwich degree awards*	To include an explanation of the status of placements available, e.g. compulsory or optional placements and/or Sandwich awards, additional work experience or placement opportunities that do not constitute part of the award itself. Information on how study abroad is managed as part of a one year placement	<i>4K – Placements</i>
Information about the Academic Adviser system	To include key information from the policy to enable students' to comprehend the Academic Adviser role and the support that this offers them in addition to understanding their own responsibilities in relation to this. A list of names of Academic Advisors should appear in the programme handbook.	<i>5D – Academic Adviser</i>

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Other information that may be added to make the Programme Handbook more student-friendly could include the following:

Specific programme management arrangements	
Staff contact list or provision of a link to this up-to-date information	
Programme philosophy and professional context	
How the programme unfolds and key themes explored	
Overview of the student educational experience, learning and teaching patterns and methods	
Instructions on the use of the online environment	
Student roles in maintaining quality (student reps, student feedback mechanisms)	
Additional support and guidance for students with protected characteristics	Diversity and Equality website

7. LEVEL HANDBOOKS

7.1 A Level Handbook should be presented for each level/year of each programme (in the first level this could be incorporated in the Programme Handbook).

	Policy
Unit Specifications and assessment details for each unit within the Level. Unit Specifications may form the basis of Unit Handbooks/Guides which provide greater explanation about the requirements of individual units. Only Unit Specifications for the current year or stage of study should be included.	
Programme content for the year or session in question	
Learning and teaching programme for the year or session	
A bibliography and list of other resources	
Specific learning guidance, e.g. use of traditional/online teaching methods	
A link to the current version of the Standard Assessment regulations along with an explanation of any variation to assessment regulations as articulated in the Programme Specification (approved exceptions). Relevant generic assessment criteria* Assessment guidance and guide to good academic practice, including details of how to reference assignments and avoid academic offences	6A – <i>Standard Assessment regulations</i> 6F – <i>Generic Assessment Criteria</i> 6H (<i>Taught Awards</i>) – <i>Academic Offences</i>

<p>Arrangements for handing in assignments including an assessment schedule/calendar with submission/feedback return dates</p> <p>Information about Exceptional Circumstances and what actions students' should take in relation to such circumstances</p>	<p><i>6J – Exceptional Circumstances</i></p>
<p>Updated staff contact list or provision of a link to this up-to-date information</p>	
<p>Notification of any changes to generic programme information or University/local procedures since the Programme Handbook was issued</p>	
<p>Information on Research Ethics</p>	

8. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 8.1 A Final Year (Level 6) Undergraduate Guide, produced by Marketing and Communications, will be provided to help prepare students for their final year of study at BU, give useful information about career development and also update on developments that will have occurred while students have been away on placements. This will sit alongside Programme Handbooks on the VLE and be available to all Level 6 students studying at the University. This publication is not be provided for partner students.

General

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

9.1 Appendices

Appendix 1: Specific text to be added to handbooks

- 9.2 This policy was reviewed according to the University's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#) in June 2019.

APPENDIX 1: SPECIFIC TEXT TO BE ADDED TO HANDBOOKS

Generic Assessment Criteria

The University's generic assessment criteria are included in your handbook. These may be used by academic staff to provide a rationale for the mark given, and to indicate how you might improve your future performance and grades. In addition to the generic criteria, you may have been given assessment specific criteria. You can use both of these to self-assess your assignment before you submit your work. In addition to these feedback and feedforward statements you will also receive more detailed, context-specific comments on the work you have submitted, to support further academic skills development. You can access the full *6F - Generic Assessment Criteria: Procedure* on the [Student Portal](#).

Academic guidance and good academic practice

The University takes academic offences extremely seriously and imposes strict penalties where students are found guilty of committing an academic offence. Penalties may include the requirement to resubmit work or re-sit an examination with your overall unit marked being capped at the pass mark, to repeat a unit or an entire level capped at the pass mark or even withdrawing you from your course and in some cases without any university credit. It is therefore extremely important that you familiarise yourself with the correct referencing requirements and information on avoiding academic offences and breaches of research ethics:

- Information on [citing references](#) including the BU Guide to Citation in the Harvard style.
- Information on [avoiding academic offences](#).
- Appropriate information on research ethics (*8B – Research Ethics Code of Practice: Policy and Procedure*).

How to raise concerns about the programme

The University encourages the early resolution of any issues/concerns you may have and is normally able to deal with the majority of these quickly. You should discuss any concerns relating to your course or your assessment outcomes with an appropriate member of your course team in the first instance. If your concern cannot be resolved or clarified by an informal discussion in this way, you have the opportunity to write to the Faculty Education Service Manager or Head of Professional Service to which the issue/concern relates. Please refer to *11A – Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards* and *11F – Student Complaints: Policy and Procedure* for further details.

Advice about placement on Sandwich awards

Candidates who meet the criteria for the award of a degree in sandwich mode, including satisfactory completion of the placement year will normally receive an award in this mode. Please note that although work experience (e.g. a placement that has not been approved by the University, a placement that is undertaken while your studies are suspended and/or undertaking a placement without paying the placement fee) is valuable experience and is good for your CV it will not lead to the award of a sandwich degree as placement approval cannot be retrospectively awarded. Under these conditions, and subject to satisfactory completion of all other criteria, you will normally be entitled to a degree that is not in a sandwich mode.