Student Carer Policy

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<th>Document Control Table</th>
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<td>Related documents</td>
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1. Introduction:

This policy provides advice and guidance to:

- Students who, during their studies at GCU, are caring unpaid, for a relative or friend who could not cope without their support.
- University staff that have a role in advising or supporting students who are carers or those who anticipate becoming a carer.

Scope of the Policy

This policy covers both prospective and current GCU students who have an unpaid caring responsibility for someone who is ill, disabled, are experiencing mental distress or affected by substance abuse.

The support provided by the student may happen at any time during their university career and there may be unpredictability in terms of commitment, consistency and time scales.

The university appreciates that caring responsibilities can fluctuate over time and care can often be either ‘short’ or ‘long’ term. With this in mind, the university recognises that each carer’s needs are unique.

The policy does not cover those with parental responsibilities, unless for a disabled child, or those employed in a caring capacity.

Policy Statement

Glasgow Caledonian University is committed to providing a rewarding Higher Education opportunity and experience to applicants with the potential to benefit from, and contribute to the GCU experience, mission and values. Caring responsibilities should not prevent students from succeeding; therefore, we are committed to being as flexible as feasibly possible to assist students in their university education.

Equality and Diversity Statement

GCU is committed to providing a culture and environment which is inclusive of all sections of society and responsive to the needs of individuals. We do this by promoting equality, valuing diversity and ensuring that our University community adheres to our Dignity at Work and Study Policy.

We are committed to treating carers fairly, and having an inclusive and supportive environment for students who have caring responsibilities. We recognise our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent discrimination, including discrimination by association, which is when you are discriminated against because of the protected characteristic (e.g. disability, age) of someone you know or are caring for.
2. Rights and Responsibilities

This section covers rights and responsibilities for students, staff and the University.

2.1 – Contextualised Admissions

The University will reduce the Scottish Higher/Scottish Advanced Higher offer requirements by one grade, for one subject only, for those applicants who meet one or more of the contextual factors. The University will make a contextualised offer to an applicant who has been identified as a Young Carer¹. This data is provided by the applicant on their UCAS application within the personal statement and/or reference and verified by the Admissions and Enquiry Service. Please see the Contextualised Admissions Policy for further details: http://www.gcu.ac.uk/aes/documentsandpolicies/

2.2 – Disclosure and Confirming Carers Status

Disclosure of carer responsibilities can be made as part of our admissions process (via personal statement), annual registration, to the Student Wellbeing Adviser or a member of staff.

Confirming student carer status is the responsibility of the student. As carers exist in a variety of different situations, proof of status can come from many different sources.

Some examples of what can be provided as evidence are listed below but please note that this list is not exhaustive:

- Self certification regarding the nature of the caring duties and how this may affect their studies, including how long they anticipate this will last (in the form of a short statement);

- A GP letter confirming carer status;

- A local authority Carer’s Assessment, Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement;

- Young Carer’s Authorisation Card;

- Other relevant documents, for example a letter from a Carer’s Centre, other professional, social worker, teachers, carer group or receipt of benefits.

At any point the University may request more information or evidence to confirm caring status or any amendments to the student carer’s responsibilities.

2.3 - Contacting the Student Wellbeing Adviser or other

As a university, we recognise that some of our students will have caring responsibilities and to best support the student carer, we will work with individuals to minimise the impact this will have on their studies.

The Student Wellbeing Adviser (SWA) is the first point of contact for undergraduate and postgraduate student carers. However, if the student feels most comfortable with an academic from their course, then they can inform them directly. The staff member should then, with the student’s permission, inform the wellbeing team so any

¹ A young carer is a child or young person aged under 18 who has a significant role in looking after someone else who is experiencing illness or disability.
necessary support can be put in place. If the student approaches the SWA first then they can assist the student in how best to approach their school and advise on what support can be put in place.

- The SWA is responsible for signposting the student to appropriate services either before or following completion of the Student Carer's Plan for example Student Funding and Wellbeing.
- The SWA is responsible for signposting/referring to the appropriate academic member of staff for discussion regarding a potential Student Carer's Plan.
- The SWA is responsible for monitoring that a Student Carer's Plan is completed (or updated), where this is required, receiving a copy of all completed plans.
- The SWA is responsible for collation of data and reporting on the implementation of the policy.
- The SWA will also be the main contact for prospective students with caring responsibilities. Any queries regarding studying at GCU as a carer can be dealt with by the SWA.

2.4 – Contacting the School

Once the student has disclosed their carer status to the SWA or school staff member, then the SWA is responsible for notifying the Academic Adviser of the student’s carer status and, with the student’s permission, providing them with a copy of the supporting documentation.

2.5 – Implications for Study

The SWA will then liaise with the Academic Adviser and will discuss with the student how the caring responsibilities are likely to impact on their studies.

A Student Carer’s plan should be agreed between the student and the SWA detailing any arrangements required during the period in which care is being provided.

The nature of the caring responsibilities should be outlined in the plan alongside the predicted duration of the situation. Once completed, this plan should be signed by the student and Academic Adviser confirming mutual understanding of any arrangements that are required and have been agreed.

A copy of the plan should be given to the student and also to other appropriate members of staff. However, the student’s permission should be sought before passing on any information.

Specific examples of the types of arrangements that may need to be considered can be discussed with the SWA when a plan is being created. It may be useful to include the SWA in any planning meetings between Academic Adviser and the student, provided both parties are comfortable with this.

2.6 - Withdrawal from or Suspension of Studies

In some situations, the student may need to withdraw or suspend their studies. Alongside the Academic Adviser the student will decide whether a break is required and how long this should be. Before this timescale is agreed, consideration should be taken in regards to the academic requirements of the student’s course. At any point, if there are changes which relate to impact of caring responsibilities, the student should inform their academic adviser who should respond appropriately in regard to the arrangements that can be put in place, including potential to extend the student’s overall period of registration.
Where possible, the student should keep in regular contact with their Academic Adviser so that the university can ensure that the appropriate support is put in place. If new arrangements are made following initial agreements, then the Academic Adviser should be involved in these decisions and provide approval.

After discussions have taken place, if the student decides that it is best to withdraw from their course, then make sure this is clear with the Academic Adviser for the necessary support and administration processes to occur. See Regulations for Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal policy for more information*  

http://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/theuniversity/gaq/gaqfiles/assessmentregulations/Regulations%20for%20taught%20Student%20Registration,%20Suspension%20and%20Withdrawal.pdf

2.7 - Resuming Studies

Once the student is ready to return, they should contact the SWA and the Academic Adviser. Each party can then work in conjunction to plan an appropriate return to study, taking examinations into consideration where necessary.

If a student has withdrawn from their course, they will need to follow standard application procedures in order to recommence in their studies.

2.8 - Financial Considerations

There are a number of scholarships and bursaries offered to GCU students which can be very helpful in regards to financial support whilst studying. Information regarding these can be accessed using the following links:

http://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/money/discretionaryfund  
https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/scholarships/

If the student has decided to withdraw or take time out from a programme of study, they must advise the Programme Administrator in writing. The date of last attendance is used as the date of withdrawal or time out to calculate any fees due.

For detailed information and guidance on withdrawal fees and refunds please refer to the Fees and Refund Policy  

SAAS may also be able to help with funding. They have created a document to advise on what additional funding is available for some student carers - https://www.saas.gov.uk/_forms/student_carers.pdf

3. Guidance for Staff

This purpose of this section is to provide guidance for staff who are supporting student carers and for any staff member who has an advisory or supporting role. It is important that students with caring responsibilities are treated fairly and in line with the Dignity at Work and Study policy. Staff should be aware of the Data Protection Policy and be sensitive in their approach when working with students with caring responsibilities.
3.1 - Initial Contact

Once a student has disclosed their caring role to a member of staff, an initial response should occur within 7 days. After this point, plans and arrangements for support should be made as quickly as possible and put in place. If the student has contacted the SWA directly, then, with the student’s permission, the Academic Adviser should be informed.

3.2 - Appropriate Arrangements

Some examples of the types of arrangements that could be made are listed below. Please note that due to the nature of the caring role, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of special arrangements.

- Recognising the need to arrive late or leave early in order to place their cared for person(s) in appropriate daytime care
- Agreeing periods of authorised absence and making arrangements for the student to catch-up on lectures/tutorials missed for reasons relating to caring responsibilities to ensure that they are not at an academic disadvantage
- Providing timetables, wherever possible, at least one month in advance to allow the student to make necessary alternative care arrangements and recognising that such students may not be able to attend academic activities in the event of late changes to timetables
- Ensuring that the student has adequate opportunity to make up missed time e.g. through access to any missed materials, or rescheduling of practical activities
- Taking account of caring responsibilities on courses which require an external placement. Priority should be given to ensuring the placement is within reasonable travelling distance to accommodate care arrangements
- Providing at least a few weeks notice of placements to allow the arrangement of alternative care
- If viable, consideration of a transfer to part-time study (Please note that international students in the UK with a Tier 4 General Student Visa are not permitted to change to part-time study).

3.3 - Academic Standards

Whilst every attempt should be made to support the student, precaution should be taken to ensure that this flexibility does not impact on the student’s ability to meet the required academic outcomes. Any requests for arrangements to be made must be carefully considered before they are approved or rejected. If a request is refused, then the reasoning should be put to the student in writing with sufficient detail and advice regarding what arrangements can be made should be detailed.

4. Mitigating Circumstances

Students with caring responsibilities may feel they need to put in mitigating circumstances due to the nature of their caring role. The role of the ‘Carers Plan’ is to assist students throughout their academic year and allow the University to support the student so that mitigating circumstances are hopefully not required. The ‘Carers Plan’ cannot be used as evidence in a mitigating circumstances application.
5. Other Support Services

**GCU Support Services**

**Nightline** [http://www.scnightline.com/](http://www.scnightline.com/)
A confidential telephone, text, and online listening and information service run by trained students for the students of Glasgow Caledonian and Strathclyde Universities.

**GCUSA Advice Centre** [http://www.gcustudents.co.uk/advice](http://www.gcustudents.co.uk/advice)
The Advice Centre provides a free, non-judgemental and confidential service to all GCU students.

**Counselling Service** [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/positiveliving/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/positiveliving/)
Provide an easily accessible counselling service which is available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students at the university.

**Chaplaincy Team** [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/faith/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/faith/)
A dedicated team of volunteer Chaplains who are there to support students' and staff's spiritual wellbeing and provide guidance and support.

**Student Funding Team** [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/money/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/money/)
Provide advice and guidance relating to queries regarding money, tuition fees, bursaries and scholarships.

**Disability Team** [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/disability/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/disability/)
This team assists students with a disability throughout their time at GCU.

**VISA Team**
VISA team give advice and guidance to GCU students regarding their international visas. If an international student finds that caring responsibilities are impacting on their attendance, it may be helpful to approach the VISA team. [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/international/visaimmigrationsupportandadvice/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/international/visaimmigrationsupportandadvice/)

**External Support Services**

**Carers Trust Scotland** [www.carers.org/scotland](http://www.carers.org/scotland)
Can provide support for Carers through local Carer Centres across Scotland.

**Carers Scotland** [http://www.carersuk.org/scotland](http://www.carersuk.org/scotland)
Can provide policy information, training and support to carers in Scotland and also supports carers through local carer centres across Scotland.

**Glasgow Association for Mental Health** [http://www.gamh.org.uk/what-we-do/carers-support/](http://www.gamh.org.uk/what-we-do/carers-support/)
Promote the health and wellbeing of mental health carers by providing opportunities for carers to access their rights and entitlements and mutual support.

**Scottish Association for Mental Health** [https://www.samh.org.uk/](https://www.samh.org.uk/)
SAMH is Scotland's leading mental health charity. They work to ensure people are talking about mental health by promoting policy, national campaigns, raising funds and supporting community based services.

6. Complaints

Where a student is dissatisfied with the arrangements offered in line with their caring responsibilities, they can access information regarding the Complaints Handling Procedure from: [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/gaq/complaintsstudentconduct/complaints/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/gaq/complaintsstudentconduct/complaints/)
Student Carer’s Plan

This section must be completed by the student in conjunction with the Student Wellbeing Adviser and Academic Adviser

1. Full Name

2. Student ID

3. Year of Study

4. Programme of study

5. Name of Academic Adviser

6. What evidence has the student provided of their carer status?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Provided</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-certification regarding the nature of the caring duties and how this may affect their studies, including how long they anticipate this will last (in the form of a short statement – question 8);</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A GP letter confirming carer status;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A local authority Carer’s Assessment, Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carers Statement;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Carer’s Authorisation Card;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relevant documents, for example a letter from a Carer’s Centre, other professional, social worker, teachers, carer group or receipt of benefits.</td>
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7. Has the student given permission to their Academic Adviser to share the evidence of their carer status with relevant staff if requested? YES/NO

8. Short description of how the student’s carer role impacts on their studies and/or attendance and predicted duration of caring role
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Arrangements requested to support the student in their studies</th>
<th>Agreed by department?</th>
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<tr>
<th>10. Adjustments to suggested arrangements (agreed by department)</th>
<th>Agreed by student?</th>
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<tr>
<th>11. Academic year for which the foregoing request relates</th>
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Student's Signature

Academic Adviser signature

Date

Date:
### GCU EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1. DESCRIBE</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1. Name of policy/strategy/decision</strong></td>
<td>Student Carer Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2. Owner</strong></td>
<td>Student Wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3. Date</strong></td>
<td>02/12/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4. Aims of policy/strategy/decision</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of this policy is to outline GCU’s commitment to supporting our student carers and outline the rights and responsibilities of staff and students. This is so that GCU can ensure that we are supporting Student Carers appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.5. Who does the policy/strategy/decision affect?</strong></td>
<td>Students, staff, applicants, visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.6. Could there be any potential implications for equality, or people with protected characteristics?</strong></td>
<td>This policy aims to support the principles of Equality &amp; Diversity, and ensure that students are not discriminated against. This policy applies to all Student Carers, regardless of personal characteristics or circumstances.</td>
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<th><strong>2. ASSESS</strong></th>
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<td><strong>2.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?</strong></td>
<td>There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as it will allow student carers some support and framework surrounding their situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?</strong></td>
<td>There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as the policy is based on flexibility for a group who could be viewed as at a disadvantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?</strong></td>
<td>There is likely to be a positive impact on this duty as the policy is centred around breaking down barriers and raising awareness to remove prejudice.</td>
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### 3. ACTION

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<th>3.1. If a negative impact has been identified, how will this be addressed?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Until the Policy and guidance are implemented, it is not possible to gauge any negative impact. However, the implementation process will be monitored and data will be gathered in relation to the relevant protected characteristics that may be affected; any negative impact will inform the future review process of the Policy and guidance. Overall, there is no direct negative impact on the protected characteristics, as this applies to all students and the principles of the policy support equality and diversity. Although the policy itself is free from discrimination overall, ultimately it is the application and implementation of the policy that provides the scope for discrimination e.g. prejudices or attitudes of staff supporting their students. Therefore, there is potentially a development need for those involved in implementing the policy, and appropriate information will be provided to staff.</td>
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### 3.2. If changes have been made to the policy/strategy/decision as a result of this assessment, outline the changes

| N/A |

### 4. MONITOR AND REVIEW

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<th>4.1. How will the implementation of the policy/strategy/decision and its impact on equality be monitored and reviewed?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Policy will be reviewed annually alongside all Student Wellbeing Policies.</td>
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### 5. PUBLISH

| Please email this completed form, along with the policy/strategy and any other relevant information to equality@gcu.ac.uk for publishing on the Equality and Diversity website and annual reporting in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements. |

### 6. SIGN OFF

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1. EIA Owner</th>
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<tr>
<td>6.2. Equality and Diversity Advisor</td>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adrian Lui</td>
<td>02/12/2016</td>
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2 Information or evidence may be removed if it is commercially sensitive or personal information