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of Exeter

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Stand Alone

34B York Way
London N1 9AB

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Dear Stand Alone,

The University of Exeter aspires to be an institution that is inviting to all prospective students, irrespective of background, and is committed to supporting students to succeed at the University. We recognise the barriers that estranged students may face accessing, and remaining in, higher education. The University acknowledges the additional need for financial and pastoral support and first made our pledge to Stand Alone in 2017. Since then, our support has developed considerably, and the University would like to re-submit our pledge to set out our current support for estranged students and how we would like to further our work to realise our ambition of being sector leading in this important area. We support estranged students in the following ways:

Finance

We offer advice and guidance about applying as an independent student to Student Finance England and support prospective and current students throughout the process. This takes place in person or via virtual meetings.

All estranged students can apply to a discretionary Success for All (hardship) fund and estranged students are able to benefit from a 'fast track' application and decision process

We provide an Estranged Students Bursary administered by our University Guild Advice Service which helps students based on individual need. The amount is not fixed and will be dependent on a student's situation. Examples include providing non-repayable financial support for specific counselling, food parcels, and travel related costs and accommodation costs.

We provide a welcome package which is administered in partnership with our Student Guild and Students' Union. It is designed to help build a sense of belonging at the university and to support the development of healthy social connections. The package is worth up to £200 and includes funding towards laundry costs, bus pass, Sports pass, Society membership and general food costs.

Accommodation

We can provide access to accommodation during the whole calendar year including the holiday periods, to remove the obstacle of estranged students having to find temporary vacation accommodation. We are committed to providing a guarantor scheme for students within Devon and Cornwall and this is a priority area for development.

Mental Health, wellbeing, and pastoral care

The university offers a collaborative approach for support between the named contacts within the Student Guild and our Student Wellbeing team enabling efficient join-up with that service if required. Names and contact details are clearly displayed on both the Guild, and the University websites.

We have recently launched Exeter Cares. A joint initiative, aimed at delivering activities and promoting the support, through a termly newsletter, that is available to care experienced students, student carers, estranged students, refugees, asylum seekers and mature students.

We run regular social events for Exeter based students via our Student Guild that are both online and in person. We have found that students particularly value the opportunity to meet their fellow students in a similar situation to themselves.

We are aware that Christmas time especially can be difficult. The university will invite and pay for students to have Christmas lunch on campus if they wish to attend. We send a Christmas card and a small present to those students that we are aware are estranged and will follow this up with a check in phone call during the Christmas vacation.

Outreach

Estranged school students are eligible for [Exeter Scholars Access Programme](#). The progressive outreach programme for years 10-13 for both regional and national students can be achieved by completing one of four unique pathways that include a range of specific events and activities. The free programme gives young people the opportunity to develop their knowledge about university and experience what it is like to study a subject of their choice at university level. University of Exeter applicants who successfully complete the programme and receive an offer from us will receive a three grade adjustment, our most generous [contextual offer](#).

We include information about the support available for estranged students in our recruitment and outreach publications and presentations.

We have an [Estranged Student web page](#) and encourage students and supporting staff to get in touch as early as possible in their applicant journey. Specific advice is available at our Offer Holder Days where offer holders can speak with specialist staff including Wellbeing and our Guild Advice Service.

Transition

Estranged students are invited to attend the [Enhanced Induction Programme](#). This transitional programme held at least a week before arrivals weekend is focused upon providing invited students with the opportunity to overcome any concerns that they may have had about making the transition to study at Exeter. The programme includes an overview of what to expect from Freshers' Week/Welcome Week and sessions on academic skills, wellbeing, student finance, the student experience and careers and employability. With a

focus on developing skills and networks to help make the transition to university level study and the university environment as easy as possible. We cover travel costs for this event.

Careers and employability

We have a dedicated Employability and Careers Consultants based at both our Streatham and Penryn campuses who will support and guide students throughout their time with us. After graduation, alumni are directed to use our online [Careers Forever resource](#). The [Career Zone](#) offers a wide variety of programmes which estranged students are eligible for, including fully funded internships and mentoring schemes to support their career planning, experience and journey into their career or further study.

Aims for the next two years (2022-2024)

1. Further promote our guarantor scheme, make it visible on the website to ensure that all students who can benefit from this service are aware of it.
2. Develop further support for estranged students on the Cornwall campuses and look at extending the guarantor scheme to encompass Cornwall based students.
3. Introduce a peer-to-peer mentoring scheme. We understand that the best and most reassuring advice often comes from fellow students who have been in the same position and share similar backgrounds and experiences.
4. Enhance our Admissions support through a dedicated member of staff to guide students through the application stages.
5. Continue to provide a bespoke Graduation package.
6. Foster links with local charities, Foyer, and homeless shelters to reach those living without support from families and promote the support available.
7. To identify progression rates of estranged graduates into Postgraduate study and the impact of support / lack of support on their progression to and achievement at PG level study. To listen to estranged students about the support they feel they need at PG level. As a result of these findings develop a support package for estranged students at post-graduate level which could include a bursary for WP students to encourage diversity from under-represented groups.
8. Build on our improved student data information for this group and conduct analysis of the retention rates, awarding gaps and Graduate Outcomes data of estranged students to identify trends and any issues which require a policy response.
9. To build in evaluation of our support schemes in order to review and further enhance them.
10. To ensure that progress on the delivery of this pledge is maintained through updates to our Success for All Strategy group, via our Under-represented Student Working Group.

If you have any questions about our work please contact Natalie Bracher, Access and Success Officer (Under-represented students) at n.bracher@exeter.ac.uk. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Stand Alone and supporting estranged students to access and succeed at the University of Exeter.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Lisa Roberts FRSA
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive

