



The Pledge: Developing Support For Estranged Students in Higher Education

The University of Wolverhampton leads the higher education sector in widening participation and the provision of opportunities for students from backgrounds currently under-represented in higher education. The University's vision as set out in our strategic plan is:

To be a progressive and influential sector leader, championing diversity, growth, and creating life chances for all while enhancing economic impact and accelerating ambition across the entire University community.

We are pleased to offer our public commitment to supporting students who are estranged from their families which reinforces our existing support measures including -

- A named point of contact within the University for advice and support
- Access to a dedicated bursary of £1000.00 per year for the duration of the course.
- A guaranteed offer of University-allocated accommodation (52-week accommodation is available).
- Access to a student mentor and online mentoring support.
- Access to all our student support services including financial advice and counselling services.

Details are available at our specific webpages: <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/study-here/student-support/support-for-care-leavers-and-estranged-students/help-and-support-for-estranged-students/>

This commitment will also mean that we are actively working to understand and identify how we can do more to support students in this difficult situation. With the help of Stand Alone and other partners we aim to -

- raise awareness of issues affecting estranged students within the institution and other sector agencies;
- encourage students to identify themselves and increase levels of declaration to access the available support and monitor progress throughout the course to a successful outcome.

We will work with estranged students and through our Students' Union to better understand the experiences of estranged students and where we can remove unnecessary barriers that are based on expectations of "traditional" family structures. Our students join the University from a diverse range of backgrounds and we would always seek to design systems and processes that would be of benefit to all students. Our inclusive approach to teaching, learning and the overall student experience is rooted in the first principles of the University's new strategic plan.

Putting Students First:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a sector-leading University experience for all. • Maximise individual potential for all students • Create outstanding learning opportunities informed by world-leading research and professional practice.
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To realise these ambitions, specific to estranged students, we will:

- Improve channels of communication to ensure staff and students across departments and faculties are aware of the support available to estranged students.
- Offer access to staff development opportunities around awareness of the barriers estranged students face.
- Develop processes to identify students and monitor their progress.
- Communicate the support available for estranged students in outreach work in schools and colleges.

We will do this in consultation with affected/estranged students and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Access & Lifelong Learning) will lead a meeting with a group of estranged students – supported by the Dean of Students and the point of contact (Student Experience Projects Manager)

This is our commitment and we are proud to be associated with Stand Alone and the work to promote, support and celebrate the ambitions and achievements of students from an estranged background.



**Professor Geoff Layer
Vice-Chancellor**



**Jackie Dunne
Deputy Vice-Chancellor(Access and Lifelong Learning)**

8th September 2016.