



SUPPORTING
YOUR SUCCESS

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WELCOME TO UCW

University Centre Weston is committed to providing an outstanding higher education experience, enabling success and inspiring ambition.

This guide outlines the support services and opportunities for personal development on offer at UCW to help you make the most out of your time with us.

We hope you've had a great summer and are feeling refreshed and ready for the start of the new academic year!

Whether you are new to UCW or have been with us for a while, we encourage you to read this booklet so you know exactly how we can support you to achieve your ambitions.

Over the next few pages you'll find out more about the additional learning support, welfare and careers services, and opportunities for volunteering and engagement on offer at UCW.

We've now settled into the University Centre in the Winter Gardens a few minutes from our Knightstone building, and we want all students to take advantage of the fantastic facilities it provides.

The Winter Gardens has bright and spacious learning zones, a café offering discounts for UCW students, a modern library, and it is also where many of our support staff are based.

So come and say hello to our HE Academic Registry Team (HEART) as soon as you can!

They are our student services specialists, have an open door policy and can be found in room 017 on the ground floor of the Winter Gardens.

They are also available in room A125 at Loxton Campus and at South West Skills Campus if you are studying on one of our creative arts or engineering courses.

We've also introduced new programmes and appointed some fantastic new members of staff in the past few months, which shows our commitment to continuing to invest in your learning experience and degree-level study in Weston-super-Mare.

Everyone at UCW hopes you have a brilliant year, but we're here for you if you need us...

And don't forget to keep up-to-date with all of the news, events and student successes throughout the year by following and liking @UCWeston on social media.



WE'RE
TEF GOLD!

That means that the teaching, learning and outcomes we provide for students have been judged to be of the highest quality found in the UK.



AND WE'RE
93%
FOR OVERALL
SATISFACTION

National Student Survey 2019

STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELFARE

Our students are central to everything we do so we want you to have a fantastic experience at UCW. Life as a higher education student can be daunting, but there is so much support available to help make your time as stress-free and straightforward as possible. HEART are your student services team and your first port of call for any issues. They can provide help and advice on a variety of issues, including:

- Pastoral matters
- Student finance
- Accommodation
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Disabled Students' Allowance
- Careers
- Mitigating/personal circumstances
- Termly bus passes
- Proof of study and council tax exemption
- Local healthcare providers

Getting started

Your time with UCW will begin with Freshers' Week to introduce you to life in Weston. You'll also be eased into your studies with induction activities to help you get to know your partner universities and each other. You'll also meet your lecturers and tutors, who will show you around UCW and tell you about our health and safety and emergency evacuation procedures, and provide your programme handbook, assessment calendar, timetable and access to your Virtual Learning Environment.

It is so important that all of these activities are completed alongside the fun of Freshers' Week. By ensuring that your registration details are correct, funding is in place and our records are complete, we are setting you up to begin your time as a higher education student with all support networks fully functional.

Mental health, wellbeing and student welfare

UCW is committed to promoting positive mental health. We also understand that life does not stop as soon as you start your degree, and that everyone has to overcome obstacles in order to achieve. That's why we offer advice, practical techniques and emotional wellbeing guidance to help you cope with any issues that may be affecting your studies. This support is available throughout your time with us. Our friendly and specialist wellbeing and welfare staff host workshops and provide individual plans and practical techniques in areas such as resilience, mindfulness and stress management. They can also provide non-judgmental advice on any pastoral issues, course concerns, drug or alcohol problems, or money worries. Our welfare and wellbeing staff can also make referrals to Weston College's free and confidential counselling service. Book an appointment with the team by emailing HEART@ucw.ac.uk or texting **07811 750 183**. You can also pop into the HEART office in the Winter Gardens at any time for a chat with them.

Student finance

The HEART team can also assist with student finance queries such as scholarships, bursaries, short-term loans and getting in touch with student finance bodies. Check out the student finance pages on our website for more information, or email finance@ucw.ac.uk if you have a specific query.

Additional support

UCW employs support specialists to ensure our students' specific learning needs are being met. This can include providing assistive technology, study skills support, mentoring and exam access arrangements. They are also able to help students with learning differences, mental health conditions or disabilities to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), which can help them access a personalised package of support. The dedicated Learning Support Team in the HEART offices can provide more information about additional support.

Get in touch with them by calling **01934 411 558**, texting **07891 618 057** or emailing support@ucw.ac.uk.

Support for priority students

UCW is committed to supporting all of our students, but we are able to provide additional support for priority students. We class these as care leavers, young carers, students who live in foyer accommodation and students who are estranged from family. This support can include help with the application process, ongoing support in a number of other ways and guaranteed year-round accommodation.

For more information, please contact:

Clem Williams
clem.williams@ucw.ac.uk or **01934 422 762**

Sam Whitehead
sam.whitehead@ucw.ac.uk or **01934 422 776**

Mitigating/personal circumstances

Sometimes circumstances that are out of your control will prevent you from being able to complete an assignment or sit an exam. In those instances you can apply for deadline extensions due to mitigating/personal circumstances. Please contact HEART as early as you can for guidance on these matters.

Council tax

Full-time students who live by themselves or with other full-time students are exempt from paying council tax. If you are living with non-students, your household may still be eligible for a discount of up to 25%. If you are progressing from a Foundation degree to an Honours Top-up, you will have to pay council tax for the period between one course finishing and the new one starting. Collect your council tax exemption certificate from HEART.

Tutorial system

You have been assigned a Personal Tutor with whom you will have at least three individual progress review sessions throughout the year. You will also be expected to attend regular group seminars so you know about everything going on in your programme. Personal Tutors are also available on an informal basis, and can provide references and help you make informed decisions about your career or future studies.

Peer mentoring

It is normal to feel homesickness and other anxieties about starting higher education, so we have a peer mentor system to help new students settle in. If you need this support from a fellow student, they will act as a positive role model to help you set goals and make positive choices. Mentors can also help you access formal advice and guidance, and are also there if you just need an informal chat about something that is bothering you.

Feedback

Everyone at UCW wants you to reach your potential. You will therefore receive constructive feedback about your submitted work in a structured manner and timely fashion. It is vital to consider these recommendations and devise and implement improvement strategies based upon this advice in order to achieve academic success.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

UCW is committed to engaging with students. We want to foster mutual respect and draw on everyone’s knowledge and experience to continually enhance the student experience. We therefore involve students in the development, delivery and review of our higher education provision.

We engage with students in a variety of ways and offer a range of opportunities for those who wish to represent the student body on key decision-making committees. We take the views of our students seriously. We respond to your opinions, and let you know about any actions taken via meetings and the Virtual Learning Environment. There are also lots of opportunities for students to express their opinions in our questionnaires and through the National Student Survey.

Student Experience Manager

UCW’s Student Experience Manager is your representative on key committees at all levels within the organisation. They ensure your views are listened to and acted upon where appropriate. They are an independent representative for the student body and also another person you can talk to at any time about anything related to life at UCW. The Student Experience Manager can usually be found at the HEART offices and spends time at all of our campuses. You can also email them at HEART@ucw.ac.uk.

UCW Student Charter

The Student Experience and Engagement Officer, following extensive consultation with current and former students, has developed the UCW Student Charter. This outlines our joint responsibilities for your learning and overall experience at UCW.

Student Representative Committees

Student Representative Committee meetings are held once a term. The role of the forum is to discuss the student experience at UCW, examine any concerns and share good practice. The committee also discusses resources and facilities and collates student-led suggestions for improvements.

Staff Student Liaison Committees

Staff Student Liaison Committees focus on academic programme-related matters and demonstrate UCW’s commitment to continually enhancing and improving your learning environment and experience.

Social media

Another great way to keep up-to-date with all the news, events, guest lectures and developments at UCW is to follow and like [@UCWeston](#) on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



GET INVOLVED

There are so many activities for you to participate in. All of our voluntary roles will help you earn the UCW Student Engagement and Achievement (SEA) Award to recognise your contributions and highlight the skills you have developed as a result of your involvement.

If you are interested in any of these roles, speak to a member of the HEART team or send an email expressing your interest to HEART@ucw.ac.uk.

Student Representatives

Each course elects Student Representatives to express the views of the learning group. ‘Reps’ attend Staff Student Liaison Committee and Programme Team meetings to review course-specific academic issues and also Student Representative Committee meetings.

Lead Student Representatives

Lead Student Reps make sure the views of the entire UCW student body are taken into account when we make important decisions about the organisation as a whole. They attend Higher Education Board of Study, Higher Education Governance Committee and Student Representative Committee meetings.

Student Ambassadors

Student Ambassadors represent UCW at events throughout the year such as Open Days and campus visits. They also help UCW with our aspiration-raising events in local primary and secondary schools. Student Ambassadors have to go through a formal application process and are paid an hourly rate on a casual basis, if selected.

Freshers’ Angels

Freshers’ Angels are second and third-year students who manage Freshers’ Week and help our new students get to grips with the social side of life at UCW. The role involves coming up with ideas, organising activities and attending all of the Freshers’ Week events.

National Union of Students

All UCW students will be issued with a University Centre Weston Card, which can be used to get offers and discounts at a range of local shops and entertainment venues. We also encourage you to become involved in the National Union of Students to represent the specific needs of UCW students. Purchase a Totum Card to access offers and discounts from national retailers. Find out more at www.nus.org.uk.



CAREERS SERVICES

Throughout your time at UCW and even after you graduate you will have access to a range of careers services to help you land your dream job.

Our higher education Careers Consultant offers expert advice and guidance to help you prepare for life after UCW. As well as delivering sessions in your classes, she will hold regular CV workshops and is also available on a one-to-one basis to help you explore your career options, understand the graduate job market, and achieve success with employment applications and interviews.

She has also put together a wealth of careers resources on the Virtual Learning Environment, including a job search tool to help you find opportunities suited to your skills and experiences.

www.ucw.ac.uk/careers-coaching

We will encourage you to be proactive and undertake work placements and other extracurricular activities to enhance your CV and gain valuable skills and employment experience. We even offer a number of scholarships to help students undertake unpaid work experience. You'll also be offered the chance to attend careers fairs at our partner universities so you can meet with employers.

Book some time with the UCW Careers Consultant by emailing careers@ucw.ac.uk or phoning **01934 411 104**. They are based in room 019 at the Winter Gardens and also work regularly in room A125 at Loxton Campus.



HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARYPLUS

Our Higher Education LibraryPlus (or HE.LP) team play a big part in our students' learning outcomes. They offer academic study skills support for all UCW students and provide first-year students with the knowhow needed to undertake degree-level research and writing.

Timetabled workshops for all first-year students include:

- An introduction to the HE.LP services and how to access the titles on your reading lists.
- A demonstration of the e-resources (e-journals, e-books and databases) you will be expected to use throughout your course.
- Key skills in reading and notetaking, critical analysis, academic writing, presentations, research methods, revision and exams, time management, reflective reading and writing and digital literacy.
- Everything you need to know about Harvard Referencing and the guidelines you will need to follow to comply with marking criteria on written submissions.

www.ucw.ac.uk/libraryplus



UCW LibraryPlus Team

Far from being a traditional silent library, the LibraryPlus centres at our Knightstone, Loxton and South West Skills Campuses and in the Winter Gardens are vibrant learning locations where students can study, think and create in a relaxed and welcoming environment. You'll find members of our HE.LP team in all of our LibraryPlus sites, including the new LibraryPlus on the ground floor of the Winter Gardens.

Academic Development Lecturers are available to assist you with study skills support and can offer one-to-one and group sessions on all of the HE.LP topics listed adjacent. Look out for HE.LP events, drop-in support and workshops, as well as our collaborative study hub. Academic Development Lecturers are available in the Winter Gardens to assist with both general and specific enquiries. You can ask them about the whereabouts of books and e-resources and they can help with literature searches. They can also take your suggestions for any resources you'd like to see added to the HE.LP collection. Get in touch with the HE.LP team on **01934 411 466** or HELibraryPlus@ucw.ac.uk.

CAMPUSES AND FACILITIES

Winter Gardens

The multimillion-pound University Centre in the Winter Gardens is a state-of-the-art teaching and learning facility. It includes a library, IT suites, seminar spaces and classrooms. The bright and spacious independent learning zones have been designed to promote cross-course collaboration by featuring technology-enabled learning pods. And as a UCW student, you are encouraged to study here as often as you would like during the extended opening hours.

Knightstone Campus

The fifth and sixth floors of Knightstone Campus are exclusively for higher education students. The University Centre has IT suites, a common room, study spaces, classrooms, a hair and make-up studio and a laboratory. Knightstone is also home to a health and fitness suite and other sports facilities, including an indoor sports hall and outdoor all-weather 3G pitch.

Loxton Campus

Loxton Campus is the home of the UCW art, design, film, photography and music degrees, and has all of the specialist equipment and performance and gallery spaces to be expected of a facility dedicated to the creative arts. It takes around 15 minutes on a bus to travel from Loxton Campus to Knightstone Campus and the Winter Gardens. Loxton is also now home to a brand new Health and Active Living Centre, which has a sports hall and full-size 3G pitch.

South West Skills Campus

Our growing number of degree-level engineering courses are based at the South West Skills Campus near Weston Milton railway station. The campus also houses the Weston College Group's Business Enterprise Centre, Construction and Engineering Centre of Excellence and Future Technology Centre.

UCW Academy of Performing Arts

The UCW Academy of Performing Arts on the lower-ground floor of Knightstone Campus was opened by renowned actor Steven Berkoff in 2012 following a £1 million revamp. It has rehearsal and performance spaces, dance studios with fully-sprung floors, a contextual studies classroom and a UCW common room.

Law and Professional Services Academy

The Law and Professional Services Academy is a modern facility across the road from Knightstone Campus. As well as teaching and learning spaces, it has a new dance studio, and accommodation for visiting lecturers and other guests.

Places to eat and drink

All of our campuses have cafés selling a range of nutritious hot and cold food at reasonable prices. There are also Costa Coffee shops in our Knightstone and Loxton Campuses and a Starbucks in the Law and Professional Services Academy. The Grove restaurant at Knightstone Campus is a stylish restaurant managed by students which is open to the public. The Florentine in our Winter Gardens building also sells food and drink at a discounted price for UCW students.

IT suites

Eduroam WiFi enables you to securely access the internet at UCW and participating institutions using your UCW log-in details. We have more than 1,500 computers across our campuses, including laptops and tablets that can be borrowed from our LibraryPlus sites. You have free access to Microsoft Office 365 through your UCW account for the whole time you are enrolled with us. The programs can even be used on the go or at home on your personal devices.



HEART

Winter Gardens
Room 017

Loxton Campus
Room A125

 **01934 411 403**

 **HEART@ucw.ac.uk**

HE.LP

Winter Gardens
LibraryPlus

Loxton Campus
LibraryPlus

 **01934 411 466**

 **HELlibraryPlus@ucw.ac.uk**

LEARNING SUPPORT

Winter Gardens
Room 020

Loxton Campus
Room A125

 **01934 411 558**

 **07891 618 057**

 **support@ucw.ac.uk**

CAREERS SERVICES

Winter Gardens
Room 019

Loxton Campus
Room A125

 **01934 411 104**

 **careers@ucw.ac.uk**

SAFEGUARDING

 **01934 411 464 (out of hours)**

www.ucw.ac.uk