For APRC APRC.13.05.**10**
16th May 2013

Approval of Student Charter for 2013/14

1. Purpose of Paper

APRC is invited ***to consider***, and if thought appropriate, ***to approve*** the Student Charter for the Academic year 2013/14, subject to the inclusion of an additional clause.

2. Proposal

APRC is invited ***to consider*** and, if thought appropriate, ***to approve*** the Student Charter for the Academic year 2013/14, subject to the addition of the following words:

The University defines student engagement as the range of ways in which students are active participants in shaping their learning experience. The University takes deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

3. Background/Consultation

3.1 The University's Student Charter was reviewed and significantly updated prior to promotion and dissemination in the academic year 2012/13.

3.2 The President of the Guild of Students and other relevant officers were consulted and have not suggested any changes to the Student Charter for the academic year 2013/14.

3.3 The opportunity for comments and suggestions has been provided to all students through the Student Portal, but none have been forthcoming.

3.4 In order to ensure that the Student Charter continues to be an appropriate and accurate reflection of the expectations and aspirations of students, the University and the Guild of Students, the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee is the appropriate mechanism to carry out the review of this document on an annual basis.

3.5 In parallel to the consultation outlined in 3.1 – 3.4, it was proposed by Registry that a definition of student engagement be added to the Charter, in order to comply with the recommendation in Chapter B5 of the QAA Quality Code that 'a definition of student engagement may be communicated via a student charter, student contract or similar document'.

3.6 This proposal, and a form of words, was discussed at the Student Reps System Advisory Board (SRSAB), and University Quality Assurance Committee (UQAC). The Guild of Students is represented on both of these committees by the Vice-President (Education) (and also by members of Student Voice and non-sabbatical officers on SRSAB).

3.7 The proposed form of words was ultimately approved at UQAC. Subsequent to this approval, the Director of Student Services was consulted on the addition of this definition to the Charter, and he confirmed that he was content for this to be included.

4. Arguments to Support Proposal

4.1 The Student Charter is a statement of mutual expectations and aspirations and as such is not a legally binding contract; however it is a document that may feature prominently in student circles and possibly nationally, as Student Charters become more apparent across universities.

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4.2 Provision of a definition of student engagement in the student charter would assert the University's commitment to student engagement and would demonstrate compliance with this section of the Quality Code.

4.3 The text of the current Student Charter is included at Appendix A. The full student Charter can be accessed through the University's website at the following link: http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/studentcharter. A statement on the annual review process for the Student Charter is included on this website.

5. Student Charter Website statistics

In the last year (1 March 2012 –28 February 2013), the Student Charter page has had 3529 unique page views. (A unique page view excludes repeat hits to the page during the same visit.) People spent an average of 2 minutes 26 seconds on the page, which suggests they are spending time reading the content. 44% of traffic to this page came via Google, 28% via the Student Portal, and 6% directly (likely through links in emails).

Appendix

The Student Charter

Student responsibilities

All students have a responsibility to:

- Make the most of their programme of study, their University experience and the other opportunities that the University and the Guild of Students have to offer.
- Treat all members of the University community with respect.
- Represent the University as responsible ambassadors through their good conduct on and off campus and ensure their actions have a positive impact on the University and the local and wider community.
- Participate in the University's culture of learning which is based upon critical enquiry, debate and self-motivation.
- Pursue their academic and professional studies in a diligent, honest and responsible manner.
- Engage with the University in formulating their own education and career goals and monitor their progress towards these goals.
- Engage with University initiatives to promote environmental sustainability.
- Comply with the University's policies and procedures.

University responsibilities

The University has a responsibility to ensure all students:

- Can learn within a framework that facilitates their active learning and helps them achieve the outcomes of their programme of study.
- Can make use of appropriate learning resources and support so that they can take responsibility for their own learning, and improve their knowledge, understanding, career development, skills and competencies.
- Will have a personal tutor/supervisor, who will provide regular opportunities to discuss academic assessment, progress and personal development.
- Can receive effective and timely feedback on their academic work.
- Can enjoy a safe place on campus in which to work, live and study and which considers the impact of its activities on the environment and on the local community.
- Can access professional welfare services which are designed to support all students.
- Can benefit from a range of sport and recreational opportunities on campus to improve their overall wellbeing.
- Can obtain clear information on University fees and have access to advice and guidance about student loans, hardship funds and other student funding.
- Can express and debate their views freely within the law.
- Can participate in the Student Representation System.
- Can obtain information on professional and regulatory requirements relevant to their programme of study.

Guild of Students responsibilities

The Guild of Students has a responsibility to:

- As a student led organisation, be the recognised voice of the student body, and campaign on their behalf.
- Provide a safe and enjoyable space for members and offer opportunities for getting involved in societies, student groups, volunteering and safe employment to promote personal development.
- Welcome new and returning students to the University of Birmingham and support them in their transition to and from university.
- Promote the importance of personal safety and wellbeing.
- Strive to improve the quality of life of students and their integration with the local community.
- Give access to free advice on academic, finance, housing, immigration and employment issues.
- Offer support to students in formal University procedures.
- Hold free and fair elections within a democratic structure.
- Conduct business in line with ethical practices and strive to improve services in an open and transparent manner on a continual basis.
- Use resources responsibly in the interest of students and re-invest student spending back into Guild services.