

Student handbook

Introduction

Purpose of this handbook

You will receive several other handbooks at the start of your studies, produced by your faculty and your school, setting out all the essential information regarding your programme of study and the academic requirements. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about all the other aspects of University life – the sources of help and support available to you, the sporting and social opportunities, the catering and leisure facilities and the key regulations applicable to all students.

We hope you will refer to it regularly, throughout your time at Bristol, so that you can take full advantage of all that the University has to offer.

More detailed information on all the topics covered can be found on the University's website, which is updated as changes occur. You should therefore regard the website as the best source of up-to-date information on most topics.

Rights and responsibilities

Please read the small print!

Being a student at the University brings with it both rights and responsibilities. The formal relationship between you and the University is set out in the Student Agreement which you signed up to at registration. This included an undertaking to abide by all the University's rules and regulations. The key rules and regulations are set out in Section 7.

Equality and diversity

The University of Bristol is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive environment, where all students are equally valued and respected, and encouraged to thrive academically. The University values the diversity of the student body and the huge range of experience and perspective that students bring to the institution. The appreciation of diversity and the equitable treatment of all are among the University's core values and underpin the success of the University as a community of scholars. For further information see www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity.

Students' views

The University is keen to ensure that the student experience is a positive one, and seeks feedback from students in a variety of ways:

- feedback forms for individual teaching units
- occasional surveys on specific topics
- system of 'course reps' in each school
- staff/student liaison committees
- student representation on major University committees.

Making your views known can help to bring about improvements, both for you and for future students. Further information about the student rep scheme and how to become a rep is available at www.ubu.org.uk.

What to do if something goes wrong

Although the University does its best to maintain high standards, problems do sometimes occur. If you feel something has gone wrong, please do not suffer in silence – raise your concerns with somebody straight away. The Student Complaints Procedure (see Section 7) gives a list of people you can approach initially to try to resolve the problem informally and also sets out the more formal procedures available to you. There are trained mediators who can assist in certain circumstances. Guidance for those who feel that they have experienced bullying or harassment is available at www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/acceptablebehaviour.

Data Protection

The University keeps paper and electronic records of all its students. The University is the data controller of such student personal data and handles this personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It is a condition of acceptance of a place at the University that students agree that the University may handle their personal data in accordance with the Student Rules and Regulations accessible at www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/dpact.html. Please see www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/dataprotection/individ/students.html for further information about how the University uses student personal data.

Brief facts about the University

The University of Bristol's roots date back to 1876. Since its formation it has become one of the leading institutions among the UK's Russell Group of universities and operates globally, where it is recognised for its research and academic excellence.

There are over 13,000 undergraduate and over 5,000 postgraduate students. The University has over 5,000 academic and support staff.

Management

The University is led by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Eric Thomas, who is the academic leader and chief executive. He is supported by a team that includes the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, three Pro-Vice-Chancellors and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, who is the head of the University's professional services. The Chancellor, the Rt Hon the Baroness Hale of Richmond, is the ceremonial head of the University. She chairs meetings of the University Court and attends some degree congregations to confer degrees.

Academic structure

The University has six faculties covering different broad subject areas, each led by a Dean: Arts, Engineering, Medical and Veterinary Sciences, Medicine and Dentistry, Science, and Social Sciences and Law. Each faculty comprises a number of schools (see Section 7), which are responsible for organising and delivering teaching and research activity. Some schools are subdivided into departments. Each school is managed by an academic Head of School. Although students may study in more than one school, each student belongs to one faculty only, for administrative purposes. Each faculty has a faculty office which handles all the administration for that faculty. Some faculties have separate Graduate Schools.

Mission

The University's aim is to address the world's key challenges through leading-edge research and the education of tomorrow's leaders. The University provides a high quality learning environment for its students, with curricula that are informed by the latest research and delivered by academic staff who are at the forefront of their discipline.

Key dates for 2013/14

Academic year

Monday 23 September 2013-
Friday 13 June 2014

Teaching blocks

On most taught programmes teaching is delivered in two 12-week teaching blocks, each followed by an assessment and marking period. Students on taught programmes are expected to be in attendance throughout these teaching and assessment periods.

Teaching Block 1 (TB1)

Monday 30 September 2013-
Friday 20 December 2013
Assessment period: 13-24 January 2014

Teaching Block 2 (TB2)

Monday 27 January 2014-
Friday 9 May 2014
Revision week: 12-16 May 2014
Assessment period: 19 May-6 June 2014

Vacations

Christmas vacation

Monday 23 December 2013-
Friday 10 January 2014

Easter vacation

Monday 7 April 2014-
Friday 25 April 2014

Summer vacation

Monday 16 June 2014-
Friday 19 September 2014

Degree ceremonies

Spring: 28-31 January 2014
Summer: 11-18 July 2014

For future dates please refer to the University's Almanac at www.bristol.ac.uk/academicregistry/office/almanac/almanac2013-14.html.