

**OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION****Central Executive Committee**

27 – 28 April 2019

**FACILITATION AND SUPPORT PROCEDURE**

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The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **note** and comment on the draft procedure

1. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees in December 2019, members supported the recommendation that facilitation and support interviews should be held for all volunteers and elected post holders who indicate that they have any additional need/s in whatever form that takes. It was suggested that the interview would be conducted by phone or face to face as convenient and would result in an agreement as to what reasonable adjustments can be made to facilitate the student's participation and what support the student can expect from the Association. Any information collected, together with the recorded agreement would be stored centrally in a confidential manner with reference to data protection requirements and available only for relevant staff to refer to when accommodating the student. Having this information on record will ensure consistency of arrangements and approach and moreover will make sure that there is a clear understanding from both parties as to what is required by the student and what can be reasonably provided.
2. The recommendation came in light of a number of challenging situations arising over recent months, a majority related to health issues that hadn't been sufficiently communicated or mental health issues that staff were either unaware of or ill prepared to deal with. In advance of Conference interviews are completed with every student identifying with an additional need and have over a number of years proved a great success with students greatly benefiting from this improved communication, often increasing the confidence of individuals and thereby their ability to take a full part in the event.
3. From a staff point of view, it has become increasingly evident that more students volunteering with the Association have complex needs and require adjustments that need a more detailed conversation to understand what can be reasonably provided and what a student can expect from the students Association in terms of support.

4. It is with reference to the above that the following Facilitation and Support procedure has been drafted:
  1. All volunteer application forms will ask the student if they wish to declare a support need. A tick in the box will trigger staff to send the student access to a facilitation form, together with details about completing this. \*
  2. On receipt of a form (see appendix 1) by the volunteer team, details will be passed to the recruiting team who will arrange a telephone or Skype call with the student – or if more appropriate a face to face or online meeting.
  3. The member of staff will record the detail as expressed by the student – and discuss with the student the nature of their needs and what reasonable adjustments can be made to meet them.
  4. The member of staff will produce a short statement of what has been agreed. This will be shared with the student and appropriate staff to ensure there is a clear understanding between all parties.
  5. The information will be stored in the appropriate manner and notes will be added to the student’s account on the volunteer database allowing staff members to understand that a statement is on record.
  6. Application forms will also ask if a current facilitation form and statement is already on record or if that record needs to be updated.
  7. Interviews will be conducted by staff members properly briefed to do this task. For students expressing mental health or well –being issues, the interview will be carried out by a Mental Health Champion.

\*Alternately a comment box could be available for students to express their facilitation needs without the need to complete a form. Alternately students could request an initial phone call.

5. The Working Group recommend that a pilot exercise is completed with volunteers from the Central Executive Committee in order to understand the value of this exercise, where there might be gaps or oversights in this draft procedure and how the interviews and storage of information will be managed.

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