



UCFB Confidentiality – Student Wellbeing Guidance Statement

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This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact: Quality@ucfb.com

STUDENT VERSION

Confidentiality – Student Wellbeing Guidance Statement

1. Principles

- 1.1 UCFB is committed to treating you with dignity and respect. This includes handling your personal information sensitively, lawfully, and securely.
- 1.2 Our work with you is guided by the Student Agreement, which all students accept at enrolment, and by UCFB policies and procedures..
- 1.3 All your personal information is collected, stored and processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018. Information we hold about you is kept securely, and only accessed by authorised staff when required. Your interactions with Student Support services are normally confidential. This means we will not share information about you without your consent to do so unless there is a legal, safeguarding or serious welfare reason to do so.

This includes the following:

- We do not respond to requests for information from parents, guardians or other third parties (unless covered by a data protection exemption e.g. from the Police). Unless you have given explicit permission in advance, we will refuse such requests.
 - There may be circumstances where the law requires information to be shared, such as for safeguarding purposes, the prevention or detection of crime, or where there is a serious risk to your safety or the safety of others. Staff are required to report safeguarding concerns to the UCFB Safeguarding Team. In some cases, this may lead to information being shared with external agencies such as the Police or Social Services.
 - Relevant information may be shared internally as part of established UCFB processes, such as At Risk, Fitness to Study or Fitness to Practise, where this is necessary to support you or protect the wider student community.
- 1.4 If you are engaging with more than one support service, we may ask for your permission to share relevant information between teams. This helps to ensure that you receive coordinated and effective support.

For example, if you need reasonable adjustments to support your learning it may be beneficial to speak to your Academic Team (such as Course and/or Module Leaders) and/or the Student Administration Team. This will be discussed with you during your registration with the Disability and Learning Support Service; you can specify who you agree for us to contact.

2. Record Keeping

- 2.1 The Student Support Team keeps a secure student record on UCFB's student information system. This record is only accessible to authorised staff members on a need-to-know basis, and you have the right to access your information.

We keep records for the following purposes:

- Contact details - to manage appointments and follow up where necessary
- Statistical purposes - we use anonymised data to inform and improve our services.
- Brief case notes - to record key issues discussed and any agreed actions

- 2.2 You may request to view your student support record at any time. This is usually arranged via an appointment so that any questions or factual corrections can be addressed appropriately.

3. Counselling Practice – Supervision

- 3.1 All Counsellors in the UK are required to have professional supervision from an independent, external consultant, experienced in counselling supervision. This person's role is to ensure that we work ethically and effectively. In Counselling supervision sessions no identifying personal details are given about any of the individuals we work with. The external Supervisor is also bound by a confidentiality code.

4. Student Assistance Programme (SAP)

- 4.1 The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) is an independent service available to all UCFB students. The service is confidential, and information discussed with SAP support workers is not routinely shared with UCFB.
- 4.2 If SAP staff believe that your health, wellbeing, or safety is at imminent risk, or if you request additional support, they may seek your consent to share relevant information with the UCFB Student Support Team.
- 4.3 In exceptional circumstances where consent cannot be obtained, or where consent is refused, information may still be shared where this is necessary to protect your vital interests or the safety of others. This approach is consistent with UCFB policies agreed at enrolment.

STAFF VERSION

Confidentiality – Student Wellbeing Guidance Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This guidance applies across UCFB, including distance and distance (with attendance) courses. Students who are overseas or out-of-residence may not be able to access the full range of welfare services referred to in this guidance, but the general principles will still apply.
- 1.2. The guidance is for **all UCFB staff** involved in supporting students with health, wellbeing, safeguarding, disability support or financial hardship matters where issues of confidentiality may arise. It is intended to promote a consistent, lawful, and proportionate approach to handling individual cases,
- 1.3. For the purposes of this guidance:
 - “Health” includes both physical and mental health
 - “Academic Team” refers to Course Leaders, Module Leaders, and any academic member of staff with whom a student chooses to share personal information.
- 1.4. Staff are required to familiarise themselves with this guidance as part of their induction and ongoing training. Advice may be sought at any time from the Student Support Team.**General Principles - Requirement for confidentiality**

- 2.1. All UCFB staff involved in matters relating to student health, welfare, disability support or financial hardship must comply with our [Privacy Notice](#), GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

- 2.2. Information may be shared:

Within the same service, where necessary, to provide effective support

Between services, where limited to what is relevant and proportionate

Information may be stored on systems that are used by other services; but access will be limited. However, information should not be shared without prior discussion and/or agreement from the student concerned.

- 2.3. Information relating to a student’s health or wellbeing will normally constitute special category personal data and must be treated as confidential. Disclosure requires explicit and informed consent unless an exemption applies.^{2.4} Any member of staff receiving student information through authorised internal channels is equally bound by this guidance. Where there is uncertainty about sharing information, advice must be sought from the Student Support Team before proceeding.^{2.5}
Most UCFB students are adults (aged 18 or over). Their personal information must not be disclosed without consent, except where legally or ethically justified.

- 2.6. Those advising students must consider at the outset of a discussion to clarify whether this content is confidential and the extent of any confidentiality which applies to any disclosures. When discussing confidentiality with students, the following should be made clear:
- Confidentiality will be respected wherever possible;
 - Consent will normally be sought before information is shared;
 - There are limited circumstances in which information might be shared with a third party, e.g. taking account of the vital interests of others, or where an individual lacks capacity to give consent.
- 2.7 Students should normally be encouraged to share relevant personal information to others where it is in their interests to do so for example where adjustments or academic support may be appropriate.
- 2.8 All staff have a duty to report safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Team who may be obliged by law to report to external bodies such as the Police or Social Services. Please refer to the [Safeguarding Policy](#) for further information.

3. Seeking Consent

- 3.1. Where information needs to be shared with a third party, staff should seek the student's explicit consent, ideally in writing. Where written consent cannot be obtained, the rationale and details must be recorded on the student record, and confirmation should normally be provided to the student via email or letter.
- 3.2. In exceptional circumstances, information may need to be disclosed without consent. This may arise where UCFB has overriding obligations, for example:
- Risk of serious harm to the student or others
 - Safeguarding duties
 - Legal requirements following disclosure from external agencies such as the Police or Local Authority Designated Officers

Such decisions must involve careful consideration and advice must be sought from the Student Support Management Team and/or the Director of Student and Academic Services. Please refer to the [Safeguarding Policy](#) for further information in relation to safeguarding and PREVENT obligations.

- 3.3. A member of staff who receives information that has been given in confidence, or acquires information which they believe to be confidential, may not always be sure whether they should disclose this information or not. In these circumstances you must seek advice from a member of the Student Support Management Team or Director of Student and Academic Services. This consultation should be done without divulging the name of the student concerned.

4. Wellbeing Discussions

- 4.1 Staff should not give absolute assurances of confidentiality in wellbeing discussions.
- 4.2. It may be appropriate for UCFB staff to consult other professionals in relation to a student's wellbeing. The student's consent should normally be obtained.
- Where consent is refused, general advice may be sought without identifying the student. In exceptional circumstances external health professionals, Disability Advisors or Counsellors may wish to speak to a member of the UCFB Student Support Team or Academic Team about a student. If the student is unwilling to consent, confidentiality will be respected unless there is an exemption under the relevant professional or legal guidelines.
- 4.3 Where NHS staff contact UCFB as part of hospital discharge planning, information may only be shared with student consent. Students will often recognise that such information-sharing is in their best interests.

5. Request from a third party, including family members

- 5.1 There may be times when family members (including parents, guardians or other third parties) contact UCFB requesting information relating to a student. UCFB does not disclose personal information to parents, guardians, or other third parties unless the student has provided explicit consent or a legal exemption applies.
- 5.2 Staff should respond to third-party enquiries politely and clearly, explaining that confidentiality prevents disclosure.
- 5.3 Where family members raise welfare concerns, staff should provide general information about available support services. Staff should encourage family members to support the student in seeking help directly. Information provided by third parties will not normally be acted upon unless risk is indicated.
- 5.4 Where a third party provides information indicating serious risk of harm, staff must act on that information and must advise the third party that anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

6. Contact by UCFB with a third party, including family members

- 6.1. UCFB will normally only contact a third party where the student has provided written consent.
- 6.2 Contact without consent requires authorisation from the Director of Student and Academic Services or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.
- 6.3. Exceptional circumstances where contact with a third party or family member without the consent of a student may be justified include:
- Physical incapacity (e.g. unconsciousness following an accident)

- Lack of mental capacity as professionally assessed under the Mental Capacity Act

Where capacity is intact, and risk to self is present, a student's wish not to contact family members must normally be respected. In rare cases of exceptional pressure or escalating risk, contacting the named emergency contact may be considered.**7.**

Requests from the Police

- 7.1 There may be times when UCFB are contacted by the Police for information about a student.
- 7.2 Disclosure will only take place where a legal basis exists, such as prevention of crime or terrorism, or where non-disclosure would seriously prejudice an investigation.7.3 All Police requests must be referred immediately to the Student Support Management Team and/or Director of Student and Academic Services.

8. Students on courses accredited by professional bodies

- 8.1 Students on professionally accredited courses may be subject to additional codes of conduct and fitness to practise procedures which are intended to protect the public.
- 8.2 Concerns regarding the health and wellbeing of such students should be discussed with the Student Support Management Team.
- 8.3 Specific advice on the requirements of the professional body concerned may be sought from the relevant Course Leader without divulging the name of the student. The professional body may also be approached for generic guidance on its requirements.
- 8.4 If it appears to the Student Support Management Team that the health or behaviour of a student may be in breach of a code of conduct and/or fitness to practise procedure of a professional body, the Head of Student Support must refer the case to the Director of Student and Academic Services for consideration of appropriate next steps to take.

9. Behavioural and emotional concerns

- 9.1 Concerns indicating risk to self must be reported immediately to the Student Support Team, who will discuss these concerns directly with the student and follow all appropriate processes including record keeping.
- 9.2 Where there is imminent and serious danger, emergency services must be contacted. Where possible, the advice of the Student Support Management Team or Director of Student and Academic Services should also be obtained.
- 9.3. Where a student's behaviour is reasonably considered to pose a risk to others, those advising the student should consider if the vital interests of others are affected. Where possible, the advice of the Student Support Management Team or Director of Student and Academic Services should be obtained.

- 9.4 Where behaviour causes significant concern but does not indicate immediate risk, staff should seek guidance from the Student Support Management Team to ensure consistency of approach.

10. Discipline and ill health

- 10.1 UCFB procedures may apply where ill health intersects with disciplinary matters. Any sharing of sensitive data must comply with relevant UCFB policy and statutory obligations.

11. Professional and operational obligations

- 11.1 All student counselling services must abide by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice. Confidentiality remains with the staff of Student Support services and information will not normally be conveyed to others without permission.
- 11.2 The Disability and Learning Support Service shares information only with the student's consent.
- 11.3 Students are encouraged to speak to their Academic Team about any issue that may be concerning them, especially if they think that it might affect their academic work. They are also welcome to approach any member of the Student Support Team. The Student Support Team operates independently of Academic Teams. Information is only shared with academic staff where consent has been obtained.

12. Under 18s

- 12.1 Separate considerations may apply to students under the age of 18. Advice should be sought from the UCFB Safeguarding Team. Further detail is available in the UCFB Safeguarding Policy.

13. Complaints

- 13.1 If a student wishes to make a formal complaint or appeal that cites services provided by the Student Support Team, the service may disclose information relevant to the complaint or appeal to the relevant officer. All complaints should be dealt with under the UCFB Complaints Policy.
- 13.2 Where legal action or external review (e.g. OIA or validating partner) occurs, relevant service information may be disclosed,