

# **Information Guide for Carers of The University of Western Australia students**

This Information Guide has been developed as a resource for unpaid carers of The University of Western Australia (UWA) students who have medical conditions and/or disability.

This Guide is also applicable to external support persons who are employed (through sources other than UWA) to provide non-academic supports to UWA students with medical conditions and/or disability.

## **Who are carers and external support persons?**

A carer is defined in the Western Australian Carers Recognition Act 2004 as “a person who provides ongoing care, support and assistance to a person with disability, a chronic illness (which includes mental illness) or who is frail, without receiving a salary or wage for the care they provide”.

An external support person can be unpaid or paid (usually through a disability service organisation) to provide individualised support including:

- Personal care and domestic assistance
- Community and social participation support
- Travel and transport service
- Life skills training
- Transition and future planning support

## **Introduction**

Australia has over 2.6 million people who are unpaid carers for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, or those who are frail aged.

UWA acknowledges the important role that carers have in looking after their family member or friend and providing needed support, often for many years. For some students, the presence of a carer or external support person is essential for the student's health and safety or meeting personal care needs while on campus. In many instances, the student would not be able to attend university if it wasn't for the assistance provided by their carer or external support person.

With the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of UWA students who will be attending university with their carers and/or external support persons. To help ensure that this is a positive experience for each student, UWA has outlined below important considerations on the roles and responsibilities of the University, and of the carers/external support persons.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Health and Safety**

The University aims to ensure compliance with legislation, industry standards and best practices. It does this through providing information, instruction, training and supervision as required to ensure safe systems of work. In relation to carers and external support persons, this may include providing and/or requiring completion of appropriate health and safety training for both the student and their carer/external support person prior to working in certain environments such as, a laboratory class or attending a field trip.

Where a carer or external support person is attending a university space with a student outside of formal teaching hours they are required to comply with any relevant university policies or requirements as they would apply to the student. This includes having completed any relevant health and safety training or approval

processes prior to accessing the area. The carer or external support person is to only remain in the area with the student whilst the student is present.

In the event of an evacuation drill or emergency situation, carers/external support persons and students should follow the instructions of University staff.

Carers/external support persons should ensure that they dress appropriately at all times and that their clothing and footwear meet the occupational health and safety requirements. If unsure about dress codes, please ask the unit coordinator.

### **Insurance cover**

Unpaid carers are considered to be third parties, not students or staff members of the University, and would only be covered by UWA's insurance for injury where the University is liable in causing injury.

Paid external support persons should have insurance cover. Generally, the University would expect organisations who fund support workers, to effect and maintain with a reputable insurance company:

- a) public liability insurance for an amount not less than twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000\*) in respect of any one claim;
- b) workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the provisions of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 (WA), including cover for common law liability for an amount of not less than fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000\*) for any one occurrence in respect of workers of the third party organisation.

\*These amounts were current as at early 2018

### **Responsibilities of Carers/External support persons**

Students who will be accompanied by carers/external support persons on campus need to register with UniAccess prior to the commencement of semester, preferably several weeks before semester commences. UniAccess and/or the students should email their unit coordinators prior to the commencement of semester to advise that the students will have a carer/external support person accompanying them in class who will be providing them with non-academic support. Letting the unit coordinators know in advance, enables the unit coordinators to give consideration to matters such as venue capacity, safety equipment, access to certain restricted areas of campus, and other special approval that the carer/external support person may also require.

When students are accompanied by carers/external support persons on campus, UWA asks that the carers/external support persons introduce themselves to teachers, exam invigilators and others in authority, as appropriate, to ensure that they are aware of the carers/external support persons presence. When introducing yourselves, you do not need to disclose personal information about the student nor provide a detailed rationale for being in class. A sample phrase you could use is, "Hello, I am Pat. I am supporting Alex today".

It is important that attending and studying at university is the most normal experience for students who have carers/external support persons. To facilitate this, UWA asks that carers /external support persons be as unobtrusive as possible.

### **Participation in class and other activities**

Carers/external support persons do not have student status and therefore cannot participate in class or group discussions or activities unless this is specific to their role and has been agreed with the University via UniAccess, UWAs Disability Office. A carer/external support person should also not attend classes as a proxy for a student.

It is important that teacher communication is with the student unless the student gives permission for communication to also be with his or her carer/external support person. For example, a student who has selective mutism may choose to have their carer/external support person regularly included in communication.

### **Participation in exams and tests**

All UWA students who require the support of a carer or external support person during a test or exam need to be registered with UniAccess. UniAccess can be contacted at: [uniaccess@uwa.edu.au](mailto:uniaccess@uwa.edu.au) or Tel. 6488 2423

If you provide support to a student who is sitting UWA tests or exams:

- Please attend the test/exam venue prior to the start of the test/exam and make yourself known to the test/exam supervisor. The test/exam venue door may be locked so please knock to gain entry.
- During the test/exam, all communication must be in your role as carer and directly related to the student's care needs. Other direct communication between yourself and the student will not be permitted.
- No food is to be consumed inside the test/exam venue. Water is permitted.
- Please ensure that all electronic devices are turned off while you are inside the test/exam venue.
- During the test/exam, should the student have a query or issue, the student should attract the attention of the supervisor.
- Please be aware that in an exam, the unit coordinators for the units being examined may visit the venue at the beginning of, or early in the exam, to provide students with the opportunity to ask questions. If your role includes supporting the student with communication, then you may wish to be present in the exam/test venue when the unit coordinator is there.

### **Supported decision making**

Where a student has a need for supported decision making due to an ongoing or episodic health condition or disability, the role of the student's carer and/or external support persons while on campus needs to be clarified and agreed upon with the University via UniAccess. Ideally this clarification should occur several weeks prior to the commencement of semester.

### **Code of conduct**

Students and carers/external support persons will be expected to abide by the University's code of conduct and other policies.

It is important that the privacy of all students is respected and that confidentiality is maintained at all times. At University you may be privy to classroom discussions where personal or commercial information has been shared. While not always

explicitly stated, this information has usually been disclosed on the basis that it remains confidential.

### **Complaints**

The University has a documented process for handling student grievances and complaints. Please see the University Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

If a carer/external support person has a complaint, advice can be sought from the University's Complaint Resolution Unit. The carer/external support person can also raise issues with UniAccess, UWAs Disability Office.

### **Assistance provided through UWA**

**UniAccess** staff provide a range of services and supports to UWA students who have a medical condition and/or a disability to assist the students with their studies at UWA. UniAccess staff have a comprehensive knowledge of medical conditions and disability in relation to their effects on students' abilities to successfully undertake study. The service is confidential. Once a student has provided UniAccess with documentation of his/her condition, the student can receive assistance without having to disclose his/her condition to others in the university.

UniAccess can also assist students who are recognised carers of a person with a disability or medical condition.

UniAccess can be contacted on [uniaccess@uwa.edu.au](mailto:uniaccess@uwa.edu.au) or by phoning Student Wellbeing reception on 6488 2423.

**Counselling and Psychological Services** are available for students with academic or personal concerns. Psychologists with the service understand issues faced by university students and offer confidential, free counselling. Find out more at: [www.counselling.uwa.edu.au](http://www.counselling.uwa.edu.au)

**StudySmarter** is a service that helps UWA students get more out of their writing, maths, study, English language and research skills. Find out more at: [www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au](http://www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au)

**Chaplaincy** – UWA has Christian and Muslim Chaplains who are committed to supporting students in a multi-faith environment. Find out more at: [www.spirituallylife.uwa.edu.au](http://www.spirituallylife.uwa.edu.au)

The University also has a **medical centre** located on the second floor of the Guild Village. Female and male doctors as well as nursing staff are available for consultation. Students who have a Medicare card can be bulk billed. Find out more at: [www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/ss/medical](http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/ss/medical)

UWA's professional Student Assist Officers within the Student Guild provide independent, impartial support and advocacy on a range of academic, financial and welfare matters. The Student Assist services are free for all UWA students. The Student Guild is independent from the University and all advice is confidential. Find out more at: [www.uwastudentguild.com/assist](http://www.uwastudentguild.com/assist)