

Student Carer Plan

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Student Carer Plan

Statement of intent for students with unpaid **caring responsibilities**:

*"As a University community we are committed to the belief that anyone with the **talent and potential** to succeed should have the opportunity to attend university, regardless of their place of birth, personal circumstances or socio-economic status."*

Edinburgh Napier University Widening Participation Strategy, 2016-2020, p.3

The publication of this document marks the first occasion where Edinburgh Napier University outlines our institutional commitment to promote higher education to individuals who hold unpaid caring responsibilities. Student carers were identified as an under-represented group in our ambitious *Widening Participation Strategy 2016-2020*, with this document reaffirming our commitment to increasing access, participation and success of students with unpaid caring responsibilities in their home life. The principle of fairness in access to higher education is the cornerstone of Edinburgh Napier University's ethos and we continue to promote greater opportunities, enhance support, remove barriers and develop targeted initiatives to support individuals with caring responsibilities within the university community.

The aim of this document **is to define the term student carer**, to outline pre-entry and in-study **support available**, and to promote Edinburgh Napier University as a higher education institution who **welcomes, respects** and **supports** individuals with added caring responsibilities. Students with unpaid caring responsibilities enrich our University community and, like all our students, display great talent, ability and aspirations to succeed in higher education - an aspiration the University proudly also holds.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 became law on 1st April 2018 with the legislation aiming to 'promote, defend and extend the rights' of adult and young carers across Scotland. This new Act introduced carer a support plan for adults and a young carer statement for individuals under 18 years of age. Carer plans and carer statements provide an opportunity for universities to work ever closer with individuals and agencies to promote higher education through sharing of information, for example this *Student Carer Plan*, information concerning entry requirements, college routes to university, study support and funding, university named contact details and information on open days.

The University's *Corporate Plan* sets the core values, namely, Professional, Innovative, Ambitious, Inclusive, for which we consider the pillars to meeting our ambitious aims. This document uses these core values, in addition to the commitments outlined in our *Widening Participation Strategy 2016-2020*, to create this Student Carer Plan. During the consultation phase current university students, young carer groups from the Lothians and Fife such as Edinburgh Young Carers Project and the Edinburgh-based Broomhouse Centre Young Carers, advocate organisations such as Carers Trust Scotland amongst other stakeholders contributed to the shaping of this Plan. Published guidance from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), Edinburgh Joint Carers' Strategy and recent Scottish Government legislation (Carers Act (Scotland) 2016) were similarly influential in shaping this document.

Our Ambitions

Objectives - in delivering this Plan the University aims to:

- Increase the number of students with unpaid caring responsibilities matriculating onto a degree programme;
- Make early contact with students declaring their caring responsibilities (at application or matriculation stages);
- Share this Student Carer Plan with all eligible students, and with those individuals or professionals who support them, at application, matriculation or in-study stages;
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the progression, retention and success of our student carers internally, and more widely;
- Collaborate with relevant advocate organisations, university and college partners, and local authorities through the CEECEF (Care Experienced, Estranged, Carers East Forum) group and on an institutional basis to further develop the support offering for student carers to access higher education, and to celebrate their successes;
- Work towards Edinburgh Napier University being recognised as a welcoming educational home for students with caring responsibilities, and to provide equitable opportunities to succeed.

Outcomes - in delivering this Plan the University seeks to:

- Facilitate early engagement by taking a proactive approach to reach-out to student carers at the earliest opportunity and to document tailored support provided;
- Disseminate information regarding the University's adjusted 'minimum' admissions policy more widely to highlight the holistic approach taken when considering applicants with unpaid caring responsibilities with an emphasis on providing targeted information to those who assist in preparing 'Young Carer Statements' and 'Adult Carer Support Plans';
- Continue to offer guidance to unsuccessful applicants to support positive further and higher education destinations through to promotion of appropriate alternative routes;
- Work ever closer with our regional and national college partners to augment existing routes into the University;
- Contribute to the sectoral conversation on access to, and success in, higher education for under-represented groups including student carers;
- Create an educational environment which not only promotes access to higher education but also supports measurable continued participation, retention and success in line with global university data;
- Establish systems to support students who take on caring responsibilities during their studies to identify themselves and to receive guidance and support where appropriate.

Summary of Actions - to implement this Student Carer Plan we will:

- Implement in full our Widening Participation Strategy to increase the number of student carers joining the University community, and to document access, success and retention;
- Promote articulation, and other access routes, for student carers studying at college and to develop bespoke initiatives to facilitate greater progression to university;
- Disseminate training and information material through University electronic communication and in-print resources to the student and staff bodies;
- Continue to work closely with regional and national advocacy organisations to host on-campus events;
- Raise awareness for students to declare their caring status during their studies, and to provide support where this occurs;
- Continue to create bespoke webpage content for student with unpaid careering roles.

Student Carer Definition

A carer is an individual who provides unpaid supportive care to another person in their home life for a consistent period of time on a regular or irregular basis that fluctuates around the needs of another. Not to be confused with care professionals in paid employment who support others or parental responsibilities which do not include additional care aspects due to health or other factors, carers provide support in their own time which otherwise would require paid-for care professionals. At Edinburgh Napier **all carers, irrespective of age can avail of pastoral support, flexible study options and named contact support at any stage: from pre-entry to on-course.** For the purpose of the University's **Admissions Policy** contextual, minimum offers are only available to students applying with Higher qualifications:

"a student carer is an individual who gives physical or emotional support, on a regular basis, to someone who could not manage without such support. This could be for a relative, partner or friend who has a long-term physical or mental illness, addiction, disability or is too frail to look after themselves."

Introduction

At Edinburgh Napier University we are acutely aware that many young people have to overcome substantial barriers prior to getting to the stage to apply, or to start, a degree programme. Research suggests there are 759,000 individuals, or 17% of the population, aged 16+ in Scotland with an unpaid caring role in their home or in a community setting – a role that if not undertaken by an unpaid carer would require a paid carer to fulfil (Scottish Government, 2015). An estimated 29,000 young carers under the age of 16 are completing such caring roles daily. A figure which represents 4% of the children and young people aged 16 years or younger in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015). Daily caring tasks and responsibilities commonly include activities which can affect emotional and physical wellbeing for the carer, and for a young person in fulltime education this can affect educational attainment. Carers Trust Scotland highlights aspects of being a young carer which affects how one grows up, including:

- It can affect a young person's health, social life, self-confidence and mental health;
- Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring which can cause pressure and stress;
- Facilitating feelings of isolation - 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role;
- 26% have been bullied at school because of their caring role;
- 1 in 20 miss school because of their caring role.

Daily caring responsibilities often form a routine without respite for the carer and according to guidance provided by Carers Trust Scotland may include, but is not limited to:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping;
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed;
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed;
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress;
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions;
- Helping to give medicine;
- Helping someone communicate;
- Looking after siblings and/or oneself.

These additional responsibilities have the potential to affect educational attainment and as such this Student Carer Plan aims to support learners on their journey into higher education and during their time at Edinburgh Napier University.

Edinburgh Napier University Support for Student Carers

Edinburgh Napier University has successfully delivered initiatives to support the transition to higher education for a range of under-represented groups including students with unpaid caring responsibilities. **Applicants and students who self-identify as carers** have access to a dedicated member of staff to offer guidance from application, transition into and moving on stages of their Edinburgh Napier University journey. Widening Participation groups, including student carers, are identified as eligible to receive a 'contextual' offer when **applying with SQA Higher qualifications** under the University's 'minimum' admissions policy as outlined in the *Widening Participation Strategy 2016-2020* (p. 4) and *Edinburgh Napier University Policy for Contextual Admissions* (updated in June 2019) (please refer to appendix 1 for details on contextual offers).

Adjusted Admissions Policy

Edinburgh Napier University is committed to promoting fair access to higher education as demonstrated by our 'minimum offers' admissions policy with individuals with unpaid caring responsibilities considered eligible to receive an adjusted offer when applying with SQA Higher qualifications from school (Edinburgh Napier University Policy for Contextual Admissions, 2019).

Minimum offer details:

- **Typically 2 grades below** our standard SQA Higher entry requirements published on our website. E.g. if the published standard entry requirement is ABBB, a minimum (formerly known as 'contextual') offer holder would be required to achieve Higher grades at BBBC (or equivalent). Please note where the entry requirements include a required subject, for example a National 5 Mathematics qualification, this subject must still be achieved at the stated grade.
- For minimum offer holders we will 'double count' SQA Highers and Advanced Highers when calculating a student's achievement.
Accepted grades for the purposes of admission are SQA Higher grade C or Advanced Higher grade D or better.

If unsure about Edinburgh Napier University's minimum offer admissions policy, or for degree programme specific entry requirements, please contact the Student Carer Contact (Peter) by emailing p.tormey@napier.ac.uk or the University's Admissions team.

Minimum Admissions Policy in Practice

A school-leaver with unpaid caring responsibilities applying with SQA Higher qualifications is eligible to receive a minimum offer. For example, they are applying for *International Hospitality Management*. **They already have achieved BCCC Higher grades in S5.** The applicant will now typically receive an *Unconditional Offer*. The published **minimum entry grades are BBBC**. As an applicant eligible to receive a minimum offer, the Admissions team will offer a place on the degree programme subject to achieving the entry requirements 2 grades below this published minimum (BCCC Higher grades). If these specific requirements are achieved, an unconditional offer will be made with the applicant then having the option to accept this offer to study.

Minimum Offer Admissions Policy Conditions

The University's unpaid carer **Admissions Policy requires self-declaration at the earliest possible time when applying with SQA Higher qualifications**. Typically this means when applying through UCAS either by ticking the 'Carer' box or by declaring unpaid caring role in the personal statement section or on a referee's report. As per the University Admissions Policy guidelines, supporting documentation may be requested prior to an offer to study being made. **Applicants who declare their unpaid caring roles after an offer to study has been made or after an application has been rejected will be requested to include one of the following supporting documents to avail of a minimum offer:**

- Receipt of receiving the [Department of Work and Pensions Carer's Allowance](#);
- Receipt of receiving the [Scottish Government's Young Carer Grant](#);
- A signed or stamped letter confirming you have accessed or are a member of a dedicated support service such as Edinburgh Young Carers, Broomhouse Centre Young Carers, West Lothian Carers, Fife Young Carers, Local Authority run service or similar;
- Submission of a [Young Carer Statement](#) or [Carer Support Plan](#);
- A letter from a teacher, head teacher, guidance counsellor or an appropriate member of staff from a school or college to confirm unpaid young carer status (which affected attainment and/or attendance).

Please note, as with all conditional offers to study, the University reserves the right to request additional information. Offers are made based on information provided at the time an application is submitted. A change of applicant status or conditional offers to study might not be considered after this point. Contextual minimum offers are not applied to Higher National qualifications such as HNC/D or SWAP Access courses such as Access to Nursing.

Working with Partner Education Institutions to aid Better Transitions

Edinburgh Napier University has a long record of partnership working with regional and national colleges to support the Scottish Government's national articulation targets, with the University the largest recruiter of articulation students in the South-East of Scotland. The University will utilise existing college networks to develop and promote bespoke guidance to the 10,653 learners with caring responsibilities within the college sector in Scotland (SFC, College Region Outcome Agreements: Summary of Progress and Ambitions report 2018). The *Data and Reporting* section of this Plan illustrates significant numbers of Edinburgh Napier's students with unpaid caring roles joining the University from college, this is particularly true for students studying nursing degree programmes within the School of Health and Social Care.

Similarly, representation at respective Young Carer Co-Ordinator groups within the Edinburgh, Lothians and Fife regions will continue as a key activity to build relationships, share knowledge and shape University practices to best support individuals with unpaid caring responsibilities.

Financial Support

The Student Funding team provide tailored guidance based on personal circumstances and financial need. The Student Funding team always look to support students wherever possible in a timely and convenient manner, for further details please click [here](#) to be directed to the funding website. Alternatively the student carer contact (Peter: p.tormey@napier.ac.uk, see contact details on the cover page) can assist with requesting information on an individual's behalf.

The Student Funding team can be contacted by emailing: studentfunding@napier.ac.uk

One to One Support

For students who have little or no prior experience or knowledge of university life, many elements of the transition from school or college to university may be unfamiliar or daunting. The University offers a student carer contact from the point of application onwards, giving students the opportunity to have their questions addressed in an informal setting, ensuring students have someone who can signpost them to appropriate services from application through to graduation, or at any stage along a learner's journey during their studies.

For example car parking concessions or assistance with flexible timetabling can be achieved on a case by case basis. Queries are welcomed, please find contact details on the cover of this document (Peter: p.tormey@napier.ac.uk).

All Edinburgh Napier Students are assigned an academic lead known as a Personal Development Tutor (PDT) to assist with academic and degree programme queries. In most cases a student's PDT is a known lecturer. PDT information and contact details can be found on e-student records (for students enrolled at Edinburgh Napier University):

<https://my.napier.ac.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Nursing & Midwifery Student Support

In addition to the support of the Widening Participation team and the dedicated name contact, students with unpaid caring roles studying in the School of Health and Social Care can also avail of the support from the Pastoral Advisor, Kev Head.

Kev provides expert dedicated support to all nursing and midwifery students and can be contacted by emailing k.head@napier.ac.uk.

Student Wellbeing & Support

The University's Student Wellbeing and Support teams provide assistance to all Edinburgh Napier's students in a number of areas:

- ❖ Counselling and Wellbeing
- ❖ Disability Inclusion
- ❖ Student Funding
- ❖ Chaplaincy
- ❖ Keeping on Track (of studies)

Information and contact details on all these areas and much more information can be found on the Student and Wellbeing webpages: <https://bit.ly/3axT99o>

Carer Support Outside the University

Support for individuals with unpaid caring responsibilities may fluctuate and change over time but support is always available when needed. National and regional organisations provide expert advice, guidance and support to those with caring responsibilities in their home life – Edinburgh Napier has relationships with many of these organisations, working together to refer and signpost queries and information.

Group	Description of Group or Support	Contact Details
Carers Trust Scotland	National advocacy organisation	https://carers.org/our-work-in-scotland/support-services
Vocal	Support for adult carers in Edinburgh & Midlothian	https://www.vocal.org.uk/
Edinburgh Young Carers	Support for young carers in North East Edinburgh	https://www.youngcarers.org.uk/
Broomhouse Centre Young Carers	Support for young carers in the South West of Edinburgh	https://www.broomhousecentre.org.uk/our-projects/young-carers/
Fife Young Carers	Support for young and young adult carers aged 8-25 in Fife	https://www.fifeyoungcarers.co.uk/
Carers of West Lothian	Support for adult and young adult carers in West Lothian	https://carers-westlothian.com/contact/

Many colleges and schools have dedicated policies and coordinators to support students, pupils and staff with caring roles so it is often worth exploring support available at places of study and work. At Edinburgh Napier University we support those with caring responsibilities who study and have applied to study with us through the measures set out within this Carers Plan and dedicated named contact support. Staff are also supported through a colleagues' Carers Network Group supported in part by Vocal Edinburgh amongst other internal and external individuals and groups.

Student Carer Data and Reporting

Since the academic year 2019/20, Edinburgh Napier University collects unpaid carer data on enrolment through a self-declaration option on the student matriculation questionnaire. Previously, unpaid caring roles of students were captured under a 'caring responsibility' question which grouped those with parental responsibilities with those with unpaid roles. At present self-declarations of caring roles is captured at application stage, enrolment and returning student matriculations stages in addition to those who declare their caring role on-course to the dedicated contact.

Enrolment data is presented below. This data will be used for analysis in future years and should be considered as descriptive data in the context of setting baseline measures. It is hoped, and anticipated, that activities such as the publication of this Carers Plan in addition to outreach and relationship building work, will result in an increase in the number of students declaring their caring roles in future academic years, as too will the accuracy of the data.

Figure 1, below, illustrates the number of student carers by University School at Edinburgh Napier University. The majority of Napier's unpaid student carers study a School of Health & Social Care (SHSC) degree programme, for example nursing or midwifery courses. In total, over half (52 out of 102) self-declared unpaid student carers at Edinburgh Napier University in the 2019/20 academic years study a SHSC degree programme.

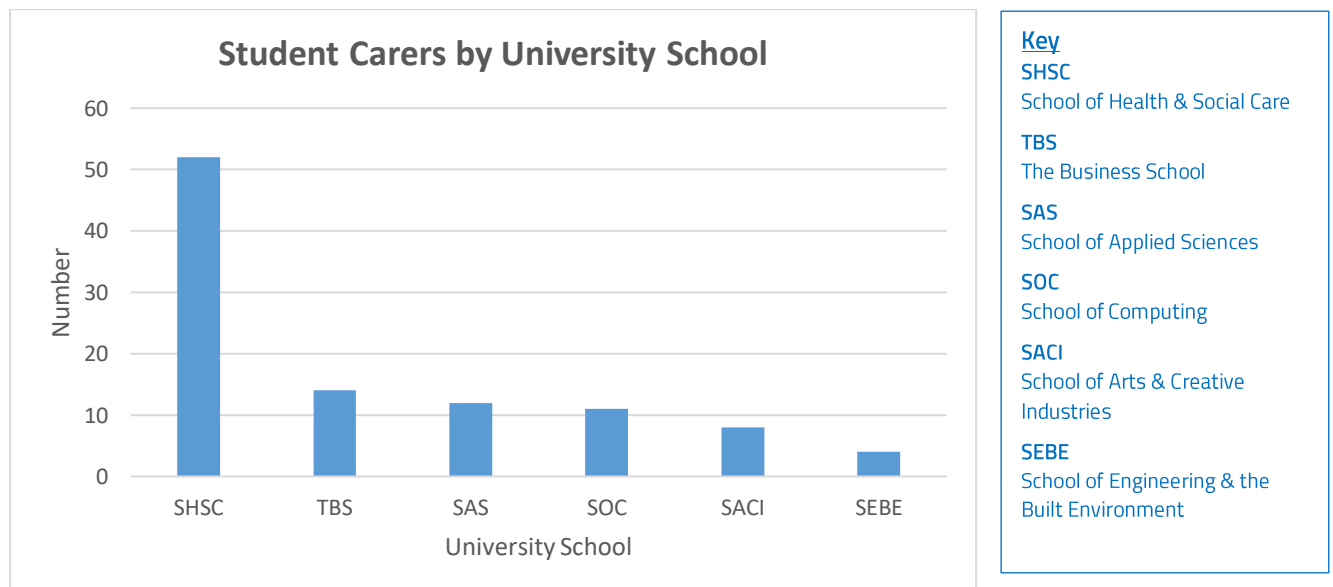


Figure 1. Self-declared student carers by University school for the academic year 2019/20. Data collected at student enrolment (n=101*) (* not displayed is one student studying an online degree programme).

Students with caring responsibilities show a relatively even spread across age bands, as demonstrated in figure 2 below. Those aged 18-20 years account for almost a quarter (n=24) of the 102 self-declared carers enrolled at Edinburgh Napier in the 2019/20 academic year. Further analysis of data shows that significant numbers of 1st year entrants who joined the University did so from college, enrolling onto a School of Health & Social Care degree programme with the majority of these students 20 years of age and older (43 of 47 1st year students were aged 20+ years).

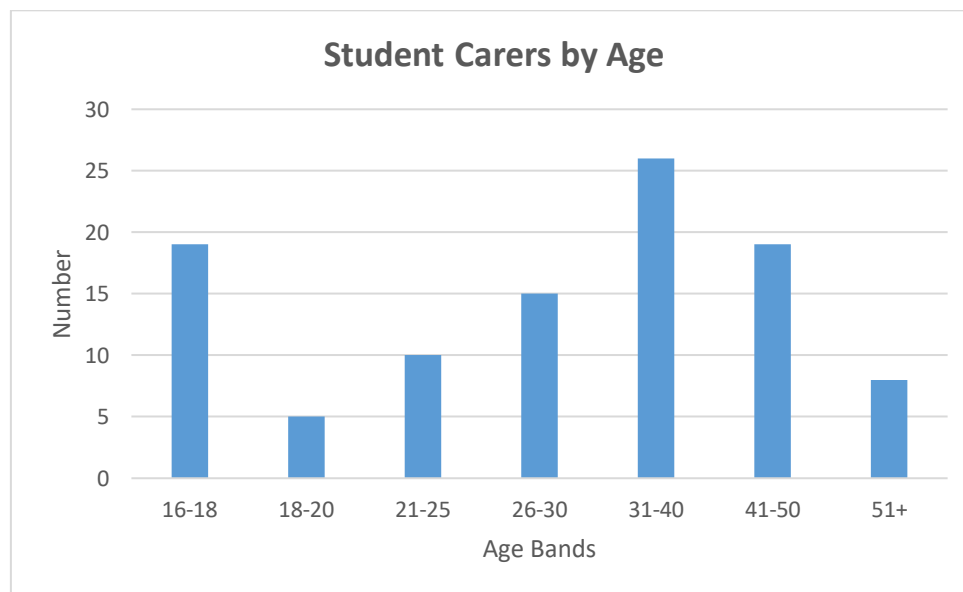


Figure 2. Self-declared student carers by age for the academic year 2019/20. Data collected at student enrolment (n=102).

The majority of student carers joining a University programme in the academic year 2019/20 enrolled onto the first year of a degree, as outlined in figure 3. As discussed previously in the context of the School of Health and Social Care (figure 2), the vast majority of student carers starting in first year progressed through a college route either into first, second or third year (n= 57 of 79 entrants). This information is key as the University's contextual minimum offer extends to school leavers applying with Higher qualifications and does not include those applying through other articulation or widening access routes which typically take place at college. For example, Access to Nursing programmes or Higher National Diploma/Certificate (HNC/D) are considered as widening participation routes and as such contextual offers are not typically applied to offers to study.

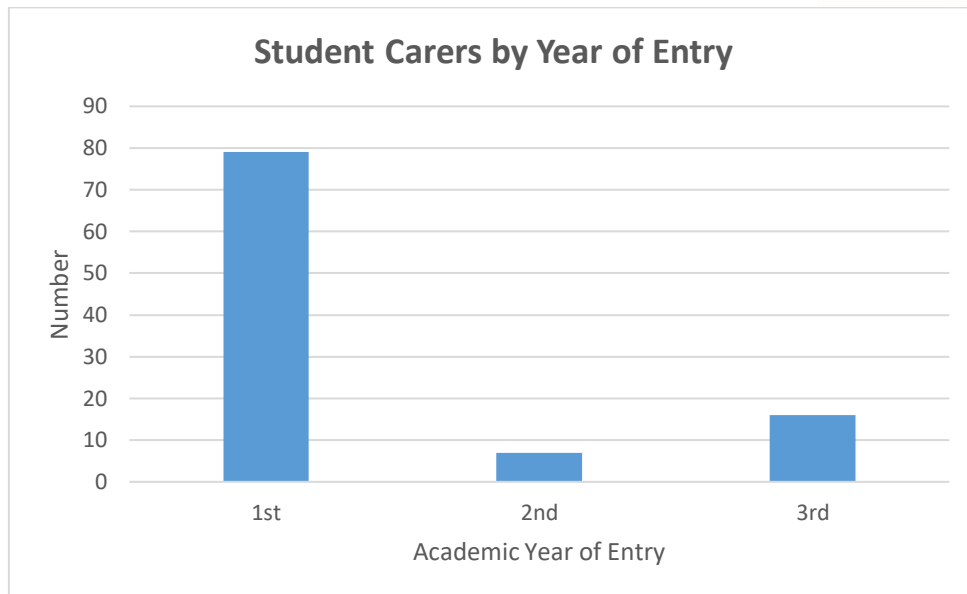


Figure 3. Self-declared student carers by academic year of entry for the academic year 2019/20. Data collected at student enrolment (n=101*) (* not displayed is one student studying an online degree programme).

Figure 4, below, reports the gender split between female and male students with unpaid caring responsibilities at Edinburgh Napier University for the academic year 2019/20. As stated previously, this baseline measure will be used to gauge future initiatives to increase the representation of male students declaring their caring roles and to promote higher education study with carer organisations and charities. Creating greater diversity and gender balance within and between degree programmes and respective University Schools is a key strategic area to develop within Edinburgh Napier. In the context of student carers, gender balance will be monitored in future Carer Plans.

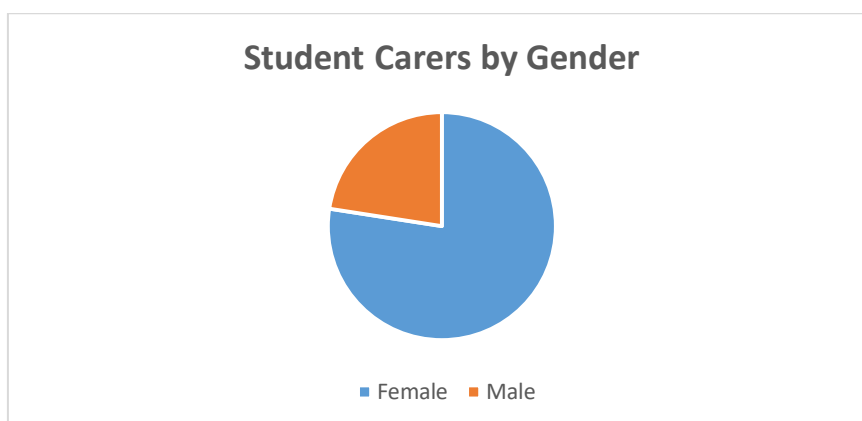


Figure 4. Self-declared student carers by gender for the academic year 2019/20. Data collected at student enrolment (n=102).

Edinburgh Napier University's Carer Plan

#	Activity	Action	Action by Whom	Evaluative Measure	Monitoring & Analysis	Timescale	Comment
Moving in: pre-entry and outreach							
1.0	Adjusted Admissions Policy (minimum entry requirements)	To implement and monitor the University's Adjusted Admissions Policy	Admissions Tutors, Widening Participation: Carer Contact	Offers to study made Adjusted 'contextual' offers made Number of matriculations	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	Implemented by UCAS deadline Jan 2019	Assistant Principal Widening Participation & Community and Head of Widening Participation to overview the process
1.1	Outreach & Dissemination of Information	To create a bespoke range of information and learning resources in a range of formats (leaflet, e-leaflet, Virtual Learning Environment, website) To work with individuals and agencies to provide information which may be included in carer plans or young carer statements	Widening Participation: Carer Contact and Retention & Success Officer Marketing & Communications team	Bespoke website content Information leaflets Online electronic resources (Learning Platform)	Widening Participation Student Wellbeing and Inclusion	Implementation by summer 2019	Timescale dependent on Marketing & Communications work streams Bitesize shorten Carers Plan created Webpage created Flyer created

Moving in: application and transition							
2.1	Pastoral Guidance	Provide timely and tailored guidance to students when sought	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact) Twice Weekly WP Student Drop-in	n/a	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact) Kev Head nursing student contact (k.head@napier.ac.uk)	Ongoing	
2.2	Positive Transitions	To support a positive transitional experience to students starting their studies or to those who assume caring responsibilities during their studies To assist students to develop their own study routines including liaising with academic staff where an intervention is required (requested)	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	Parity of retention rates with University targets	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	Trimester 1 for new entrants, ongoing where appropriate	

2.3	Carer e-Card	The creation of a Carer ID e-card to enable students who may have external commitments to identify themselves to University staff should they be called away at short notice	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	Establishment of e-Card programme, training and ongoing guidance to University staff	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	September 2020/21 academic session	
Moving through: successful progression							
3.1	Progress and Success	Support students to successful study outcomes including parity of retention and success with peers	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact)	Progress to next year of study	Widening Participation team (Carer Contact) Widening Participation Access & Retention lead	Ongoing	Currently no data is held on these measures

3.2	Student Experience	Promote extra-curriculum opportunities and assist to identify ways for students to partake (around their caring responsibilities)	Widening Participation team - Carer Contact	n/a	Widening Participation team	From transition to near-graduation stages	
3.3	Networking and Post-Graduation	Develop initiatives to add value to degree studies with networking and industry events to boost graduate employability	Widening Participation Alumni team Student Futures team Careers team Employer Mentoring	Positive graduate employability destination	University partners	Near – to post-graduation stages	
3.4	Post-matriculation declaration	Provide the opportunity for students who take on unpaid caring responsibilities during their studies to self-declare and to receive support	Widening Participation team	Signposting material Creation of online content Collaboration with internal and external partners Addition of eStudent Records tick box	Widening Participation team Other interested parties	September 2019/20 academic session	

References

Carers Trust Scotland, Going Higher for Student Carers. Available: <https://carers.org/going-higher-scotland>

Carers (Scotland) Act 2016. Available: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/9/contents/enacted>

City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Joint Carers' Strategy (2014-2017): for children, young people and adults who give unpaid care to others. Available: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20215/health_and_social_care/1014/edinburgh_joint_carers_strategy

Edinburgh Napier University Corporate Strategy. Available: <https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/principal/strategy2020/Pages/Strategy-2020.aspx>

Edinburgh Napier University Policy for Contextual Admissions 2019 (Appendix 1). Available: <https://www.napier.ac.uk/study-with-us/undergraduate/how-to-apply/understanding-our-entry-requirements>

Edinburgh Napier University Widening Participation Strategy 2016-2020. Available: <https://www.napier.ac.uk/about-us/university-governance/equality-and-diversity-information>

Scottish Funding Council, College Region Outcome Agreements: Summary of Progress and Ambitions report 2018. Available: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/outcome-agreements.aspx>

Scottish Government, Scotland's Carers: An Official Statistic Publication for Scotland (2015). Available: <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00473691.pdf>

(PT May 2020)

Edinburgh Napier University Policy for Contextual Admissions

1.0 Background

Edinburgh Napier University is committed to admitting students who have the potential to succeed and benefit from our programmes of study. We believe that a diverse student body makes for a more interesting and dynamic learning environment and brings benefits to our student population as a whole. However, we also recognise that student learner journeys differ considerably, as does the level of support, advice and guidance available to students. Implementation of a contextual admissions policy aims to take account of these differences in backgrounds, thereby acknowledging the context in which a student has achieved his/her academic grades.

Whilst academic grades remain the primary tool in assessing academic ability, there is increasing evidence across the sector¹³ that Universities should consider more than academic achievement alone when making admissions decisions.

The University already gives additional consideration to applicants who apply via the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS), the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), or those who have spent time in care or is a young carer. The implementation of a contextual admissions policy represents further development of the University's commitment to widening access.

2.0 Contextual Factors

2.1 Offer Making

In addition to considering an applicant's academic achievement, the University will consider contextual data when making admissions decisions. Where possible, we will make an offer of admission, or offer an interview, audition or portfolio review, to Scottish-domiciled students¹⁴ who have one or more of the following contextual identifiers:

1. Applicants who have been in care

¹³ Supporting Professionalism in Admissions 'Contextualised Admissions : Examining the Evidence' July 2013

¹⁴ Currently living in Scotland

2. Applicants who are young carers - young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction
3. Applicants who have been identified as LEAPS eligible
4. Applicants applying via a SWAP route
5. Applicants who have attended a school which has a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (SHEP Schools¹⁵)
6. Applicants who have Government-recognised refugee or asylum status
7. Applicants who live in an area of high deprivation (MD20¹⁶)

In line with our current procedures we will continue to review applications on an individual basis with reference to the academic grades (achieved and predicted), personal statement and academic reference. Applicants are required to demonstrate via their UCAS application, their interest in and commitment to, their chosen subject of study. This is particularly important for those subject areas which involve an interview, audition or portfolio review as part of the admissions process.

We will also continue to consider, individually, applicants who have a declared disability and those who have had to deal with adverse personal circumstances¹⁷ which have had an impact on academic progression. Please refer to the University Admissions Policy and the Policy for Applicants with Declared Disabilities for further information.

2.2 Minimum Offer Requirements

Where an offer of admission is able to be made to contextual applicants, these offers will be set at a ‘minimum’ level for Year 1 entry.

Minimum offer entry grades are listed within the entry requirements section of the course information pages on our website. Where the entry requirements include a required subject, this subject must still be achieved at the minimum requirement set out in our published entry requirements.

¹⁵ The SFC funded Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), has identified 80 schools as having a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (defined as a less than 22% average progression rate to HE, based on 5-year average). The list of SHEP schools is updated annually and LEAPS Group 1 Schools are included in this list

¹⁶ As defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, applicants who have a home postcode in any of the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland (MD20)

¹⁷ For example, where an applicant has suffered a bereavement, individual ill health, ill health of a close family member or where there has been serious disruption to their education. Circumstances are considered on an individual basis.

For contextual offer holders we will 'double count' Highers and Advanced Highers when calculating a student's achievement. A student **must** however by the point of entry have achieved passes in a minimum of three different subjects to qualify for entry.

Passes for the purposes of admission are Higher Grade C or Advanced Higher Grade D or better.

2.3 Confirmation of Results

On confirmation of results from applicants, final admissions decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking into consideration grades achieved, alongside any contextual factors.

2.4 Operation of Contextual Admissions

Admissions decision-making continues to be carried out on an individual basis with reference to the applicant's achievements. The operation of a contextual admissions process does not change this – applicants are still expected to demonstrate an aptitude for, and interest in their chosen subject area.

3.0 Review and Monitoring

It is neither in the University or applicant interest to admit students who may struggle to complete their degree studies. As a result, the University will closely monitor those students who have been admitted on the basis of contextual factors. This tracking data will be used to inform and where appropriate to guide any revisions to this policy.

4.0 Support for Applicants

As is currently the case, the University will continue to offer a wide-range of student support services, such as student mentoring and academic skills workshops, to help ease the transition to University study. Full details can be obtained by emailing [Student Learning](#).

5.0 Additional Information

For further information relating to admission to the University please refer to the University's Admissions Policy and to the University's Curriculum for Excellence Statement (SQA candidates).