



STUDENT CHARTER

***As approved by the USPSA Federal Body
April 14 2011***

Overview:

The University of the South Pacific is the premier institution of higher learning for the South Pacific region, uniquely placed in a region of extraordinary physical, social and economic diversity.

The multi-cultural nature of the staff and student body give USP an exceptional character. It is a quality institution producing degrees comparable to those awarded by universities in Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Graduates from USP are found in important executive positions throughout the public and private sectors in all member countries and in numerous countries around the world.

The University of the South Pacific Student Charter is issued jointly by the University and the University of the South Pacific Student Association. The student charter outlines some of the reciprocal responsibilities which members of the University, both staff and students have to each other.

This Charter is not a contractual document and is not intended to create legal rights or obligations whether contractual or tortuous or otherwise but it is written to foster an understanding between the University and its students. The University and the Students Association expect staff and students to honour the principals of this Charter on a reciprocal basis. Any breach of the obligations referred to in the Charter shall not give rise to any claim for damages or loss (including but not limited to special or consequential loss or damage).

Welcome to the University of the South Pacific

As a student of the University of the South Pacific this is your charter. It has been developed by the Students association of USP together with the University and reflects our excellent working relationship.

The charter sets out the kind of learning environment that you, as a student, can expect from your University and also the standards which we, in turn, will expect of you. It is an important statement of our commitment to fostering a University community within which we all have a role and function to perform; within which we all have rights and responsibilities to each other.

The University is committed to continuously enhancing the student experience. As a student of USP our aim is that you derive maximum benefit from the range of educational, sporting and cultural opportunities which we offer and that you enjoy your time in the University. This Charter is an important step towards achieving those goals.

INTRODUCTION

University of the South Pacific's mission is to maintain, advance, and disseminate knowledge by teaching, consultancy, and research, and to provide appropriate levels of education and training responsive to the well-being and needs of the communities in the Pacific region.

Our aim can only be achieved if there is an active partnership between the University and its students. To this end the University has in consultation with the University Student Association produced this Student Charter.

The Charter has been prepared to outline what students can practically expect from the University and likewise it sets out the University's expectations of the responsibilities of students as they pursue their studies within the University environment.

It is of the utmost importance that students are fully aware of the contents of this Charter, their entitlements and obligations. The Charter will be distributed annually on registration. It should be recognized that many of the services referred to in the Student Charter are described more fully in other University documents such as the Charter of Statutes and Ordinances standing orders of the Council, USP Calendar and Handbook, and course publications.

The University and the Students Association have agreed to uphold the Student Charter. All amendments to this Charter shall be those agreed by the Student's Association and the Vice Chancellor's office.

Expectations and Responsibilities

General

The Students can expect:-

These guidelines assume and acknowledge that students are active participants in the learning process and that they have responsibilities to the institution and the international community of scholars.

1.0 The University can expect that students will:

- 1.1 Comply with University rules and regulations that are relevant to their rights and responsibilities as a student.
- 1.2 At all times act in a way that demonstrates respect for the rights of other students and staff so that the learning environment is both safe and productive.
- 1.3 Students contribute to the promotion of a good learning-teaching environment by:
 - a) Attending all their lectures, tutorials, field trips and laboratory classes and sitting tests as required and if circumstances prevent them from doing so, by informing their lecturers of their absence;

- b) Completing and submitting for marking, on time, any work that is required of them as part of the continuous assessment of their courses;
 - c) Completing the work in (b) above honestly and without cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of information;
 - d) Maintaining steady progress throughout their studies through working hard, attending class and devoting appropriate time to study outside of class hours;
 - e) Seeking assistance from mentors/appropriate staff when they have (either academic or personal) difficulties with their studies.
- 1.4 Respect University property.
 - 1.5 Learn and work in an environment free from harassment and discrimination
 - 1.6 Show commitment to the principles of the University with special reference to achieving personal excellence in performance and allowing freedom of expression.
 - 1.7 Understand and accept the consequences of cheating, plagiarism and fabrication or falsification of data. Students are also expected to be aware of their individual rights and responsibilities regarding the proper use of copyright material, the ethical responsibilities of researchers with regards to animal and human subjects, and intellectual property rights.
 - 1.8 Familiarize themselves with the requirements they must meet to complete their academic program and take responsibility for their own academic progress. Students should, where appropriate, exercise their rights to reasonable access to and assistance from academic staff and the various academic support services.
 - 1.9 Submit all assignments through Turnitin.

- 1.10 Support student representative organizations, such as the USP student association which has a mandate to represent students.

2.0 The University will use its best endeavors to:

- 2.1 Select students for entry into University and individual courses by fair and transparent procedures with clearly stated entry criteria, consistent with statutory requirements.
- 2.2 Supply current and prospective students with access to accurate and clear information about University courses, application and entry procedures, credit transfer (cross-credit) policies, fees and associated costs, and financial support prior to the enrolment period.
- 2.3 Ensure that students enrolled in a program can complete it in the format as described in official University publications. When courses are changed, transitional arrangements must be made that do not disadvantage currently enrolled students. Any changes to a course must be authorized by a Dean and students are to be informed in advance.
- 2.4 Publicise its current Guidelines for Prevention of Cheating in Examinations and Coursework; the proper use of copyright material; ethical concerns regarding the use of human and animal subjects in research; and intellectual property rights. This information should be made available to students through official school publications including the Calendar and Handbook.
- 2.5 To provide an academic environment in which students are encouraged to reach a high level of intellectual achievement and their potential.
- 2.6 Ensure that guidance is available to students on how to use the library, write assignments and prepare for tests, exams and other forms of assessment.

- 2.7 Ensure that the teaching and learning environment is a cooperative one in which students are given reasonable access to their lectures and other staff members to discuss matters of concern to them;
- 2.8 Ensure that students are promptly given fair and helpful guidance when they seek the assistance of staff members;
- 2.9 Ensure that students' assignments and other assessed work when marked, are returned promptly with clear feedback on how students can make improvements in time to take advantage of the comments in the next assignment(s);
- 2.10 Ensure that students are formally informed of their course results as soon as practicable after the examinations, but not later than 4 weeks after the end of semester;
- 2.11 Ensure that students are aware of the procedures for appeal against their course grades;
- 2.12 Ensure that the University will keep confidential all the information it holds on all students except where such information is requested by the students themselves or, in the case of sponsored students, by their governments and/or sponsors;
- 2.13 Ensure that in dealing with students on any matter, fair and reasonable assistance is given without discrimination based on gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or race.
- 2.14 Provide opportunities for students to participate in, and provide feedback on, the quality and content teaching and research activities of the University.
- 2.15 Provide a harmonious work and study environment in which complaints and student grievances will be addressed through explicit and efficient procedures and resolved as quickly and fairly as possible.

- 2.16 Help resource student support services including: health and counseling/ career planning services; learning assistance; recreational facilities; and accommodation services.
- 2.17 Ensure that compulsory subjects are appropriately timed and sufficient optional subjects are available to allow course completion within the specified minimum time.
- 2.18 Students at USP come from a variety of different cultures and educational backgrounds. Most go through an intensive adjustment period as they adapt to the expectations of University studies, and in many cases, to a new living situation without the community support mechanisms to which they are accustomed. The University will endeavor to better understand factors that affect student achievement and will strengthen support mechanisms leading to increased student success rates.

USP will achieve this by:

- Regularly monitoring and analyzing student performance across the University and identifying correlating factors for student achievement.
- Promoting a broader understanding of various teaching and learning styles, and encouraging approaches that develop analytical skills, confidence, written and spoken English, entrepreneurship, good citizenship, ethical conduct, and leadership.
- Revising pre-degree and bridging programs to improve student performance in key areas.
- Exploring cultural and adjustment issues that may affect student retention, particularly in the first year of studies through an effective and relevant orientation program.
- Identifying and using effective teaching strategies and activities to increase student learning, performance, and retention.

The University of the South Pacific Students Association (USPSA) serves all undergraduate and post graduate students from the 12 Pacific Island countries. The University of the South Pacific Students Association (USPSA) works to improve the overall educational, social and cultural environment for its members.

The University of the South Pacific Students Association is the students' organisation and the officers that are elected by the students are there to promote students general welfare. It is therefore up to the students to communicate their needs to the student leaders and take advantage of all the activities and services made possible through the USPSA.

USPSA primarily exists to protect the interests of students and respond to students' needs and concerns through the student council, the various standing committees of the association and representations on University committees. USPSA provides input to its cultural groups and affiliates through financial grants and other means of assistance.

Responsibilities of the University of the South Pacific Student Association

3.0 The University of the South Pacific Students' Association shall:

- 3.1 Endeavour to act in the best interests of students through wide consultation.
- 3.2 Contribute constructively to discussions.
- 3.3 Abide by the protocols of University committees, including the maintenance of confidentiality as required.
- 3.4 Aim at all times to make decisions that are acceptable to the University and the students.
- 3.5 Be pro-active in improving the quality assurance mechanisms of the University.

- 3.6 Ensure that USPSA representatives receive appropriate and sufficient training in order to understand fully their role and its responsibilities.
- 3.7 To develop a Strategic Plan in line with the University & USPSA Constitution to ensure effective leadership and accountability of financial transactions every year.

4.0 Admissions – Prospective and current students can expect:-

- 4.1 Access to current and accurate information about courses, application and entry procedures, and information on fees pertaining to academic courses and detailed indications of costs pertaining to their respective course.
- 4.2 Students should also receive with their offer letter, access to information (where applicable) on the following:
 - a) Principal Dates for the academic year
 - b) Schedule of Fees and payment schedule
 - c) ELSA and EL001 information
 - d) Registration and Academic Counseling schedule
 - e) Student accommodation options and Application Form
 - f) Immigration and Study Permit
 - g) Guide to On-line Registration
 - h) Information on the consequences on non-payment of fees.
 - i) Finance Details Form

(Source: Handbook of Policies and Procedures, Policy Number: 3.32.01, Procedures for Enrolment Admission)

The University can expect prospective and current students:-

- 4.3 To disclose all information required for assessment of their application for admission and to provide truthful statements about their qualifications and relevant experience.
- 4.4 To make themselves available for interviews or tests which may be part of the selection criteria.

5.0 Appeals -

Students can expect:

5.1 That transparent, fair and open procedures for dealing with appeals will be clearly outlined, published and readily available and that provide for timely feedback on the outcome of such appeals.

5.2 That if they have a grievance, their grievance will be heard fairly and within a reasonable time, following the agreed procedures within the University.

The University can expect Students:-

5.3 To familiarize themselves with the appeals mechanisms.

5.4 To use all available mechanisms for resolving grievances through dialogue and discussion prior to lodging a formal appeal.

6.0 Equity and Privacy

Students can expect:-

6.1 Their needs to be addressed regardless of gender, disability, religion, race, age, marital or family status or sexual orientation/preference.

6.2 To participate fully in University activities without fear and free from discrimination.

6.3 A safe study environment that meets satisfactory standards of health and safety.

6.4 To be treated with courtesy and respect in an environment free from harassment and abuse of power.

The University can expect Students:-

6.5 To treat all staff and fellow students with courtesy and respect without regard to gender, disability, religion, race, age, marital or family status or sexual orientation/preference.

6.6. Not to harass, or discriminate against, staff or other students.

6.7 To immediately advise appropriate staff if they have concerns for their personal safety.

6.8 To take every precaution and course of action to avoid being a health risk to others.

6.9 To seek help with problems or issues of concern from relevant staff or those designated to help them such as the Student Counselors, Medical Officers and Academic advisors.

6.10 To adhere to the highest ethical standards in language and behavior.