Welfare Matters and MSc Projects

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Welfare Tutors

• Dr Iain Styles (Senior Welfare Tutor)
  – General welfare issues
  – Disability support (reasonable adjustments)
  – Extenuating Circumstances at exam time

• Dr Ata Kaban
  – General welfare issues

• Dr Shan He
  – General welfare issues
How to contact welfare

- Email welfare@cs.bham.ac.uk
  - Please **do not email welfare tutors personally**
    - We will all be away at different times and may miss your message
  - Please use your **university email address**
    - Spam filters may block your message
- Over the summer, meetings with welfare tutors are by appointment – send an email.
Tell us about problems early

- **You** are responsible for informing us of problems
  - If we don't know, we cannot help.

- Sorting out problems retrospectively is hard – **tell us early**
  - Especially if you are an overseas student – there may be visa issues.

- What you tell us is CONFIDENTIAL
  - We cannot and will not talk to your family or friends without your explicit permission.
Overseas Students

• You **must** tell us about problems quickly
  – Not studying could cause your visa to be withdrawn.
  – If you attend a contact point then you are considered to be studying and are incurring fees.
  – If you do not attend your contact points then you are considered to not be studying and are violating the conditions of your visa.
  – We can help, but only if we know.
  – If you cannot work properly due to a welfare issue, **TELL US.**
Valid Extenuating Circumstances

- significant illness, accident or injury;
- the death or serious illness of a close family member or dependent;
- family crisis directly affecting the student;
- absence caused by parental leave, jury service (deferral of which has been denied by the Court);
- exceptional and unforeseen financial hardship.
- Chronic/long-term issues should be dealt with through student support agreements, not the extenuating circumstances process.
Invalid reasons

- minor illnesses (such as coughs and colds);
  - Especially true for project: some absence should be allowed for in your plan
- minor computer problems or inadequate planning preventing completion or submission of coursework;
- stress and panic attacks, that are caused by examinations, but are not diagnosed as an illness or documented in a Student Support Agreement;
- assessments or examinations scheduled close together;
  - No allowance for lots of resits
- personal or domestic events, such as moving house or attending a wedding;
- holidays or travel arrangements;
- consequences of paid employment;
- sports activities
Leave of Absence

• In the case of serious problems a “last resort” is to give you a “leave of absence”
  – Gives you a break from your studies to sort your problems out

• Leaves of absence can only be granted back to last recorded point of contact
  – Fee and visa implications.
Long-term issues, disabilities, learning difficulties

- A disability is a long-term physical or mental health issue of 6 months duration or more
- You may be entitled to a special “student support agreement” that tells us exactly how to support you in your studies
- Only need to provide evidence once
- Contact welfare and we will give you further instructions.
If something is affecting your ability to work on your project, **tell the welfare team as early as you can.**

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