Mission statement: 'To be a centre of excellence for developing the leaders of tomorrow in sustainable development relating to the rural economy, built environment and food chain, and to provide leadership regionally, nationally and internationally through its education, research and knowledge exchange activities'.

Royal Agricultural University (RAU)
Student Charter 2017/18

This Charter was developed by RAU senior academic staff (i.e. members of Academic Board) and Student Union officers, working together to set out the mutual expectations of the RAU and its students (undergraduate and postgraduate, on-campus and studying at a distance). It is envisaged that this framework will help to provide clarity, transparency and consistency across the University with regard to staff and student rights and responsibilities.

Whilst this Charter does not constitute a legal document, enrolment onto a programme of study at the RAU implies a contractual arrangement whereby students are entitled to receive appropriate tuition and other support to assist them in completing their programme of study. Similarly, the RAU is entitled to expect certain levels of engagement and compliance from its students. This Charter thus sets out the principal obligations of both parties.

The Charter is reviewed annually by the staff-student partnership to ensure that the document is being used and remains relevant. These reviews incorporate feedback from the National Student Satisfaction (NSS) survey, the RAU's internal Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS), programme committee meetings, module reviews and other feedback mechanisms.

The Charter is communicated and disseminated to the wider staff / student body; it is introduced during induction for students, and for new members of academic and student support staff, and it is published on the University website in order to ensure that it is accessible to all students and staff. The Charter also features in the Student Handbook, which includes further relevant additional information.

Overall, the Charter is designed to demonstrate the RAU ethos of, and commitment to, providing a positive environment for learning and academic achievement which supports and develops students through high quality learning and teaching, and services that underpin an enhanced student experience. The development of this Charter is also designed to facilitate the establishment of effective working relationships between staff and students as members of the RAU learning community.

The RAU undertakes to:

- Encourage its employees to treat all students, colleagues, clients and visitors equitably, with dignity and respect, in a fair, just and legal manner and without discrimination, at all times.

The RAU undertakes to provide:

- An induction to the RAU and to individual academic programmes and assistance with registration.
- Well-designed, relevant, and quality-assured programmes of study, that integrate academic content with wide-ranging skills, are appropriately resourced, varied in delivery and provide students with a stimulating, interactive and challenging learning environment, maximising student choice and flexible delivery modes where reasonably possible.
- High standards of teaching, advice and guidance that supports students through their programmes of study and facilitates achievement of stated learning outcomes.
- Assessments designed to facilitate and test achievement of stated learning outcomes, on which students will receive, where appropriate, individual written feedback against published University marking criteria that is informative and constructive, enabling students to understand their level of achievement, and which is internally moderated and externally examined as appropriate to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Classes that have been planned and prepared for, start and end on time (wherever possible), and are supported by further learning resources posted on the relevant module Gateway pages as appropriate.
- Communication with students, as efficiently as possible, through a variety of means, principally electronically and online.
- High quality, fit for purpose, facilities, resources and student support services (both on campus and online) including access to counselling and advice on:
    - Support, safety, health and wellbeing http://rau.ac.uk/student-life/living/support-wellbeing.
    - Disability Services including specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, etc.) http://rau.ac.uk/student-life/learning/academic-support.
    - Accommodation http://rau.ac.uk/student-life/living/accommodation.
    - Finance http://rau.ac.uk/study/fees-how-to-apply.
    - Careers http://rau.ac.uk/student-life/learning/careers-advice.
- Access to the library (see term and vacation opening hours), access to subscribed digital resources such as e-books and e-journals, the Virtual Learning Environment (Gateway) and Information Technology services http://rau.ac.uk/student-life/learning/library-and-it-access.

- Access to resources (e.g. Personal Development Plans, study skills tuition), expertise and activities (e.g. placements / work-based learning) that will help students reflect on their learning, performance and achievements so they are able to plan for their own personal, educational and career development, thus enhancing their time at university and their employability when they leave university.
- A personal tutor for each student to review and support their academic progress throughout their studies, encouraging their autonomy, self-reflection and action planning, and access to relevant academic tutors by arrangement.
- Regular review of (e.g. through peer observations), and continuing professional development for, its staff to ensure that all academic and student support staff are appropriately qualified.
- Opportunities for students to express their views about the quality of their learning experience as an RAU student (e.g. through NSS and SSS) and timely responses to such feedback, including action in response to feedback as required to help improve the student experience.
- Encouragement and monitoring of, the involvement of elected student representatives in decision-making processes, through relevant University and programme committees (see Student Representatives' Handbook), including representation on Governing Council.
- Explanation as to why information needs to be collected from students and safeguards for such information in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act, including not divulging student information to parents, except when permission to do so has been granted by the student or in cases of emergency.
- Access to a Students' Union and opportunities for students to celebrate their success at a graduation ceremony (Convocation), and to engage with the University's graduate community, the Alumni association.

The RAU undertakes to provide students with the following clear, accurate and accessible information:

- Academic programme timetables and locations, and sufficient notice, wherever possible, of changes to timetables, cancelled classes, re-scheduling of content, etc.
- Clear coursework submission deadlines and timeframes for timely feedback on submitted work, published within assessment briefs.
- A programme specification, to include details of programme delivery mode, accreditation by professional bodies (where appropriate), programme aims and intended learning outcomes, programme structure and requirements, criteria for admissions, teaching, learning and assessment methods and academic guidance and support.
- Module reference sheets and handbooks, to include details of overall study time, contact hours, module learning outcomes, teaching schedule, assessment briefs and reading lists.
- University Academic Regulations for assessment, progression and awards, including academic misconduct policies, and mitigating circumstances and appeals procedures.
- University Marking Criteria (undergraduate and postgraduate) for coursework and examinations.

- Student Handbook, to include information about academic administrative processes, learning resources, library facilities, IT services, disability support, careers service, complaints procedures and student disciplinary code and procedure.
- University and programme costs, payment options and deadlines, and an estimate of any necessary additional costs.
- A record of individual student achievement (including module grades, accumulated credit, progression status, and eligibility for award) and appropriate certification.
- Academic references for employment and/or further study.

Students undertake to:

- Treat all staff, their fellow students, visitors and members of the local community, equitably, with dignity and respect, in a fair, just and legal manner and without discrimination, at all times.
- Behave in a manner deemed by the University to be responsible both on and off campus, and ensure that their actions do not have an adverse impact on the RAU's reputation.
- Keep up-to-date with programme information, by regular reference to programme and module pages on Gateway, ensuring that they are registered for a viable diet of modules where their programme has a choice, and to check emails regularly (ideally daily during the week in term times and weekly in University vacations) and manage their email accounts.
- Adhere to the rules, regulations and policies of the RAU as laid down in the Student Handbook (in addition to local rules and regulations if studying at a partner organisation).
- Respond promptly to communications from the RAU, provide accurate information upon request and keep it updated.
- Participate in induction, prepare for and attend, punctually, timetabled classes and examinations, study diligently and keep to, and engage in, meetings with tutors.
- Inform the Registry, as soon as possible and in advance, of any essential absences during term times.
- Inform the Registry in writing or by email before day 1 of the term should they not be returning to studies.
- Act as independent learners and aspiring professionals by taking responsibility for managing their own learning and skills development; proactively engaging in their programme of study, ensuring that they spend sufficient regular time in private study, participating fully in group learning activities and taking advantage of services that enable them to improve academically, seeking advice when necessary.
- Complete assessed work to the best of their abilities and submit it by stated deadlines, actively participate in feedback opportunities and use feedback provided to improve subsequent work, where appropriate.
- Make payment of all agreed charges made by the RAU at such times as shall be stipulated by the University from time to time, e.g. tuition and accommodation fees and other expenses relating to programmes.

- Participate honestly and responsibly, in a timely manner, in feedback systems [e.g. NSS, SSS and Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey] designed to lead to improvements in the quality of learning and teaching.
- Support student representatives on University and programme committees (see Student Representatives' Handbook).
- Respect the University's physical environment and property, including accommodation.

The Students' Union undertakes to:

- Support all students to ensure that they receive equal treatment and are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- Support student participation in quality enhancement activities, especially through the election, development and training of student representatives on University and programme committees.
- Encourage honest, responsible and timely student participation in feedback systems (e.g. NSS, SSS, DLHE) designed to lead to improvements in the quality of learning and teaching.
- Encourage students with academic and welfare problems to make use of the University's student support services / networks.
- Represent the interests of students at local and national level.
- Support active student-community engagement, especially with regard to combating anti-social behaviour.
- Provide a range of athletic and social clubs and societies to help engage all members of the diverse student community in University life and to enhance their personal and professional development.
- Provide a General Manager to oversee the running of the Student Union, who will work in conjunction with the three SU Officer Directors and the two external directors appointed by the RAU's Governing Council.
- Be an autonomous entity and limited company trading as "Royal Agricultural University Student Union" which enables the student body to be represented as a whole.
- Undertake long term plans to benefit students at the RAU.

Vice Chancellor: ..... Date: 26/9/17
(Professor Joanna Price)

Student Union Chair..... Date: 26th Sept 2017.
(Jack Walton)

For further information, please contact:
Laura Butler, Academic Quality Support Officer. Email: laura.butler@rau.ac.uk or:
Julie Tottle, Student Support Services Manager. Email: julie.tottle@rau.ac.uk