

# STUDENT CHARTER ACTIVITIES

## Short activities to explore the meaning of the University of Reading Student Charter

These brief activities can be adapted by Senior Tutors for use in personal tutor training, and by Personal Tutors with their tutor groups. Ideally Personal Tutors will introduce the Student Charter to their tutees in Welcome Week and then revisit it during transitions to each further year. The activities are designed to promote a sense of belonging, active participation, professionalism, and awareness of rights and responsibilities that characterise being part of the University of Reading community.

### 5 Most important...

Cut up copies of the Student Charter into strips with each statement on a separate strip. Give each person in the group a set of the strips. Ask them to select what they think are the 5 most important statements to create their own mini-charter. Ask people to share their top 5 statements and use this as a basis for starting a discussion about the most crucial aspects of the Charter. **Aim of activity:** To encourage active engagement with the Charter and a discussion of its importance.

### Words in context

Pick a word in the Charter that is repeated a number of times – for example “timely” or “engage / engagement”. Ask people in the group to highlight each time it appears in the Charter then discuss what they think it means in each context – does it have the same meaning when applied to students and staff, and if not, why? What does each person think “timely” means...e.g. immediately, when I want, within 2 working days? **Aim of activity:** To explore different expectations and working relationships between students and staff.

### Open-ended Phrase

Pick a statement from the Charter that might seem open to debate / interpretation / disagreement and then ask the group to discuss what it means to them and why. Possible statements to use:

- “Students expect the University to facilitate opportunities to express views which are considered and responded to”
- “The University expects students to take advantage of the wealth of activities (social and developmental) provided by the University and the Students Union”
- “We all expect each other to challenge one another intellectually and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge”

**Aim of activity:** To explore the interpretations of the Charter, ownership of the Charter, and that the Charter is open to criticism and debate.

## Tweet the Charter

In small groups or pairs, ask people to come up with a Tweet (140 characters) to sum up the main message of the Student Charter or to create a strap-line for the Charter. Use the Tweets as a basis for discussing the purpose and overall impression of the Charter. **Aim of activity:** To look at the overall purpose and messages of the Charter.

## What does the Charter say about us?

Ask people to read the Charter and then discuss what impression they have of the University of Reading based on this document. What kind of place or community is the University of Reading as portrayed in the Charter? How might this differ from other charters or communities they have encountered? **Aim of activity:** To explore how the Charter defines our community and what this community may stand for.

## Charter for life?

Taking the statement from the Charter, "Students expect the University to offer opportunities to gain knowledge and skills useful for life beyond University", ask the group how far they think the Charter applies to life beyond University. Is the Charter something that just applies to University life or does it have a meaning or effect beyond it? **Aim of activity:** To think more broadly about contributions to society post-University and to explore if the values in the Charter have wider application.

## What could I do if...?

Pick a few statements from the Charter – maybe one with expectations that apply to students and one that applies to staff, for example "Students expect staff to teach in an engaging and varied manner that inspires learning" and "Staff expects students to manage their time to fulfil academic and other commitments". In pairs or small groups, ask people to come up with a list of solutions, actions, or people / University services they could use if this statement in the Charter wasn't being fulfilled. Discuss as a whole group. **Aim of activity:** To explore the rights and responsibilities within the Charter, as well as sources of support for taking action about these.

## How much is enough?

Based on the statement from the Charter, "The University expects students to take ownership of their own health and wellbeing", take some common health and wellbeing categories such as: Social media, sleep, exercise, food, alcohol, socialising, work...and ask each person anonymously to note down "How much is enough?" for each category on a separate post-it note. Collect in the answers for each category and use them as a basis for general discussion. **Aim of activity:** To consider students' responsibility for their wellbeing and self-management and to show differences in individual approaches to this.

## My Charter

Ask each member of the group to select one statement from the Charter that they personally want to work on for their own development. Ask each person to write it down and to think of what specifically they can do to develop this. As an extension of the activity, collect in the statements and then hand each person's statement back to them at the end of the year / beginning of next year. Do they think they have developed based on this statement? Has their interpretation of what this statement means to them changed? **Aim of activity:** To encourage personal engagement with the Charter and its role as a tool for development

