

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

Keeping our apprentices safe

Safeguarding at Oxford Brookes



Introduction

The safety and wellbeing of our students – including those who have chosen to study at Oxford Brookes University as part of an apprenticeship programme offered in partnership with their employer – is hugely important to us. We are committed to working together with employers to create a sector-leading learning experience, which supports achievement, self-fulfilment and career progression; whilst nurturing personal development and wellbeing.

We are committed to creating a safe, disciplined and positive learning environment and a sense of community within the University, where staff know and care about their students, and bullying and harassment is not tolerated. We wish to promote positive and respectful behaviours and attitudes among our students and staff, and any issues of bullying or discrimination will be addressed quickly and effectively.

We have a number of policies and support services in place designed to fulfil our duty of care, which you can find on the **Safety and Welfare** pages of the University's website. Your employer also has a duty to comply with all current UK legislation and statutory responsibilities relating to safety and welfare in the workplace; and managers are responsible for seeking appropriate advice when they feel an apprentice may be at risk in their personal lives.

As an apprentice, you are expected to take responsibility for your own safety and wellbeing, and be mindful of the safety of others around you – both at the University and in the workplace – by adhering to the University's, and your employer's, regulations and behavioural codes, and by seeking appropriate support when necessary. Relevant professional body behavioural expectations may also apply to your programme of study.

This document provides a summary of the University's approach to the safety and wellbeing of members of the University community, explains some key definitions and concepts relating to safeguarding, and outlines the responsibilities of the University, your employer, and the standards of behaviour expected of you while studying towards your award. It also highlights relevant University support services and who to contact when you need support or advice.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the overarching term used to describe the protection of the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals, to keep them free from abuse and harm. All parties involved in the delivery of an apprenticeship are legally obliged to have measures in place to promote the welfare of apprentices and to recognise – and take action to address – any risks to their safety, whether they are in the workplace or in attendance at the University.

The University has a clear commitment to safeguarding, which is overseen by the Academic Registrar – John Kirk – as the University's Safeguarding Lead. He promotes the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that it is reviewed regularly and acted upon; and he also Chairs the University's Prevent Duty Advisory Group (see section below). Additionally, all members of University staff working with apprentices have a basic level of training on the University's obligations relating to the Prevent Duty, and are able to access additional information, advice and guidance on safeguarding in general, when required, through a system of staff located across the University who are trained as Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).

Many issues are considered to fall within the scope of safeguarding, including:

- Emotional and physical abuse
- Bullying (including in the online environment)
- Discrimination
- Forced marriage
- Mental health
- Neglect and self-harm
- Radicalisation and extremism

As an apprentice, you may feel more comfortable disclosing or discussing sensitive issues with different people in either the work or study environment, depending on the nature of the issues and your relationships with your managers and lecturers. Measures will be in place to ensure that communication between your academic course team and the managers supporting you in the workplace is effective, so that you can be provided with the appropriate support when needed. The University will endeavour to be as transparent as possible with your employer about your support needs, while respecting your privacy and adhering to university confidentiality policies.

The University's role:

- Ensure apprentices have an awareness of safeguarding and understand how to access the relevant university support services.
- Provide advice and guidance on safeguarding issues to staff, through the University's Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs).
- Provide a range of extra-curricular activities to promote the good physical and mental health of students.

- Promote an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all learners, irrespective of age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Your employer's role:

- Familiarise themselves with relevant government legislation, and implement compliant practices.
- Take appropriate steps to understand what safeguarding means in practice at their organisation, in the context of the responsibilities they have for the people they employ; and, if possible, identify a person to coordinate safeguarding across the organisation.
- Ensure that any staff working with apprentices, in a position of trust, are appropriate for the role and do not present any danger or threat.

As an apprentice, you should...

- Attend any training provided for you, both in the workplace and at the University (for example, on sexual consent), so as to familiarise yourself with key safeguarding principles, how to report concerns or issues, and where to seek support if you need it.

Prevent

As noted above, radicalisation and extremism fall within the scope of the safeguarding agenda, and, under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, universities have a statutory duty to *pay due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism*. This is known as the *Prevent Duty*, which is supported by the Prevent Duty Guidance; and the University has a **Prevent Duty Advisory Group** which advises the Vice-Chancellor's Group on the measures that need to be put in place to ensure Oxford Brookes remains compliant with this Guidance.

The Government's **Counter Terrorism strategy (CONTEST) 2018** aims to ensure that people are not being drawn into illegal, terrorist-type behaviours, across a range of activities which includes religious extremism, political extremism and other types of ideological extremism (some of which may involve non-violent action). There is no single way of identifying a person who may be vulnerable to extremist ideology and it is often the culmination of a number of influences, including family, friends, or relationships they have made online.

All apprentices studying on a programme at the University, are expected to attend a compulsory session in which these issues will be covered, and you will be given opportunities to discuss relevant issues, and gain an understanding of the key local risks, as part of your apprenticeship. Please be reassured that threat levels are low, in Oxfordshire, which is generally a very safe region in which to work and study.

The University's role:

- Provide relevant training for University staff so that they understand the obligations the university has under Prevent Duty and how to manage risks and concerns. This training is also available for apprentices.
- Have clear procedures in place so that any concerns can immediately be brought to specialist attention.
- Provide a forum for apprentices to explore these matters.
- Provide a contact for any further information regarding the Prevent Duty.
- Ensure apprentices are able to express views in non-extremist ways and create an environment that encourages respectful free speech.

Your employer's role:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the principles that underpin the Prevent Duty.
- Have regular meetings and supervisory sessions with their apprentices.
- Seek specialist support if any concerns are raised.

As an apprentice, you should...

- Undertake the Prevent module provided by the University, and any training provided for you in the workplace; so as to familiarise yourself with your responsibilities under the Prevent Duty, how to report concerns or issues, and where to seek support if you need it.

British Values

An important part of Prevent is the promotion of British Values. These are the principles that shape our society, and which are enshrined in law through legislation such as the Equality Act 2010.

British Values are described as:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect
- Tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

The University is expected to exemplify and promote British Values in its management, teaching, and through the general behaviour of staff and students; and all members of the University community are encouraged to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics described in the Equality Act 2010. Oxford Brookes actively promotes equality of opportunity in order to create an environment where all learners can thrive together. It is important

that you develop a respect for others, appreciating that differences are positive, not negative; and valuing the individual characteristics that make people unique.

We aim to develop apprentices and other students as responsible, respectful and active citizens who are able to play their part, and know how to become involved, in public life. British Values are therefore embedded in the learning outcomes and curriculum of your programme of study. You will be provided with opportunities to discuss and explore these concepts, and you will be encouraged to apply them in relevant professional situations and contexts.

The University's role:

- To promote British Values throughout an apprentice's programme, and encourage apprentices to engage with these values and show respect for each other.
- Develop and deliver a dedicated programme of study which defines and explores British Values and how they influence our society.
- Create opportunities for apprentices to apply their learning to relevant situations and contexts.
- Promotes understanding of different perspectives through providing a programme of extra-curricular activities and open events which celebrate diversity, for example, through Disability Awareness Month, Black History Month, International Women's Day, etc.

Your employer's role:

- Demonstrate a commitment to British Values.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

As an apprentice, you should...

- Show respect for each other and your differences; and engage positively with opportunities to discuss how the British Values apply to you, and in the context of your profession.

Staying safe online

The increasing use of the internet and digital technology has presented huge opportunities, both to enrich the learning environment for apprentices and also allowing you to expand your personal horizons. However, as people are increasingly able to access and engage with online content, you need to have the skills to be able to use the internet safely and develop appropriate online behaviours.

It is really important that you are aware of ways in which you can protect yourself online and ensure the security of your personal data. Dangers of the online environment can include bullying and abuse, revenge porn, grooming, identity theft, and viruses. An important part of an apprentice's development at university is becoming a critical thinker, and developing this critical mindset will also help you to examine and appraise the validity and authenticity of information online.

You can access a range of guidance and training to help familiarise yourself with, and stay safe online in the University's digital environment, via the **IT Essentials** and **Information Security** web pages.

The University's role:

- Assess how apprentices may be at risk of harm using the internet or technology.
- Provide relevant advice and guidance for apprentices so that they are able to work safely and effectively online.

- Help apprentices to develop an objective attitude to online information and evaluate its authenticity.
- Make sure university staff are trained to identify and deal with concerns about online safety.
- Provide clear guidance on what is and is not an acceptable use of the internet at University.

Your employer's role:

- Ensure apprentices are made aware of their organisation's policies on using the internet and technology in the workplace.
- Understand the dangers apprentices may face using technology in the workplace and act to minimise risks.
- Communicate any concerns about safety online to the University.

As an apprentice, you should...

- Ensure that you know how to keep yourself safe online referring to the guidance on information security and using the University's digital services, as referenced above.

Accessing support

University Safeguarding Lead
John Kirk

Safety and Welfare information and support

Wellbeing services

Report sexual violence, hate crime or harassment

Concerned about someone?

Is there an emergency?

Equality, diversity and inclusion

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