

A problem shared

The letters 'US' are written in a bold, yellow, hand-drawn style with black outlines and a textured, stippled effect. They are set against a solid purple circular background.

Your Union Advice newsletter – a little bit of help when you need it most

Issue 1 (September 2018)

Welcome! Or welcome back!

As a new academic year dawns, your Union Advice Service is bringing you something new, a regular newsletter. Every one of you is entering a new chapter in your University life, whether it's your first experience of University life, moving into your first house without parents or entering your final year of study. In these newsletters, your advice team will be providing articles and top-tips to support you through the ups and downs of the University year. And, if you don't find the information you need here, make sure you come and see us. We're always here to support you, just in case.

In this issue, it's all about welcoming and preparing you for the year ahead. Abby Wilson, your Union President opens the newsletter with a welcome to all students. On top of this, there's an introduction to your advice team – the people that support students at our Derby, Buxton and Chesterfield campuses, Buxton and Leek College Students and Online Learners. Additionally, you'll find information about settling in, how to get involved in different parts of the Union and the pitfalls of academic offences (don't be too frightened).

In future, we'll be providing information around challenges we know our students face. This will include housing, appealing your grades, overcoming difficulties within the University, mental health and progression.

Any other issues worrying you, let us know and we can share some advice and guidance around them. So keep an eye out, as you never know what advice may come in handy in the future.

Finally, the entire advice team would like to welcome you for the first time or welcome you back to the University of Derby and to your Union of Students. We hope you find the information and advice in this newsletter and future issues helpful.

Hello from the President



Hi everyone, my name is Abby and I am your Union President! I'd like to welcome and introduce all students both new and returning to your Union. When you enrol here at the University of Derby you are automatically a member of the Union of Students which means you can use our services and get involved in our extracurricular opportunities!

My conversation starter whenever I speak to someone about the Union is three questions; Do you want to make the most out of your time at University? Do you want to make friends and memories for life? And finally, do you want to be ahead of the competition when looking for jobs? If the answer to any one of those questions is yes, then you should get involved in your Union!

No matter what you study or what you like to do in your free time, the Union can connect you to others who like the same thing. We have over 40 Sports Clubs and almost 100 Societies who meet regularly to do what they love! Joining one of these clubs is a great opportunity to meet new people, challenge yourself and network with other students. If I haven't convinced you yet, how does hosting your own radio show or writing for our student newspaper sound? Or perhaps volunteering opportunities in the industry you want to work in, or does climbing Kilimanjaro

for charity sound more up your street? Have I won you over yet? If not you can stand to be a rep for your course and shape the way you learn! Whatever you love, let us know and we will do our very best to transform your student experience!

The final part of the Union I wish to talk about, and the reason you're reading this newsletter, is our Advice Team. Many students don't know this, but they can get free help and support from our advice team throughout the year. Our advisors are professional, fully trained, completely independent from the University and most importantly, absolutely lovely. They can help you with a number of things, from housing to complaints to signing you up for a C-card so you can get free condoms, dams and lube. Even if you are worried about something I haven't listed, they will do their best to help you or will find someone who can. If you remember only one thing from reading this article, remember your Union advice service. Should there come a day that you or a friend need support, they will always be here for you, just in case!

Union advice

Contact us if you need advice or help

Derby: 01332 591507

Buxton: 01298 330485

derbyunion.co.uk/advice

Meet the team



Hi, my name is Tom. I am one of the Advisors based at Derby and am relatively new to the Union of Students joining the team in March 2018. Prior to this I worked in the Student Wellbeing Service at the University based at the Buxton campus. I studied Geography at the University of Manchester, before going on to undertake a PGCE in Secondary Geography at MMU. Having worked at both the University and now the Union, I am eager to make a positive impact on your student experience so please share any concerns or issues you are having so we can look to make a change and help every student thrive.

Hi, my name is Bryony. I've been working as a Union Advisor since January 2018, and I'm based at Kedleston Road. Before I became an advisor at the Union of Students, I studied Humanistic Counselling Practice at the University of Nottingham. My favourite thing about being an advisor, is that I'm able to make positive changes for students by helping them to have their voices heard. If there's any issue, big or small, that you feel you need support with then come and talk to us, and we'll work hard to support you.



Hi my name is Emma and I am the Support and Inclusion Manager for the Union of Students Advice team. This role includes managing the Advice service and taking a lead on the Equality and Diversity Strategy for the Union. I have worked for the Union for five years, four of which were predominantly spent at the Buxton campus as an advisor. I love working for the Union and being a part of the Advice Team. I enjoy meeting students and supporting them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Hi, my name is Megan and I am a Union advisor for Further Education students that study at Buxton and Leek College. I have worked for the Union for 2 years after completing my Outdoor Coaching and Leadership degree at the University of Derby (Buxton). In my free time I have volunteered for the Derbyshire Mental Health Federation as a group support assistant. One of my favourite things about being an adviser, is that I am able to work with a diverse range of students and support them with positive outcomes that will enhance their student experience. If you have any issues or concerns you would like to voice, come and have a chat and we will be committed in supporting you.



Settling in

Starting university can be an emotional rollercoaster. You're starting a new course, meeting new people, and getting to know your way around the University and the city. It's normal to feel a bit homesick and overwhelmed, and it can be hard to know where to start. Here are some suggestions to help you settle in. Remember, there's lots of support available to you along every step of your journey at the University of Derby.

Get involved!

The Union of Students have over 100 societies and clubs that you can join. You can also get involved with volunteering, fundraising and sports. It's a great way to meet new people and learn new skills. To see the full range of activities you can take part in visit derbyunion.co.uk/getinvolved

Get to know your personal tutor

Your personal tutor is there to help you with any issues affecting your course and support you with your studies, get to know them and let them know if anything is affecting your ability to complete your work.

Join the gym

Nothing beats butterflies in your stomach like working up a sweat. You can join the gym in the Kedleston Road Sports Centre from just £99 for the year.

Explore Derby

The University has eBike hubs across different campuses and there are hubs across the city. You can use the solar-powered electric bikes to travel effortlessly. It's an easy way to explore the different campuses and the city. You can find out more at ebikesderby.com

Keep an eye out for events

The Union of Students host a variety of events throughout the year to help you get the most out of your time at Derby. From the Housing Fair in November to Destressifestival in March and even Puppy petting sessions. There's always something happening and there's something for everyone.

Free Condoms and Lube

If you're 18-24 you're entitled to free condoms, dams, and lube with a C-Card from your Union!



**Plagiarism?
Collusion?
Impersonation?
Contract
Cheating?
Fabrication?
So what?**

University workloads can be daunting. During some periods in the year, it can feel like you're surrounded by nothing but deadlines that are approaching too fast to handle. When the work starts mounting up, it's tempting to find a short-cut to relieve that anxiety. But remember, as a student the University has an expectation that the work you submit, is an honest attempt and reflective of your individual efforts.

Think of it this way; you've invited your friends round for tea and promised them a home-cooked meal. However, you're running out of time to find a recipe, buy the ingredients and cook the meal. As you panic about finding a solution, you decide to find that short-cut - the ready made aisle at the supermarket. You hurriedly cook the packaged meals and present them on the table in your own dishes in preparation for your friends arriving. You pass it all off as food you've made from scratch when in fact you didn't contribute anything original to create the meal. This is essentially how you might commit an academic offence but with words instead of food.

So remember, even if time is running out, don't try using anyone else's work other than your own as the consequences can be very serious. So let's talk about how to prevent it from happening. Some of our top tips can be found below - have a look and think about them during the academic year:

Understand what academic offences are! Familiarise yourself with the University's regulations around academic offences - follow the QR code so you understand the different types of offences and the procedures that accompany them.



Use your tutors! If you're struggling to complete your work or are unsure about the different types of academic offences, speak with your academic team as early as possible so they can support you.

Use Turnitin! Did you know that you can submit your assignment to Turnitin early to check the similarity rating? Give yourself a few days spare before your deadline to submit your work and see if there are problems that need rectifying - be organised!

Talk to us! Don't forget that if something is affecting your ability to complete your work, notify a lecturer or support service as early as possible so support can be put in place to help.

Be mindful of academic offences during this academic year. Remember there is plenty of support available for you to help you reach your potential at University. And don't forget, your Union advisors are always here to provide support, advice or guidance, just in case.

Programme Reps and Part Time Officers

The Union of Students is responsible for the academic representation structure at the University. Students just like you elect over 500 Programme Reps and Part Time Officers each year to represent you. Their job is to work closely with the University's Vice-President (Education) to identify any student issues or needs and represent the student voice at the highest meetings at the University.

Your programme will be represented by a Programme Rep (or two depending on the size of your cohort). The Programme Rep attends three Programme Committee Meetings each year, and sometimes further meetings relating to your programme or college. If you and/or your cohort have any issues or feedback about your programme, such as timetabling, assessments, programme structure etc. your Programme Rep should be the first person for you to speak to as they can take your feedback higher. Programme Reps have to be registered with the Union, so if you are unsure who your Programme Rep is, just ask us or your programme leader. Alternatively you could become the rep for your programme! You will need to be elected in by your cohort at the beginning of your academic year, and you will then receive training and support from us every step of the way. Ask your lecturer about elections or talk to Stephanie Groves at the Union or visit derbyunion.co.uk/change/academic if you would like to know more.

