

# **Service Level Agreement (SLA) from Student Learning Services (SLS)**

SLS have a small team of highly experienced study skills advisors who provide professional expertise, guidance, information and support to students and staff, on all aspects of effective study and learning at University.

The ultimate aim of the service is to enable students to make the most of their academic studies at university, to progress and be successful, and to become independent learners. We work in partnership with academic staff, other support service colleagues and students to facilitate an enjoyable, effective and efficient learning experience.

This SLA includes our service aim, details of what we can offer you, and what we expect of you as a user of the service. This document also outlines what is on offer and the minimum service you can expect under usual circumstances. However, there may be occasions when due to unforeseen circumstances, the level of provision is compromised and we cannot provide the full advertised service. We regularly monitor and evaluate our activities to ensure that wherever possible, and within our resources, we are providing the best possible service.

## **1. What to expect from the Student Services Hub**

- Advice on what services SLS can, and cannot, provide
- Signpost the student to the most appropriate source of learning support
- Offer information on times/locations of SLS provision and, as appropriate, book appointments

## **2. What to expect from Student Learning Services**

- Advise students on academic skills relevant to their studies at University
- Work with students to consolidate their previous learning and develop new learning strategies
- Advise on action-plans and learning strategies to improve grades
- Suggest practical solutions if students feel overwhelmed by assignment work
- Help students gain confidence in the transition to Higher Education
- Work with staff to embed academic skills in the curriculum

SLS do not offer on-going or sustained support to students with medium to long-term difficulties which impact on learning. In these circumstances, learning support may be provided by the Access and Inclusion Service. Please contact the Student Hub for details.

## **3. SLS offer the following:**

Information and online resources:

- An up-to-date website with access to information about the service.
- Access to information and relevant news via the portal, e-mails, plasma screens and noticeboards, through academic and service staff, and also Twitter.
- A range of resources and information made available to all students via Canvas (currently still under development).

## Workshops:

SLS offer a range of basic study skills workshops. Details can be found on the SLS web site and on plasma screens around the University. The workshops are designed for undergraduate students in their first and second year of study – but all students are welcome to attend if they think they can benefit. These are basic generic study skills workshops. They are good for revision with an opportunity to ask questions. The workshops are non-bookable and places are allocated on a ‘first-come first-served’ basis.

## Drop-in guidance:

During semester, we offer drop-in sessions (each a maximum of 30 minutes) every working day of the week. There are 6 sessions available each day, allocated on a first-come-first served basis. Once the sessions are booked up for a particular day, we are unable to create more spaces. Students sign up on a list available on the SLS noticeboard in 3A1. The list is usually available from 9.30am at the start of each day. For dates and times of drop-in session, please see the SLS web site. Any changes to the service will be listed on the SLS web site/Canvas site. Tuesdays and Fridays tend to be the least busy days.

If a student is unable to ‘drop-in’ or come to campus (e.g. they are a distance learning student, live a considerable distance off campus or are not attending classes for any reason), the student can contact SLS to make alternative arrangements. SLS endeavour to respond to SLS e-mails within a day. However, at busy times the waiting time may be extended to three days.

Drop-in sessions only run within semesters. Outside of semester, we run a bookable tutorial system. Please contact us to make an appointment. SLS

endeavour to respond to SLS e-mails within a day. However, at busy times or during vacations, the waiting times may be extended to three days.

Appointments are booked on a priority basis and most students are seen within 5 working days. However, during times of high demand, students may have to wait up to 2 weeks (10 working day) before meeting with a tutor.

One hour tutorials:

SLS have a limited number of 1 hour tutorials. These are reserved for students who are 'at risk' of academic failure or who have short-term difficulties which impact on their ability to do well. Usually the services is recommended to students by academic tutors, other support colleagues or via the SLS drop-in service. Students have to voluntarily contact us to make an appointment.

SLS endeavour to respond to SLS e-mails within a day. However, at busy times and during vacations, the waiting time may be extended to three days.

Appointments are booked on a priority basis and most students are seen within 5 working days. However, during times of high demand, students may have to wait up to 2 weeks (10 working day) before meeting with a tutor. If attending a tutorial, we would ask a student to e-mail work (if appropriate) to us at least 24 hours in advance of these slots.

#### **4. In the drop-in sessions and tutorials – SLS CAN**

- ✓ Answer any quick questions about studying at university
- ✓ Talk about any specific study issues or learning strategies
- ✓ Discuss issues around reading, writing and critical thinking

- ✓ Help a student start an assignment
- ✓ Check the assignment is focused on the task
- ✓ Give some generic feedback on an assignment
- ✓ Support a student when completing a re-submission
- ✓ Discuss other support services who may be able to help

### **In the drop-in sessions and tutorials - SLS CANNOT**

- ✗ Just check a whole assignment
- ✗ Advise on content or discipline specific issues
- ✗ Give feedback on every aspect which may need attention
- ✗ Edit or proof-read work
- ✗ Check grammar and spelling
- ✗ Teach English language
- ✗ Comment on grades
- ✗ Read assignments and feedback on mobile phones.
- ✗ Guarantee a pass grade.

### **5. What to expect when meeting with an SLS tutor**

- Be approachable, supportive and non-judgmental
- Treat you with dignity, respect and courtesy
- Work with you to explore learning strategies and ways of working which will improve the learning experience
- Signpost you to helpful academic resources

- Work with you to identify academic challenges and priorities and advise accordingly
- If appropriate, refer you to other university services, relevant staff or external organisations
- Keep to allocated time
- Keep enquiries and service feedback confidential (subject to the SLS statement on confidentiality and data sharing)

Information that you provide and a basic record on the engagement, will be stored securely within the SLS Information System. We will only share this information with colleagues outwith SLS, if we have your permission or if we are required to in a crisis situation.

Please find the link to our confidentiality and data sharing policy here:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/sls/students/#d.en.115009>

## **6. What we expect from you**

- To be respectful and courteous to staff and other students
- To check details of the service provision and dates/times on the SLS website
- To arrive at the drop-in/tutorials/workshops ready with questions or issues you wish to discuss
- To clarify anything you are unsure about in the tutorial or workshop
- To attend any appointments which you make with the service. If you are unable to make an appointment, to inform us as soon as it is possible

- To work in partnership with staff to find solutions to academic challenges
- To take responsibility for any final changes to assessments you make. Staff can only make suggestions about your work and implementation is up to you
- To be clear about what SLS are able to help you with and what we are unable to help you with. To have realistic expectations about the level of support staff can provide in the allocated time
- If requested, to send work in advance
- If appropriate, to inform SLS staff if you are receiving learning support from others sources within the university

## **7. Access to the service**

Details of routes to the university and disabled access:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/getting-here/>

Details on car parking:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/getting-here/parking/>

During the semester, it is extremely busy on campus – and so you may need to park at the halls of residence and walk across to the Cottrell building. Blue badge holders can use the allocated spaces.

Maps of the campus:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/getting-here/maps/>

Maps of the interior of building, including accessible routes:

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/autoimport/maps/CottrellFloorplans.pdf>

The nearest lift to 3A1 is either by the entrance in C block or in the X stairwell (off A corridor).

Waiting area:

For drop-in sessions and tutorials students are asked to wait in 3A1. We have a seated area and books to read.

Workshops can take place in any teaching location. Details are on the web site.

## **8. SLS are responsible for:**

- Providing staff who have expertise in academic skills support and student learning
- Ensuring SLS staff participate in CPD and remain in good academic standing
- When appropriate, ensure there is a private space to discuss academic issues
- Prioritising workloads to ensure that the service is as accessible, fair and efficient as possible, within the resources available
- Balancing the needs of different student cohorts and making decisions about priorities
- Advertising services appropriately



- Working within relevant sector guidelines and legislation

## **9. Monitoring Success**

SLS will monitor our performance against this Service Level Agreement using -

- SLS surveys (December and June)
- SLS Management Information System
- Student feedback through e-mails

Student evaluations are posted onto the SLS VLE by August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## **10. Complaints**

If there are any complaints about this service, in the first instance please contact the Head of Student Learning Services ([sls@stir.ac.uk](mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk)) or Lynn Maher (Advocacy and Inclusion Co-ordinator, Stirling Students' Union - [lynn.maher@stir.ac.uk](mailto:lynn.maher@stir.ac.uk)). The University of Stirling complaints procedure is available here <https://www.stir.ac.uk/complaints/>

## **11. More information:**

Student Learning Services

[sls@stir.ac.uk](mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk)

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/student-learning-services/>

OR

The Student Hub

ask@stir.ac.uk

The Student Hub accessed via Queens Court entrance of Cottrell Building

01786 466022

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/studentsserviceshub/>

SUMMARY OF SLA				
ACTIVITY	WHO	AVAILABLE	ACCESS	Comments
General e-mail enquiry	Anybody	All year round	Contact <a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a> OR <a href="mailto:Ask@stir.ac.uk">Ask@stir.ac.uk</a>	SLS endeavour to respond to SLS e-mail usually within one day. At busy times the waiting time may be extended to three days
Drop-in guidance (face-to-face)	All students	In semester time only. 30 minute slots. Dates and times on the SLS web page.  Outwith semester times – see below.	Sign up on sheet in 3A1 after 9.30am on the day	There are 6, 30 minute slots per day. Drop-in times are available on the SLS web site.
'Drop-in' guidance (e-mail)	On-line students	In semester time only. 30 minute slots.  Outwith semester times – see below.	Contact <a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a>	E-mail guidance is usually provided within 3 working days – but at busy time this may be extended to 10 working days.
One-hour tutorials	All students	Only available outwith semester dates. Limited service in university holidays and summer.	Contact <a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a> OR <a href="mailto:Ask@stir.ac.uk">Ask@stir.ac.uk</a>	A limited number of slots per week. Students are usually seen within 5 working days – but at busy time this may be extended to 10 working days.
One- hour Tutorials	Students 'At Risk' of academic failure. Usually the service is recommended to students by academic tutors, other support colleagues or via the SLS drop-in service	All year, booked on a priority basis. Limited service in university holidays and summer.	Contact <a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a> OR <a href="mailto:Ask@stir.ac.uk">Ask@stir.ac.uk</a>	Students are usually seen within 5 working days – but at busy time this may be extended to 10 working days.
Workshops	Aimed at undergraduate students in first and second year. However, all students welcome if they feel they could benefit.	Dates and times on the SLS web site	No need to book, first come, first served. More details see SLS webpage	Note – these are basic generic study skills workshops. They are good for revision with an opportunity to ask questions.
Emergency cover	If staff are available and there is a genuine emergency around academic work- we will endeavour to see a student asap. However, we cannot guarantee a member of staff will be available.	If a staff member is not available, please e-mail <a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a> and we respond as quickly as possible. In the meantime we suggest students contact their personal tutors and/or advisors of study.		