

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

Dr Ben Calvert, Is-Ganghellor
Dr Ben Calvert, Vice-Chancellor

Jayne Bryant MS
Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee
Jayne.Bryant@senedd.wales

18 July 2023

Dear Jayne,

Committee Letter regarding International Students

Thank you for your letter regarding the committee's concerns regarding international students and particularly those who travel with dependants. We were aware of the concerns raised by Buffy Williams during the debate on the Children, Young People and Education Committee Report on Mental Health support in Higher Education and wrote to her immediately afterwards to offer a meeting to discuss her concerns.

It is always concerning to hear of these individual cases, but I would like to assure you that the welfare of our students is our primary focus. We have met with a number of our local Senedd Members and Members of Parliament over the last year and are keen to engage with our local community and politicians to ensure all students are receiving appropriate support.

As I am sure you are aware there are strict regulations in relation to student visa requirements and I can assure you that we have stringent processes in place. In order to successfully apply for a Student visa, applicants are required to demonstrate that they hold £9207 for themselves, and £6120 for each accompanying family member. This money is for the express purpose of meeting the living costs for the main applicant and their families while in the UK and must be demonstrated to UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) at the point of application. As a Student Route sponsor, the university completes checks to ensure that applicants are able to successfully apply for a visa and support themselves whilst here. We check that all potential students hold the funds at the appropriate level for themselves and each of their dependants. This helps to shield students from preventable visa refusals and associated sunk costs.

In addition we offer guidance to all of our inbound international students about the current challenges and will continue to do so. In fact we strongly encourage them not to bring dependants, however students are often reluctant to travel without their families for understandable reasons. We are aware that some students have been impacted by higher private rental costs however we have been managing these on a case by case basis with an internal escalation protocol to help students who maybe struggling to find accommodation.

With regards to the cost-of-living pressures, the University of South Wales has made over £850,000 available to increase measures designed to help offset some of the impact of cost of

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living rises on our students in this academic year alone. This includes a free breakfast for all and a cost-of-living bursary that was available to all students to apply for. To date we have already helped over 5,000 students with that bursary, receiving payments up to £200 based on their needs.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our students have a positive student experience and are supported throughout their time with us. We encourage all members who have had contact with students who required additional help or support to contact us, with the details of the individual students, so we can reach out directly and ensure that they are accessing all of the help and support that is available.

As always, we would be very happy to meet with you to discuss in more detail how the University is supporting our international students.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Milton FCIPD
Prif Swyddog Gweithredu / Chief Operating Officer