Welcome to St Mary’s
St Mary’s recognises that looked after children and care leavers face a number of challenges on the path to university. We are strongly committed to supporting you to ensure that you get the most from your course and university experience.

This guide is for looked after children, care leavers, carers, local authority staff and teachers. It contains all the essential information on the support that is offered for care leavers at St Mary’s, from pre-application to graduation.

Who is a care leaver?

St Mary’s classifies a care leaver as a person who has been looked after for a minimum of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who was in care on their 16th birthday. A young person’s status as a care leaver can be defined as follows:

**Eligible child:** a young person who is 16 or 17 and who has been looked after by the Local Authority/Health and Social Care Trust for a minimum of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and who is still looked after.

**Relevant child:** a young person who is 16 or 17 who has left care after their 16th birthday and before leaving care was an eligible child.

**Former relevant child:** a young person who is aged between 18 and 25, who before turning 18 was either an eligible or a relevant child, or both.
Studying at St Mary’s

Peter

“As a care leaver, I never thought I could go to university. Whatever your ambitions are, St Mary’s will do all they can to help you.”

Laura

“I have had the opportunity to take a work placement module in an advertising company, which has given me some valuable work experience that I can put on my CV.”

Support

St Mary’s gives priority to the quality of the support it offers to students. Consistently high standards of advice and guidance are offered, including a health centre, financial advice service, one-to-one sessions, and disability and dyslexia support, to ensure you have all the help you might need during your time with us. The Chaplaincy Team is at the heart of our community and has an inclusive mission to offer pastoral care for all.

Employment

Most students are able to complete a work placement which gives you credits that count towards your degree. Whatever subject you study, a work placement can help you enhance your knowledge and develop key employment skills.

The Careers Service at St Mary’s is part of The Careers Group, University of London, the largest careers service in the country. You will receive all the help you need to move on successfully after your degree, putting you on the right track to achieve the career you want.
95% of St Mary’s students are in employment or further study within six months of graduating.
(Source HESA 2017)
Support whilst you study with us

Students are given support and assistance throughout their period of study. Members of different services, such as the resident mentors and staff from the Chaplaincy, the Security Office, and the Students' Union, work together in close collaboration to offer you all the support you may need.

Once you have accepted your offer to study at St Mary’s, you will be contacted by a member of our Student Services Team, this person will remain your main point of contact. They will make sure that you have all the information and advice you need.

For more information

www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-support/care-leavers/care-leavers.aspx

Student accommodation

The Accommodation Service offers general advice and assistance on a wide range of housing issues for students living in University accommodation and in the private sector. The Accommodation Service will also make sure you have suitable accommodation during the summer breaks. There is a specific hall that remains open during the Christmas closure period; priority can be given if you have specified this as your number one choice*. If you reside in halls of residence, the resident mentor and student senior residents will assist you in settling in.

* In accordance with St Mary’s Accommodation Allocation Policy

For more information

Email: accommodation@stmarys.ac.uk
www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation
Counselling

At St Mary’s we have a team of professionally trained counsellors who are accredited with the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

Our counsellors are available by appointment, offering a free and totally confidential service to all St Mary’s students who are experiencing emotional distress or difficulties.

For more information

Email: counselling@stmarys.ac.uk
www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-support/wellbeing/counselling/counselling.aspx
Support whilst you study with us

Disability and dyslexia
The Wellbeing Service aims to provide confidential advice and support to those students who request it. This includes not only dyslexic and disabled students but also those who suffer with a mental health condition or who have medical conditions that affect their studies as well as other specific learning difficulties such as dyspraxia and dyscalculia. St Mary’s positively encourages students to disclose their additional requirements at the earliest opportunity so that individual adjustments can be discussed and the appropriate arrangements agreed.

Services available include:
- Accommodation adjustments (in halls)
- Help with applications for funding – Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA)
- Diagnostic assessment for dyslexia
- Examination arrangements
- Individual specialist tutorials for dyslexic/dyspraxic students
- Liaison with academic staff (only with student’s consent)
- Specialist support – note takers, sign language interpreters
- General advice on disability matters
- Mental health support

For more information
Email: wellbeing@stmarys.ac.uk
www.stmarys.ac.uk/disability-and-dyslexia

Financial advice
Student Funding Service
Going to university is potentially one of the greatest investments you will ever make, which will improve your chances of employment and boost your earning capability.

However, it is important that you are financially prepared for university. By giving some thought to your finances before you arrive at St Mary’s, and with the help and support of our experienced staff, you will be better prepared for life at university and able to get the most out of your time here.

The Student Funding Service offers advice and guidance on all aspects of student funding:
- Bank accounts
- Budgeting
- Student loans and grants
- Hardship funds

For more information
Email: studentfundingservice@stmarys.ac.uk
www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-finance/overview.aspx
**Bursary**

St Mary’s University is pleased to be able to offer bursaries for Care Leavers of £3,000 for each year of your degree programme whilst you study at St Mary’s University*.

The Bursary is one of a number of measures we have in place to support care leavers including a named point of contact at the university, a guaranteed place in university accommodation (365 days if necessary), financial support for you to attend graduation, automatic registration onto our paid Student Ambassadors Scheme, and access to additional Hardship Funds, if required.

* Maximum of three years for an undergraduate degree. Additional funding for one year is available if you are doing an extended degree with a foundation year and/or if you progress to a PGCE programme.

There are other scholarships also available. Please see the St Mary’s website for further information where you can find the application forms.

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**For more information**

Email: scholarships@stmarys.ac.uk  
www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-finance/scholarships/scholarships.aspx
Support whilst you study with us

**Academic support**

Upon your arrival, you will be given an personal tutor to assist you directly with your studies and you will also be able to get help from learning advisers. Learning advisers are there to provide you with the skills to and resources you need to enjoy your studies, overcome any difficulties and make the most of your time at St Mary’s.

They can help you with many aspects of studying, including:

- Essay writing
- Writing for reports
- Time management and organising your workload
- Unpicking the question
- Effective use of books and other sources
- Overcoming study anxiety

And much more!

**Careers**

St Mary’s Careers Service offers comprehensive careers guidance and information/advice to St Mary’s students, staff and recent graduates.

**Let’s talk about your future**

You can drop in to the Careers Service office (J3) to speak to a careers consultant in a careers appointment (ideal for CV and application feedback, or as an initial career planning discussion), or you can book an appointment to have a longer more in-depth careers discussion or practice interview. We guide you in preparing excellent CVs and applications, as well as offering practice sessions to successfully deal with interviews and assessment centres testing (including psychometric and personality testing for work).

We help current students and recent graduates find and successfully apply for:

- Work experience placements
- Part-time work
- Vacation work
- Internships
- Graduate training schemes
- Full-time work
- Further study

**Further study**

We can also guide you in preparing excellent CVs and applications, as well as help you to practice for success in interviews and at assessment centres.
‘Get Set for Success’
All students with a care background that have been accepted onto a course at St Mary’s will be invited to attend the pre-enrolment programme ‘Get Set for Success’ before term starts. This event involves orientation sessions, academic preparation and social activities to assist transition to university level learning and life.

For more information
www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-support/careers
Information accurate at the time of printing, May 2018.
For most up-to-date information please see our website: