

## Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust Summer School Agreement & Code of Conduct 2025

The Supported Progression, STEP and Sutton Trust Summer School Programme Agreement and Code of Conduct outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both Durham University and those taking part in Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust Summer School in order to ensure that the programme runs to maximum effect for all involved.

It is important that you are aware of the following points relating to the programme. If you require any further clarification, we are available by email or you can request a telephone call to discuss these in more detail.

This document is divided up into a few main sections. Please ensure you have read the entire document before agreeing to the declaration in the online student forms. You may find it helpful to keep this document safe, in case you need to refer back to it later on. The sections are:

- 1) Key Terms and Definitions.
- 2) Eligibility for the guaranteed offer and how it works.
- 3) Expected student conduct.
- 4) Common scenarios explained.

### 1. **Key Terms and Definitions:**

**“Guaranteed Alternative Offer”** – (also simply referred to as a ‘guaranteed offer’). Students who complete the programme successfully will be eligible for a contextual offer. They must show a high level of participation in the summer school. It is important to understand that it is the “offer” that is guaranteed and this is not a guaranteed place at the University – students still need to finish their A levels or equivalent and achieve the required grades, (this is the ‘conditional’ part of the offer). Where a degree programme involves any interview element (i.e. Primary Education), it is the offer of an interview that is guaranteed. The offer is also conditional on the submission of a satisfactory UCAS form (see below). The ‘alternative’ part is best explained as being equivalent to typically two grades lower than the standard offer. Therefore, if the standard entry requirement for your chosen course is AAA, then successfully completing the summer school could mean your offer would instead be ABB.

Essentially, this means that based on the outcome of your engagement with the programme, the University *may* give you a promise to make you an offer *if* you apply to us for a single honours undergraduate course at Durham, prior to the January equal consideration deadline, and you are studying any required level 3 subjects for your chosen course. You will then get a place at the University *if* you ‘get the grades’. Please be aware that some offers will include subject specific requirements for example “AAB including an A in History” or “BBB including Maths A Level OR grade A GCSE Maths”. We will explain this fully throughout the programme but it is *your responsibility* to ensure you are ultimately able to meet these conditions.

If you wish to apply for any joint or combined honours course, this is normally possible, but we cannot guarantee it. Please get in touch with us to discuss prior to applying. This will be subject to you being able to meet any subject specific or other requirements of all programmes. The University may also need to consider the level of demand for these courses in the relevant application year. However, we will work with you to try our best to accommodate this wherever possible.

**“Home Student”** – the additional admissions benefit of successfully completing the Supported Progression, STEP or Sutton Trust programme are limited to students who are

recognised as having 'home status' and are classified as eligible for 'home' fees by Student Finance England at the time an application is made through UCAS. This includes the guarantee of an offer and the alternative conditions associated with any offer.

You have been offered a place on the Supported Progression/Sutton Trust/STEP programme based on the information you have provided. From this information, we believe you are likely to be classified as being eligible for 'home' fees as information in your application or other evidence you have supplied could indicate that you have 'settled status' in the UK. However, it is important that you understand that it is not possible to reach a conclusive decision on your 'home' status at this stage. Your actual fee status cannot be determined until later in the UCAS application process and the summer school team will not determine this. **If you complete the programme but are later classified as ineligible for 'home fees', you may not be eligible to receive the benefits mentioned above.**

If you know now or learn later that you are not a 'home' student it is your responsibility to inform us and to seek further advice. Further information about fee status can be found online at: [UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - England: fee status](https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/international-student-advice-and-guidance/england/fee-status/).

**"Satisfactory UCAS form"** – Students applying with a guaranteed alternative offer from Supported Progression, Sutton Trust Summer School or STEP are still subject to the rules and regulations of UCAS and of the University. As such, you must submit a satisfactory UCAS form in order to receive the guaranteed offer. In this context, a UCAS form may be deemed unsatisfactory if for example, the personal statement is plagiarised or inadequate, if the qualifications submitted are not suitable for the programme of choice (as above), your application is submitted late (after the January equal consideration deadline), you submit false information etc. It is your responsibility to ensure you comply with such requirements.

**"Successful Completion"** – In order to successfully complete the programme you must attend and complete all compulsory events and activities such as the Summer School. Successful completion of the summer school means that you attend, take part and complete the full summer school. If you are asked to leave the summer school due to a breach of the summer school code of conduct, or you elect to leave for reasons other than illness, you would not be considered to have successfully completed the summer school.

## **2. Eligibility for the guaranteed offer and how it works**

Students who participate in Supported Progression/Sutton Trust/STEP may be eligible for a guaranteed offer. It is important that you understand what this means and particularly, what it does NOT mean.

Simply having a place on Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust does not mean you are automatically eligible for a guaranteed offer. In order to qualify for the guaranteed offer, you must:

- Successfully complete the programme. This means attending all compulsory events and activities, as well as completing the summer school.
- Submit a satisfactory UCAS form and complete the application process as normal within the right application year, this includes being able to meet any subject specific grade requirements, admissions tests, or interviews as relevant to your chosen course.
- Be classified as a 'home' student when you apply to the University – being given a place on the summer school does not mean this assessment has taken place. See 'Home student' above.

Please be aware that it is the offer that is guaranteed, not the place at University. The guarantee therefore is that you will be made **an** offer if you apply to Durham University for a

single honours course and are taking any subject specific requirements for your chosen course (see below 'common scenarios' if you wish to apply for more than one course, for a combined course, or for a different subject than you are taking on summer school). Again, this does not mean you are guaranteed a place and it is important that you understand that you are still required to achieve the grades set out in the offer to confirm your place. College allocation is separate to this process and is therefore not guaranteed.

You may be aware that Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust students are sometimes eligible for additional bursary funding. It is important that you understand up front that such funding arrangements can change each year and as it stands currently, additional funding is means tested. This means that you are not guaranteed to receive any additional bursary funding from the University as a result of your participation on a summer school.

*Please note that nothing above means you are committing to Durham University early in the application process. You do not make this commitment until you are at the stage of the UCAS process where you would normally be deciding which universities to apply to, that is, September/October of Year 13 at the earliest. You are only committing to have understood what you would need to do in order to achieve the benefits on offer should you wish to.*

### **3. Expected student conduct**

**Students are expected to take seriously their commitment to the Supported Progression, STEP and Sutton Trust scheme by:**

- Committing to attend all compulsory timetabled events and activities, unless, due to reasons beyond your control (i.e. illness) you are unable to participate.
- Informing the SP/STEP/Sutton Trust team if you are unable to attend any events or activities.
- Informing the University if any issues involving the scheme arise or there are any changes to your circumstances such as changing or dropping A level subjects or if you move house or your contact details change.
- Maintaining regular, appropriate and professional contact with the team, including by replying to all requests for information and signing up to events on time.
- Abide by the code of conduct (below) whilst engaging in online events/activities and attending on site events at the university; and understanding that any breach of the code of conduct could result in your place on Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust being withdrawn.

**We want you to have a positive experience and make the most of the programme.**

In order to ensure that everyone enjoys the programme it's important that you follow the rules, act with respect and have a responsible attitude throughout your time with Durham University either online or when attending events on site at the university. The following code of conduct applies to any form of interaction with the university as part of the programme. This means both attending events on site at the university and any online activity. Online activity could be using the University's website, Microsoft Teams, or any other online platform as may be used from time to time.

Remember that you are in an inclusive learning environment shared with people who may be of different ages, nationalities, religions, cultures and backgrounds, with different knowledge, ability and experience to you.

It is important to note that for online components of the programme, communicating online through text can lead to misunderstandings, so it is important to give other people the benefit

of the doubt, and be kind in your interactions: sometimes it's difficult to know or fully appreciate the situation of the person you're talking to.

**We expect all Supported Progression, STEP and Sutton Trust students to:**

- Commit to do the best academic work possible and engage positively with all sessions and activities.
- Maintain a high level of engagement with the programme, unless there is a valid reason for absence, such as illness, and you have notified us of this. Online this engagement would include responding to messages, attending webinars, and all compulsory sessions and meetings. At on-site events this would include class sessions, meals, activities, and meetings.
- To catch up on any missed sessions and keep the team informed. For example, if you are unable to attend a live webinar, you may be expected to watch the recording later and to confirm this with us for monitoring purposes.
- Tolerate and respect all individuals including but not limited to people of different races, cultures, religions, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, and national origins.
- Behave in a friendly, cooperative, polite, and responsible manner toward all persons involved in activities. This includes, online sessions and activities, on site events, as well as in the larger campus and local communities.
- Uphold academic and personal integrity, respecting the ideas and property of others, and ensure that those around you do the same. Cheating, copying, and plagiarising are unacceptable.
- Follow any and all additional session rules as set out below or from time to time by University staff leading on events.
- Respect the privacy of other participants, including by refraining from viewing, using, or sharing contact details such as email addresses. Do not attempt to contact Durham student mentors or University staff using the private chat function in Microsoft Teams, personal email addresses, or to make direct contact via other social media accounts. Similarly, *no mentor or staff member should attempt to contact you using your social media accounts – if they do, please contact us immediately.*
- Refrain from bringing prohibited items (including alcohol, illegal substances and dangerous items) to any of the events.
- Not use tobacco, cigarettes, vape/e-cigarettes or similar on university premises.
- Use computer and other resources responsibly.
- Report any incidents affecting you or witnessed by you, that you believe to be a clear breach of the above, especially if you are made to feel uncomfortable or upset.

**Typical online session rules include:**

- Comply with requests of University staff e.g. the SP/STEP/ST team, academic teaching staff, and mentors. Such requests may include turning off your camera/microphone in meetings unless invited to turn them on. This is so that background noise and interruptions can be kept to a minimum for the benefit of all participants.
- Being mindful of your background whilst having your camera on during sessions. Students should avoid having anything in their background that is likely to cause another person upset, offence or would in any other way make them feel uncomfortable.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language or offensive conversation topics and behave in an appropriate and responsible manner at all times. This includes refraining from sharing or distributing inappropriate or offensive material.

When using SP/ST/STEP online communication facilities **you may not:**

- Post anything abusive, defamatory, obscene or otherwise illegal. This includes but is not limited to not using words or sharing content that is offensive or inflammatory, such as language, names or content that is sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, sexually explicit, abusive, contains swearing or is otherwise likely to cause offence.
- Copy or forward email or any other private messages without permission, unless as reporting inappropriate or offensive behaviour of other users through official channels.
- Include material that is confidential or the copyright of which is owned by someone else, unless you have first obtained permission.
- Post any advertising or promotional material.
- Behave in an impolite or offensive manner.
- Deliberate or reckless activities having, with reasonable likelihood, any of the following characteristics:
  - Wasting staff effort or Durham University resources;
  - Corrupting or destroying other users' data;
  - Violating the privacy of other users;
  - Disrupting the work of other users;
  - Continuing any activity, including use of software or hardware, after Durham University staff has requested that such activity cease for example where such use or activity is causing disruption to Durham University systems.
  - Other misuse of SP's/ST's/STEP's online platforms, such as the introduction of "viruses" or other harmful software or malware via Durham resources to resources on SP/STEP/ST online platforms, or another Organisation's network.

Durham University reserves the right to remove, vary or amend any of the content which appears on our online platforms at any time and without prior notice.

When submitting postings or assignments within the summer school you must give due acknowledgement for material quoted from other sources.

**Typical on site rules for student conduct include:**

- Comply with the requests of your Event Staff, Academic Teaching Staff, Site Manager and Mentors.
- Adhere to the timetable including arriving to breakfast punctually and respecting any curfew.
- Attend all classes, guest lectures and activities on time.
- Leave your rooms, the refectory and classrooms tidy at all times and dispose of litter appropriately.
- Not leave the site unescorted by residential staff except by agreement with the summer school senior staff.
- Not wander around the site or use the computer resources unescorted by residential staff unless expressly allowed to do so.
- Not enter any accommodation block or other students' bedrooms, except your own.
- Not deface, tamper with or damage the university's or other people's property.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language (eg, swearing) and behave in an appropriate and responsible manner at all times.
- Not speak to members of the press – should any visit one of the events – unless this has been cleared with the summer school senior staff. (This is for the protection and safety of others and to respect the privacy of others).

### **Serious Incidents of Misbehaviour**

In the event of serious incidents of misbehaviour, such as fighting, damage to property, racial abuse or any other discrimination, the use of illegal substances or alcohol, the student(s) concerned will not be allowed to continue on the programme, their parents (or guardians) will be informed and arrangements will be made for the student(s) to be removed. To the extent that such behaviours can take place online, this includes cyber-bullying or presenting online in a manner consistent with the above. Where such behaviour takes place on site at the university, parents (or guardians) will be informed and arrangements will be made for the student(s) to be returned home. Parents/guardians will be liable for the cost of the student returning home in this event.

### **Confidentiality**

Whilst we respect every individual's right to privacy we cannot promise absolute confidentiality. All information held concerning students on the programme will be kept strictly in adherence to Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation. We observe strict confidentiality regarding all student records. We will, however, inform parents/guardians or other relevant bodies of any issues that we are made aware of that we believe warrant such action. Furthermore, for reasons of safety, transparency, and to safeguard all participants in the programme, during online activity, any conversations had on a 1-1 basis between students and members of the University, e.g. within "Chat" functionality, may be recorded and shared with the staff team for moderation. We do not monitor conversations students have with each other.

### **Security**

Each individual is responsible for the security and use of any username and password they may be provided with. You are not allowed to use the account, username or password of any other user. You must not disclose your username or password to anyone else.

In compliance with Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff, students and visitors using University IT systems should not create, transmit, receive, view or store material with the intent to radicalise themselves or others.

If a member of the University community believes they may have encountered a breach of this provision, they should contact the Office of the University Secretary immediately.

### **Copyright**

Copyright of any study material and all other content of SP/STEP/Sutton Trust are owned or controlled by Durham University. You are permitted to view, copy, and print any documents shared with you as part of the programme subject to your agreement that:

- Your use of the material is for your own personal information, and for non-commercial purposes only.
- You will not modify the documents or graphics in any form or manner.
- You will not copy or distribute graphics separately from their accompanying text and you will not quote materials out of their context.

### **Additional Rules and Requests**

When you engage with the university either online or at events on site, staff may explain some additional rules and regulations that will apply to specific sessions or activities. As such, it is expected that you will adhere to them for your own health and safety, and that of other students and staff. The above provides a broad overview of our expectations but failure to adhere to additional rules and requests at events, not set out above, will be deemed as a breach of the code of conduct.

### **Please note:**

**We operate a "zero tolerance policy" with regards to the above. This does not mean that students will be removed for minor breaches but it does mean that we will**

challenge negative behaviours. However, if students do not adhere to this Code of Conduct or we otherwise feel it is in the best interests of the wider programme cohort or University community, they may be withdrawn from the scheme by the Programme Manager at any point. Persistently negative behaviours (even if minor) or serious breaches that are incompatible with the supportive and inclusive environment we create will result in students being removed. Where students are asked to leave part-way through an on-site event, this will typically be at their (or more likely their parent or guardian's) own expense.

#### **4. Common Scenarios Explained**

##### **Withdrawal from the programme / exclusion from events –**

You have been accepted onto this scheme because we believe you have academic potential based on the information given on your application form and support from your school or college. If for any reason your school or college no longer wishes to support your participation in the scheme, or your academic achievement is significantly lower than predicted, it may no longer be appropriate for you to continue on the scheme.

Additionally, the team work hard to ensure that all events are safe and enjoyable for all participants. To help us achieve this it is important to ensure that you follow the rules, act with respect and have a responsible attitude throughout your time with us. With this in mind, we may withdraw anyone from the programme who acts in breach of the code of conduct, session rules or any rules outlined on events.

##### **Changing subjects –**

Due to competition for places, it may not always be possible to change subject throughout the programme, particularly where subject strands are full. We will not accept change requests in advance of the spring event(s) and we may be unable to accept subject change requests within four weeks of the Summer School as we need to confirm numbers with academic staff for planning and admissions purposes. It is important to note that although we may agree to consider a request, this does not guarantee that your request will be successful. If you are concerned about your subject allocation it is imperative that you seek advice from the team as soon as possible.

##### **Combining subjects –**

If you wish to apply for a course at Durham that involves more than one subject, then you will need to contact the summer school team. This would include any course that is not single honours, such as Joint Honours, Combined Honours in Social Sciences, Liberal Arts, or Natural Sciences. It will normally be possible for you to receive a contextual or alternative offer through SP/STEP/ST for such a course but demand for places on these programmes can be very high, and so this will need to be considered in the relevant application year and is therefore not guaranteed. Advice about this and similar scenarios will be provided throughout the programme and you can seek advice from the team if you have any questions. You can e-mail:

- [supported.progression@durham.ac.uk](mailto:supported.progression@durham.ac.uk)
- [step@durham.ac.uk](mailto:step@durham.ac.uk)
- [sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk](mailto:sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk)

##### **Attendance at events –**



If you are unable, for any reason, to attend any of the programme events, such as the sessions as part of the online summer series, or the summer school, you should contact us immediately. Please note that it may be appropriate to withdraw students from the programme in order to give a place to a candidate who is able to complete the programme.

We highly recommend that you attend all events to make the most of your experience. We have selected you partly based on your assumed motivation for the programme and thus we have an expectation that students will participate in every event, except in exceptional circumstances such as illness or other unforeseen circumstances. If for whatever reason you cannot attend an event, it is important that you give us as much notice as you can.

### **Deferring your offer –**

Sometimes students want to take a year out from their studies (gap year) to work or travel before coming to university. Where students have an offer from a university but want to start a year later, this is called 'deferred entry' or a 'deferred offer'. For example, if you are in Year 13 in 2025/26 you would ordinarily be applying to start your course at university in September/October 2026. This is called '2026 entry'. However, if you apply for deferred entry this would mean starting a year later in September/October 2027 or 2027 entry.

It is possible but not guaranteed that students can defer their offers for one year. There are two main ways this can happen:

- 1) Students apply through UCAS in Year 13 as usual but apply for deferred entry. This means you will find out whether or not you have a place for the relevant entry year sooner.
- 2) Students choose not to apply in Year 13 but submit a request for the SP/STEP/ST offer to be held over for a subsequent entry year. It is essential that you inform the team and discuss this with us if you wish to 'carry over' the guaranteed offer from the programme.

Students on the programme will normally be able to defer their offer by one entry year (i.e. to start their course one year later). It will not normally be possible for students to defer entry for more than one year. If a student wishes or needs to defer beyond one year, they would typically be expected to re-apply through UCAS for the relevant year of entry. It may be possible that students in this position could receive an alternative offer but this will be considered on a case-by-case basis and any reduction in grade requirement would be based on the standard entry requirements at that time (i.e., if your chosen course was AAA but your SP/ST/STEP offer was ABB, but the grade requirement has gone up by the time you apply to A\*AA, then the offer would also go up to something like AAB).

Should you apply to Durham and miss the grades on results day, if you choose to re-apply the following year and get in touch with us to let us know, you will likely still be able to benefit from an SP/ST/STEP guaranteed alternative offer, the following year provided you are within two years of completing your summer school (Year 13 would be within one year, and the year after would be within two years). Please note, as you will need to re-apply, although the alternative offer is guaranteed, the conditions of the offer may change the subsequent year, in line with any updated entry requirements for that cycle (as explained above). If you are intending to re-apply to Durham following results day, please get in touch with us to discuss prior to applying.

If you are thinking of applying for deferred entry, then we will be happy to discuss this with you at that time. Please get in touch with us on:

- [supported.progression@durham.ac.uk](mailto:supported.progression@durham.ac.uk)
- [step@durham.ac.uk](mailto:step@durham.ac.uk)
- [sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk](mailto:sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk)



**Applying for more than one course at Durham –**

Occasionally, students may choose to apply for more than one single honours course at Durham. Each student is only guaranteed one alternative offer through Supported Progression/STEP/Sutton Trust. As such, if you are considering applying to more than one course at Durham, please get in touch with us to discuss on:

- [supported.progression@durham.ac.uk](mailto:supported.progression@durham.ac.uk),
- [step@durham.ac.uk](mailto:step@durham.ac.uk)
- [sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk](mailto:sutton.trust@durham.ac.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We appreciate that there's a lot to take in. We also understand that for the vast majority of students the matters we draw attention to in the code of conduct will never be an issue, with or without a formal document. So we also appreciate you taking the time to read this.**