



Pre-appointment Guide

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FAQs



What is a one-at-a-time (OAAT) appointment?

An OAAT appointment is a focused, 45-minute session with a qualified Wellbeing Practitioner, usually a counsellor. During the appointment, you will have the opportunity to explore what is currently affecting you, identify a goal for the session, and discuss practical strategies and next steps.

The aim is to help you gain clarity, feel supported, and leave with actions or ideas that may help you move forward.

These are available both in-person and on Teams all year round.

We are a specialist university service based on-campus and have additional expertise in what is available to you and what the common challenges are as an Aberystwyth University student.

What kinds of issues can I discuss?

You can talk about any issue that is affecting your wellbeing or academic experience, including:

- Academic pressures
- Motivation and procrastination
- Overwhelm
- Homesickness
- Relationships and friendships
- Loneliness
- Stress and anxiety
- Low mood
- Feeling lost or different



Is the service confidential?

Yes. What you discuss during your appointment will be treated confidentially.

There may be rare occasions when we need to share information outside of Student Services without your consent. For example, there may be serious concerns about your safety or the safety of someone else.

Wherever possible, we would discuss this with you first.

Will I receive counselling?

Instead of a pre-agreed block of counselling, you can book sessions one-at-a-time, that focus on your immediate concerns and helping you identify practical next steps. This means you can access appointments at different times of the year when you need them.

If ongoing counselling may be more suitable for your needs, your practitioner can discuss external support options with you.

Can I choose my practitioner?

Yes. Once you have registered you will be able to select the practitioner of your choice. You can see information about our practitioners here: *[insert link]*. Research suggests that the relationship you develop with a practitioner is the paramount factor, so we recommend repeat appointments with the same practitioner.

What happens during my first appointment?

Your practitioner will:

- Listen to your concerns
- Explore what is most important to you
- Help identify a focus or goal for the session
- Discuss possible coping strategies, resources, or next steps
- Help you consider what support may be most helpful

After the appointment, you will receive a summary of the actions discussed.

Do I need to prepare for my appointment?

No formal preparation is required. Some students find it helpful to think about:

- What is currently affecting them
- What they would like support with
- What they hope to take away from the session

However, it is completely fine if you are unsure where to start—we can work through this together. We have developed a pre-session questionnaire you can choose to complete: [SST Pre-Session Questionnaire 2.docx](#)

Can I book another appointment?

Yes. Your practitioner will explore with you whether and when another appointment would be helpful and you are able to book further appointments for at least one calendar month after you register. If you are no longer able to access the booking calendar, you will simply need to update your registration form.

What if I need ongoing support?

If ongoing therapeutic support would be helpful, your practitioner can discuss suitable options with you.

Our Student Assistance Programme, Wisdom Wellbeing, can be accessed for free by Aberystwyth students. This offers up to 6 sessions of video counselling and can offer evening and weekend sessions, ideal if you're accessing the service on placement or on a year abroad: *[insert link]*

Students may be able to self-refer to Area 43, which provides counselling for people aged up to 30 who are registered with a Ceredigion GP. *[insert link]*

You may also be eligible for ongoing 1-2-1 mentoring if you have used NHS services for your mental health.



Seeking Support - Common Myths

"My problem isn't serious enough."

If something is affecting your wellbeing or studies, it is important enough to discuss.

"Someone else probably needs the appointment more than I do."

The service is available to all students who may benefit from support.

"I need to know exactly what's wrong before booking."

You do not need a diagnosis or a clear explanation of how you're feeling to access support.

"Talking about my difficulties means I'll be judged."

Our practitioners provide a supportive, non-judgemental space where you can talk openly about your experiences.



It's okay to feel nervous

Many students feel anxious before their first appointment. This is completely normal. You don't need to have all the right words or know exactly what you want to say. Your practitioner will help guide the conversation.

You don't need to be in crisis

You do not need to be experiencing a major difficulty to access support. Students attend appointments for a wide range of reasons, from managing stress and academic pressures to exploring personal concerns or making sense of difficult feelings.

It is okay if you're not sure where to start

Many students come to appointments unsure how to explain what they are experiencing. Your practitioner can help you explore what has been happening and identify what feels most important to discuss.



You don't have to share everything

You are welcome to talk about whatever feels important to you. Equally, you do not have to discuss anything before you are ready. The appointment is your space to use in the way that feels most helpful.

The session is collaborative

Your practitioner will not tell you what you should do. Instead, they will work alongside you to explore your situation, identify strengths, and consider possible next steps that feel realistic and achievable.

Give yourself time afterwards

Some students feel relieved after an appointment, while others may feel emotional or thoughtful. If possible, try to give yourself a little time after the session to reflect and avoid scheduling something stressful immediately afterwards.