

ADVICE SERVICE CODE OF PRACTICE

The Student Advice Service, provided by Cambridge SU, offers professional support to all students at the University of Cambridge – including offer-holders and former students whose circumstances relate to their time at the University. Our staff deliver high-quality advice and information in a respectful, impartial, and empowering manner. This Code of Practice sets out our core values and explains how students can access and make the most of the service.

FREE

The Student Advice Service is available free of charge to all University of Cambridge students. At no point will students be required to pay for the information, support, or representation provided by the Service.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Student Advice Service is a confidential resource available to all University of Cambridge students. Any information shared with us will be treated with strict confidentiality within the service.

The Advice Service is committed to providing a confidential service to all its users. Nothing a student tells us will be shared with any other department, organisation or individual outside the service (including parents, guardians, other relatives, the University, and other students) without a student's express permission, unless:

- required to do so by law
- it is necessary to ensure service users and staff safety
- we believe there is the risk of serious harm to that student or others

INFORMED

The Student Advice Service is committed to maintaining a comprehensive understanding of the procedures and policies that affect students across the University of Cambridge and its 31 colleges. We aim to ensure that every student feels confident in approaching the service, knowing they will receive independent, informed advice tailored to their individual circumstances.

Our staff work collaboratively with students to explore constructive and appropriate routes forward. While we respect each student's autonomy in decision-making, the service may choose

Student Advice Service Code of Practice

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not to support a course of action that is clearly ill-advised or inconsistent with our professional guidance.

IMPARTIAL

The Student Advice Service offers impartial support to all students. We explore all available options collaboratively, ensuring our guidance remains free from bias—political, religious, cultural, or otherwise. Every student is treated with fairness and respect, regardless of their background or beliefs.

INDEPENDENT

The Student Advice Service offers independent support to all students. Our advice is not influenced by any external body, including the University or its colleges. The Student Advice Service remains separate from Cambridge SU's political and campaigning activities. However, staff may identify recurring issues or trends that could inform future campaigns by the organisation.

NON-JUDGEMENTAL

The Student Advice Service offers non-judgemental support to all students. We are committed to assisting and advising every student, regardless of how their situation has arisen.

COMPETANCE

The Student Advice Service operates within its area of expertise. Where necessary, we will direct students to appropriate external sources for specialist advice.

EQUALITY OF ACCESS

The Student Advice Service seeks to provide equality of access to all students. In line with our equal opportunities policy, we will not discriminate on (for example, but not limited to) the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

CASE RECORDS AND DATA MANAGEMENT

An electronic record of information provided, advice given, and actions taken will be stored securely in our confidential case management system. Any accompanying paperwork will be locked in a secure filing cabinet before being digitally copied onto the case management system.

All records are treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with Data Protection legislation, and Cambridge SU data policies. Records are retained for seven years following the student's initial engagement with the Service.

Aggregated statistics and anonymised reports may be generated from case data to support service evaluation and improvement. No individual student will be identifiable in these reports.

STUDENT DISPUTES

Any student approaching the Student Advice Service regarding a dispute with another student, will receive the same level of support, guidance, and representation as in any other case. Should the other party also seek assistance from the service, they will be entitled to equivalent support and wherever possible we will assign them to work with a separate Advisor.

Confidentiality is central to our approach. We will not disclose either party's engagement with the service to the other party, and any information shared will remain strictly within the boundaries of our confidentiality policy.

In instances where both parties are supported by different staff members:

- Each staff member will maintain full confidentiality and will not share details of the case with the other Advisor.
- Communication between staff members will be limited and, where necessary, facilitated by a third staff member who is not directly involved in either case.
- All students involved will be clearly informed of the confidentiality policy and the impartial, non-judgemental nature of the support provided.

The Student Advice Service's aim is to ensure that all students feel safe, respected, and empowered to make informed decisions, regardless of the complexity or sensitivity of the situation.

WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICE

Advisors engage with students respectfully and expect the same in return. The Student Advice Service is committed to providing consistent, ongoing support to all individuals who seek assistance. However, support may be withdrawn if a service user:

- Uses aggressive or inappropriate verbal or written language towards a staff member
- Uses or threatens violence or other inappropriate behaviour
- Seeks support for fraudulent or illegal activity
- Knowingly provides misleading information or withholds necessary details
- Persistently fails to attend appointments after receiving a warning
- Makes excessive or unreasonable demands, such as:
 - Requesting priority over other users
 - Pursuing actions with no reasonable prospect of success
 - Repeatedly seeking advice on the same issue
 - Requesting support beyond staff expertise (e.g., legal representation)
- Insists on a course of action contrary to an agreed plan, which staff deem detrimental
- Is receiving advice from another agency or legal counsel

If a service user's behaviour is deemed inappropriate, the Student Advice Service will, where possible, issue a written warning outlining the concerns and the potential for service withdrawal should the behaviour continue.

If a final decision is made to withdraw or refuse service, the Student Advice Service will:

- Notify the service user in writing, including the reasons for the decision
- Where appropriate, provide information about alternative sources of advice and support

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

The Student Advice Service is committed to delivering high-quality support to every student. Service user feedback plays a vital role in helping the Advice Service to improve. Once your interaction with the service concludes, we'll send you a link to share your thoughts.

If our service doesn't meet your expectations, we want to know. Please see our [Complaints Procedure](#) for more information.