



STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE CODE OF PRACTICE

As a membership organisation, Students' Union Advice can provide a professional advice and information service to all current students of the University of Nottingham. This includes former students if their query relates to their time as a student at the University (and they contact us within 3 months of the date they ceased to be a student) and prospective students who hold an offer for a UK-based University of Nottingham programme of study.

We have adopted this Code of Practice which helps people who contact the service to understand more about how the service works, the standards which have been set and, if they are not happy with any aspect of the service, how they can complain.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The provision of the service is based upon certain core principles:

Free

Our service is free of charge. At no time will anybody be expected to pay for advice, representation or information.

Confidential

SU Advice is committed to providing a confidential service to students. No information regarding a student shall be given directly or indirectly to any third party, without that student's prior expressed consent to disclose such information*.

*There are several situations when we may breach confidentiality – please refer to our 'Confidentiality Policy and Procedure' for details of these.

Impartial

SU Advice staff offer impartial advice and information. All options for resolving difficulties will be explored, i.e. the service will not be limited or influenced by political, religious or cultural bias.

Non-judgmental

SU Advice staff will help and support all students with difficulties, regardless of how those difficulties arose.

Independent

The advice given by advisers is independent of any outside influence or external body, including the University.

Equal Opportunities

SU Advice staff seek to ensure equality of access to the service and will not discriminate, for example, on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, faith or belief, gender or sexual orientation.

Empowerment

The advice offered is non-directive. Advisers will identify all possible courses of action, and consequences, in order that students can make informed decisions for themselves, as one of the primary aims of the service is to enable and empower students to act for themselves. Third parties, such as parents of students and University staff, will be asked to get the students to contact SU Advice directly to discuss their issue directly.

DATA PROTECTION

Information you give us will only be used to record your enquiry and give you the help you need. Copies of your emails and personal data provided will be stored in our secure electronic database in a case record. Stored data will be kept for 6 years after which it will be securely destroyed through the University of Nottingham's confidential waste disposal service. Once your case has been closed we will delete any emails, relating to your case, from our email software. If you prefer, we can keep a record but do so without documenting any personal data, or alternatively we can destroy all notes and emails once the advice has been given. If you'd like to access your case notes, or any other information we hold about you, email us at suadvice@nottingham.ac.uk

FEEDBACK

We want to give you, or other students, the best possible support. So, from time to time we ask for confidential feedback on your experience of working with us. If you've got any comments or complaints about our service, you can fill in the SU Comments, Complaints and Compliments form.

CONSENT TO AUDIT

From time to time, our casefiles are reviewed by an external Advice Quality Standard Auditor, to ensure we are giving correct and complete advice. This is done confidentially by the Auditor, and you will not be contacted if your files are reviewed.

If you don't want your files to be audited, please let us know at suadvice@nottingham.ac.uk

CONTACTING SU ADVICE

Students can access our service in the following ways:

- in person in Portland Building, University Park, Nottingham (Advisers via appointment)
- by telephone (0115 846 8730)
- via e-mail (SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk)
- via our on-line form at www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/advice

We are open during the following hours:

- Monday 9am-4.30pm
- Tuesday 9am-4.30pm
- Wednesday 10.30am - 5pm (Vacations: 9am-4.30pm)
- Thursday 9am-4.30pm
- Friday 9am - 4.30pm

- Advisers can also see students outside of these times or at other teaching sites, by appointment.
- The service is open throughout the year except for Bank Holidays and other days when the Students' Union is closed. If, for any reason, SU Advice cannot open, as much prior notice as possible will be given.
- Advisers see students on an appointment basis, although they may be able to see clients on a drop-in basis if their diaries/workload allow this.
- Advisers can also receive enquiries by e-mail, letter or telephone. Letters, e-mails and telephone messages will be dealt with promptly.
- Advisers will not answer the telephone if they are advising a student. Telephone callers can leave messages at the Reception desk, if they are unable to speak with an Adviser at the time of their call.

OTHER MATTERS

- Advisers will not advise outside their sphere of competence. SU Advice aims to provide a comprehensive service but, where appropriate, will refer a student to a more appropriate or qualified/experienced source of advice and information. For example, we may refer students to a solicitor if we believe they need legal advice or a specialist advice agency if they need specialist advice.

- Advisers do not offer counselling or mental health support. The service offers practical help and advice in several areas. Students will be advised of relevant services who offer such services.
- Where a conflict of interest occurs, advisers will refer to the SU Advice Conflict of Interest policy.
- Advisers will not offer detailed advice outside of SU Advice unless we are meeting a student in a suitable alternative venue. However, we will be able to give basic advice and information when giving talks, or staffing stalls, elsewhere.
- Advisers reserve the right to withdraw assistance from students who are being abusive, threatening or violent, or students using language, students who are intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs, or displaying behaviour, which is unacceptable.
- SU Advice staff rely on the accuracy and reliability of information given to us by the students. If a student is thought to have misled an Adviser, or gives conflicting information to a different Adviser, SU Advice reserves the right to withdraw our services for that case.
- Students have full access to their personal case notes and other information held on them – should they wish to request such access, they need to email SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk.
- If a student is seeking advice from SU Advice on the same matter as another agency, we reserve the right to withdraw the service.
- The quality of advice will be reliant on students keeping advisers up to date on the progress of their case.
- Advisers will not lie on behalf of a student and advisers reserve the right to withdraw assistance from students who decide upon courses of action which are illegal or involve deceit.
- Advisers reserve the right to withdraw the service to students when all avenues of assistance have been provided to the student.
- The level of service provided will be dependent upon the resources available. SU Advice have limited resources and aims to provide an equal service to all users – in particular, resources in terms of staff time are not unlimited. Therefore, long term support demands that require substantial staff time, which then have a detrimental effect on the ability to provide an acceptable level of service to other users, cannot be offered or maintained.
- We only provide advice to current University of Nottingham students. If you have withdrawn from your studies, been withdrawn, graduated, or if you have been expelled we may not be able to offer you advice if you contact us more than **3 months** after the date that you ceased to be a University of Nottingham student.
- Once a student has completed their studies, SU Advice have the right to refer someone to another relevant advice agency.

- SU Advice staff will not advise or represent students on Students' Union matters, due to conflict of interest.
- SU Advice staff will always treat clients professionally and with respect. We also always expect clients to treat staff with respect.
- Advisers reserve the right not to attend University meetings or hearings where a student is expected to attend, if the student is not present.
- Adviser attendance at meetings or hearings with students is dependent on availability and resources.
- Third parties, such as parents of students and University staff, will be asked to get the student to contact SU Advice directly.
- We can provide advice to prospective students who hold an offer for a UK-based University of Nottingham programme of study.

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