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OXFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION Student Advice Service Service Standards

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1: Statement of Purpose

The Student Advice Service is a free, independent, and confidential information and advice service. The Student Advice Service works to empower students by giving them the information they need in order to navigate difficult situations and make the decisions that are right for them. The Student Advice Service is staffed by experienced and trained staff who aim to provide clear information and realistic advice and who constantly strive to develop and maintain best practice standards across the Service.

2: Our Service Users

The Student Advice Service is available to all current students at Oxford University including

- Students who are on a year out or whose student status has been suspended
- Students who have been sent down by the University who wish to appeal within the permitted time limit.
- Ex-students engaged in complaints or appeals procedures dating one year from receipt of the Close of Procedure letter from College or the University.

3: Services We Offer

- *Advice:* we aim to outline the range of options available to you, the possible outcome(s) and to support you in your decision
- *Information:* we aim to offer you appropriate and accurate information
- *Proof-reading documents:* We will read and comment on draft documents
- *Accompanying you:* we can accompany you to meetings with your college or the University. **We will need 72 business hours notice to do this and to meet with you at least 24 hours before the meeting.**

4: Services We Are Unable To Offer

Please note: we are not an emergency service and should not be contacted if you need emergency advice and support.

- Legal advice or legal advocacy
- Ongoing emotional support or counselling
- Visa advice
- Drafting documents



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We aim to signpost you to specialist advisors in these areas.

5: How We Deliver Our Service

Our offices are open Monday- Friday 8am-6pm all year. You can contact the Student Advice Service in the following ways:

- Email: advice@ousu.ox.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01865 288466 (answerphone available)

And term-time only

- Drop-in Monday 10am-12noon; Wednesday 12 noon-2pm; Friday 2pm-4pm
- Live Advice Tuesday 3pm-5pm and Thursday 11am-1pm

6: Our Responsibilities To Service Users

We want to give you the best service we can. When you contact us, we want you to be happy with the advice we give you and the way we treat you.

Treatment

We aim to treat all our service users in the same way. We will

- Be friendly fair and helpful
- Treat you as an individual, and with respect
- Listen to you and take you seriously
- Behave professionally
- Ensure our office is as safe as possible for all our service users
- Respect your privacy

When you contact us

Timing

We aim to respond to all correspondence (email and telephone calls) within **two** working days. If we are unable to respond within this time will tell you why and

- Who is dealing with the matter
- When you can expect a full reply

Visiting our Office

When you visit our offices our staff will:

- Greet you in a friendly and professional manner
- Aim to see you at the time you have an appointment
- Speak with you in a private interview room.

If you visit our offices without an appointment or outside drop-in session times, we may not be able to see you straight away. We will try and book an appointment time for you as soon as we can.

Easy Access

We aim to make sure you can access our service easily and are committed to our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and outlined in the Student Advice Service Equality and Diversity Policy available at www.ousu.ox.ac.uk and hard copy on request. The Student Advice Service is wheelchair accessible and we aim

to accommodate any additional access requirements and make appropriate adjustments where possible.

In addition we will

- Give you the advice you need taking account of any health condition, disability or language barrier that you may have
- Provide different ways to access our services (by phone, email and in person) so you can choose the one best for you
- Make sure our offices have easy access for people with impaired mobility

If you have a health condition that affects how you use our service please tell us so that we can arrange to give you the support you need.

Follow up

After each meeting or conversation, an Advisor will send you an email giving a record of your discussion and outlining the agreed action points. If an Advisor needs to find information to answer your question they will let you know when they expect to be able to do this and update you if there is a delay.

When we contact you

You can choose how we contact you either by phone, by email or in person. When we contact you, we aim for all communication to be clear and easy to understand. Where requested, we aim to provide assistance with reading and language interpretation.

Contacting third parties

We are a confidential service. We will not contact third parties unless you give us permission or unless it is judged by the Manager of The Student Advice Service that there is

- Individual Risk (to the safety or well-being of students, staff and those associated with the organization)
- Reputational Risk
- Financial Risk
- Litigation Risk
- Or where there is a legal obligation

In these situations it may be necessary to disclose information with the Chief Executive Officer.

If we have to break confidentiality, where possible, we will make a reasonable effort to inform you of this decision, specifying the reason why and to whom confidentiality will be breached.

Our full Confidentiality Policy can be found at www.ousu.org and a hard copy is available on request.

7: Our Expectations of Service Users

If you choose to access the Student Advice Service you must:

- Provide the Service with as full and accurate an account of your situation as possible



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- Inform us in good time of changes to arrangements: how we should contact you, whether you are able to attend an appointment etc.
- Not engage in any form of harassment or intimidation, including verbal and physical abuse, towards members of the Student Advice Service, employees of OUSU or any other persons on the premises.

The Student Advice Service reserves the right to refuse service when, in the judgment of the Manager, a student has failed to behave in line with these standards or in cases where the service is not in a position to support that student. Our full Exclusion Policy can be found at www.ousu.org and a hard copy is available on request.

8: The Right Result

We aim to give you accurate information and to signpost you to the advice you feel is best suited to help you.

9: Feedback

We are always looking for new ways to improve our service. If you have any ideas that could help us do this please let us know. If you write to us, we aim to reply to your comments within **ten** working days of receiving them.

You can also give us anonymous feedback by completing this online survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DKZ3YMD>.

Complaints about the service should follow guidelines in the Student Advice Service Complaints Policy. This can be found at www.ousu.org and a hard copy is available on request.

10: Responsibility and Review

10:1 Operational oversight and the daily implementation of the Service Standards lie with the Manager of the Student Advice Service.

10:2 Ultimate responsibility for the Service Standard lie with the Chief Executive of Oxford University Student Union.

10:3 Service Standards will be reviewed annually or when required through Operational need. Review will be the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Oxford University Student Union.

This Policy has been approved and authorized by

Name: R Howe

Position: President and Trustee

Date: 4 February 2016

Date for Review: 4 February 2017

Related Policies

SAS Code of Practice
SAS Complaints Policy
SAS Confidentiality Policy
SAS Data Protection Policy
SAS Exclusion Policy
SAS Equality, Diversity and Non Discrimination Policy