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**OXFORD UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION
The Student Advice Service
Code of Practice**

The Student Advice Service is part of Oxford University Students Union (OUSU). Advisors provide a professional advice and information service to all students at Oxford University, including former or prospective students if their situation relates to their time as a student at the University.

This Code of Practice outlines our core values and how students can access the Service.

Our Core Values

Free

The Student Advice Service is free of charge to all students of Oxford University.

At no time will students have to pay for the information, assistance or advice they receive from the Service.

Confidential

The Student Advice Service is a confidential service for all students.

All information which students share will be treated as confidential within the Service. While an advisor may share information about a case with other members of staff within the Student Advice Service, this information will not be disclosed to a third party outside the Service without the student's full, informed consent unless an Advisor judges there to be significant risk as outlined in our Confidentiality Policy found on our website www.ousu.org and a hard copy available on request.

All face-to-face meetings will be conducted in our private advice area. We will not confirm that any student has visited the Service or used the Service without the student's consent.

Non-Directive

The Student Advice Service provides non-directive advice and information to all students.

All decisions about which course of action to take will be made by the student themselves, not the Advisor. The role of the Advisor is to comprehensively explore all possible courses of action and to point out potential consequences, in order that the student can make an informed decision.

If diary commitments allow, Advisors can attend University or College meetings with students to take notes and act as a “friend in the room”. We will need seventy-two business hours notice in order to attend a meeting. Before the meeting, an Advisor will meet with the student, comment on written submissions and rehearse oral statements. We aim to empower students to advocate for themselves.

Impartial

The Student Advice Service provides impartial support to all students.

All available options will be explored with the student. Advice and information will not be targeted toward or against any viewpoint, and will not be limited by political, religious, cultural or any other form of bias.

Independent

The Student Advice Service provides independent support to all students.

The information and advice we offer to students is not influenced by any outside body, including the University or any of the colleges. The assistance we provide is also independent of OUSU’s political and campaigning work on student issues. However, identified trends may feed into future campaigns to improve the experience of all students.

Non-Judgmental

The Student Advice Service provides non-judgmental support to all students.

We will assist and advise all students, regardless of how their situation arose. We will not make judgments about any situation, nor any decision that the student makes.

Competence

The Student Advice Service will not provide information, support or assistance outside its field of competence.

The Student Advice Service aims to provide a one-stop service, but will refer or signpost a student to a more qualified/experienced source of advice and information when appropriate.

Equality of Access

The Student Advice Service seeks to provide equality of access to all students.

In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy (available at www.ousu.org and hard copy on request), we will not discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristic listed in the Equality Act 2010. Our building is accessible and resources available in a variety of formats.



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Contacting the Student Advice Service

Students may telephone, email, write to or visit the Student Advice Service in person. Contact details and availability times can be found on the Student Advice Service website at www.ousu.org.

Students can arrange an individual appointment. In addition, during term time we offer three drop-in sessions when students can meet with an Advisor on a first-come-first-served basis.

Monday 10am-12 noon
Wednesday 12-2 pm
Friday 2pm-4pm.

We also offer Live Advice, a live chat facility during term time

Tuesdays 3pm-5pm
Thursdays 11am-1pm

Advisors aim to reply to all enquiries within 2 working days of receiving them.

Case Records

Advisors keep digital records of events, advice offered and action taken. These details, along with the student's name, college, faculty and other relevant information, will be kept on our confidential casework database.

Records will be treated confidentially, and subject to our Data Protection Policy (available at www.ousu.org and hard copy on request) and will only be accessible to Advisors in the Student Advice Service, and the student (if the student requests access to them) or when subject to legal requirement.

We will generate reports and statistics from all cases and enquiries the Student Advice Service receives – these statistics will be used in written reports on the work of the Service, and inform OUSU campaigns. Individual students and cases will not be identifiable in these reports.

Withdrawal of Service

Advisors will be supportive, professional and non-directive in all their dealings with students who come to the Student Advice Service, and every effort will be made to continue to support any student who comes to the Service. However, the Service will withdraw assistance from students who are being abusive, threatening or violent. Details of our Exclusion Policy can be found at www.ousu.org and hard copy on request.

The Student Advice Service team expects students to provide accurate and reliable information. If an Advisor believes that a student has misled them, or given conflicting information to more than one Advisor, the Student Advice Service reserves the right to withdraw its services for that particular case.

Advisors will not lie on behalf of students.



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Feedback and Complaints

The Student Advice Service welcomes all feedback on the service we provide. Our aim is to provide a quality service to all students – if we fail to do this, we want to know about it. This enables us to resolve any specific problems, but also to learn for the future, and prevent it happening again. Feedback can be given here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DKZ3YMD>

You can find details of our Complaints Policy at www.ousu.org and hard copy on request.

Responsibility and Review

Operational oversight and the daily implementation of this policy rests with the Manager of the Student Advice Service.

Responsibility for this policy rests with the Chief Executive of Oxford University Student Union.

This Code of Practice 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 Code of Practice has been approved and authorized by

Name: R Howe

Position: President and Trustee

Date: 4 February 2016

Date for Review: February 2017

Related Policies

- SAS Complaints Policy
- SAS Confidentiality Policy
- SAS Data Protection Policy
- SAS Exclusion Policy
- SAS Equality Diversity and Non Discrimination Policy
- SAS Service Standards