



## **STUDENTS' UNION ADVICE CODE OF PRACTICE**

SU Advice staff provide a professional advice and information service to all students of the University of Nottingham, including former students if their query relates to their time as a student at the University. We will also provide information to prospective students. 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**

The 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 a number of situations when we may breach confidentiality (such as a risk of harm to you or anyone else) - 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](mailto: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](mailto:suadvice@nottingham.ac.uk)

### **CONTACTING SU ADVICE**

Students can access our service in the following ways:

- in person at our offices on University Park, Nottingham (Advisers via appointment)
- by telephone (0115 846 8730)
- via e-mail ([SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:SUAdvice@nottingham.ac.uk))
- via our on-line form at [www.su.nottingham.ac.uk/advice](http://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)  
(Sutton Bonington: 12.30am-3pm, term-time)
- Thursday 9am-4.30pm
- Friday 9am - 4.30pm

- Advisers can also see students outside of these times or at other teaching sites, by prior arrangement.
- 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 have the opportunity to 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. The service offers practical help and advice in a number of areas. Students will be advised of relevant services who offer such services.
- Where a conflict of interest occurs, students will be referred 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 or behaviour which is unacceptable.
- Advisers reserve the right to withdraw assistance from students who are intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs.
- 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 is giving conflicting information to more than one Adviser, SU Advice reserves the right to withdraw its services for that particular 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](mailto: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.
- 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.
- Once a student has completed their studies, SU Advice have the right to refer the student 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 treat clients professionally and with respect at all times. We also expect clients to treat staff with respect at all times.
- Advisers reserve the right not to attend University meetings or hearings where a student is expected to attend, if the student is not present.
- Third parties, such as parents of students and University staff, will be asked to get the students to contact SU Advice directly.