

Conflict Of Interest Policy

The Advice Service recognises that conflicts of interest must be managed appropriately in order to limit any potential impact on the service offered to students. This policy outlines the Advice Service's responsibilities and practice in relation to conflict of interest.

Identifying a Conflict of Interest

- A conflict of interest may occur when an advisor feels that it is not possible to give impartial advice to a student or that they may be perceived to be unable to give impartial advice.
- A conflict of interest may arise if an advisor is approached with an issue from one or more students who are in conflict with one another, for example bullying or alleged collusion.
- A conflict of interest could also arise if an advisor is approached with a matter that involves staff within or closely associated with the Students' Union or a family member.
- Alternatively, the matter may involve a course of action that could damage the reputation of the Students' Union or staff.

Advisors are responsible for identifying any potential conflict of interest in a timely manner and follow the procedure set out to manage such conflicts. If there is doubt about whether a conflict is present, advisors will consult with the Advice Service Lead to determine the next steps.

In order to ensure that any conflict of interest can be identified, students are encouraged to attend individual rather than group appointments.

Conflict of interest procedure

Once a potential conflict of interest has been identified, the advisor must notify the student of this and explain clearly what course of action will be taken.

Notifying a student of a conflict of interest may inadvertently draw attention to another student's use of the service. Advisors will only reveal that a conflict has been identified with a similar case, and will never share information about any other party who has contacted the service.

In the first instance, the Advisor should identify to the student that there is a conflict of interest (when the conflict is such as knowing the individual) and ask if they are happy to proceed with advising them and get this in writing from the student.

Where a conflict has arisen from a case involving multiple students, the advisor will notify the students of the conflict and arrange for them to be allocated to different advisors within the service, where advisers are available. No one Advisor will be able to represent more than one student in a dispute and every effort will be made to secure representation for the second

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student by referring them to another Advisor. If there are an insufficient number of advisors to assist every student involved in the case an adviser will provide initial information only and assist in identifying other sources of advice by speaking with the relevant Sabbatical Officers to ascertain if they can offer support in these cases.

In the above cases of conflict of interest students will be seen on a 'first come, first served' basis. Where a case involves Advice staff or their relatives, the student will be notified that a conflict has been identified and directed to alternative sources of support.

If a conflict of interest is identified by a casual staff member, the Escalation of Cases procedure should be followed to make sure that the case is not viewable by the casual staff member.