

Student Advice Centre Code of Practice

Your responsibilities and rights

It is our aim to ensure that:

- you have access to relevant advice and information so that you understand your responsibilities and rights and are enabled to make informed decisions.
- you are provided with advice, support and representation, as appropriate, to assist you in resolving your problem. This is because we believe it is important that you retain control of your situation and learn the skills necessary to deal with it. We do not believe it to be in your best interests for us to do everything for you. We will therefore support you in drafting letters, making representations and completing forms etc. rather than doing it for you.
- we will listen non-judgementally to your problem or complaint and wherever possible we will give you realistic feedback and options to take this forward. If however we cannot see a realistic way forward or realistic option with which to achieve your desired outcomes we will discuss this with you openly. It may be that in some circumstances we are unable to advise or represent you further.

You are expected to:

- ü Keep any appointments you make and be on time – access to our service may be restricted if you fail to do so.
- ü Keep us up to date with any developments as soon as they occur.
- ü Be honest with us: we rely on the accuracy and reliability of the information you give us.
- ü Be proactive by fulfilling any agreed courses of action as discussed with the Advisers.
- ü Be willing to explore with us why you are in difficulty so that we can ensure as far as possible that the problem does not recur.
- ü Allow us to empower you through a variety of means to resolve problems and issues for yourself.
- ü Respect the guidelines outlined in this Code of Practice.
- ü Respect the privacy of Advice Centre staff by not asking them to advise you outside normal office hours.

You are encouraged to:

- ü Give us feedback on any action you have taken. We want to know if you've been successful.
- ü Complain to us when you are not satisfied with our service. Please make an appointment with the Membership Services manager who will work through the complaints procedure with you to resolve your issues.
- ü Let us know when we have provided a good service. We welcome positive feedback.

You can expect us to:

- ü Offer a fixed appointment within five working days, or a "drop in" slot within two working days during our normal term time opening hours.
- ü Answer your enquiries as completely as possible when you first make contact; and, if further research is required, advise you of this and give you a clear indication as to how long this will take.
- ü Provide accurate and relevant guidance, advice and information.
- ü Make you aware of all available options so that you are able to make appropriate informed decisions.
- ü Treat you in a non-judgemental, impartial and professional manner.
- ü Explore with you reasons as to why you are in difficulty so that we can ensure as far as possible that the problem does not recur.
- ü Empower you to resolve problems and issues for yourself.
- ü Complete any agreed follow up work on our part within five working days.
- ü Provide a wide and comprehensive range of up-to-date information leaflets.
- ü Make referrals to outside organisations where appropriate.
- ü Assist with your enquiry via the telephone, post or e-mail should you be UNABLE to come into the advice centre.
- ü Withdraw our service where behaviour contravenes equal opportunities, our code of practice or is abusive, violent or threatening.
- ü Decline to repeatedly cover the same ground where you are not taking action to further your own case.
- ü Advise you until all practical lines of enquiry are exhausted.
- ü Monitor the issues you raise so that we can take positive steps to benefit students.
- ü Help and advise you, unless a conflict of interest occurs. We are unable to advise both parties involved in a conflict. Please see our confidentiality policy for further details.
- ü Withdraw our service should you give deliberately misleading information.
- ü Not advise landlords.

Student Advice Centre
Tel (Stoke): 01782 294469 Tel (Stafford): 01785 353425
Email: sac@staffs.ac.uk
Log on to www.staffsunion.com for more information.

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