

Student Advice Service

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Statement

The Student Advice Service is committed to providing all students of Cambridge University with individual support in all areas pertaining to their academic and welfare needs. We are a confidential service – we believe that all students have a right to confidentiality and believe that offering confidentiality gives students confidence in sharing personal information with us.

The Student Advice Service understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a student who has approached the Service shall be given (directly or indirectly) to any third party outside the Service, without that student's prior, explicit and informed consent. Confidentiality also includes not confirming that any student has used or is using the Service without the student's consent.

The advice officers of the Service (currently, the Advice Service Manager, the Student Advisor, the CUSU-GU Welfare and Rights Officer, the CUSU Education Officer and the CUSU Women's Officer) will share information about individual students with each other, on a regular basis. This will usually occur in weekly reflective practice meetings. When having informal discussions, advice officers will ensure that they are speaking privately and that confidentiality is maintained.

Advice officers will ensure that all meetings between themselves and students take place in a confidential meeting space (if required), and will ensure to the best of their ability that no inadvertent breaches of confidentiality take place.

Case Records

Advice officers will keep a record of events, advice offered and action taken. The student will also be asked to fill out a casework form. These details, along with the student's name, college, faculty and other relevant information, will be kept on our confidential, Student Advice Service casework recording system, and/or in a locked filing cabinet.

Records will be treated confidentially, and will only be accessible to the administrator and advice officers in the Student Advice Service, and the student (if the student requests access to them).

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

CUSU and the GU's campaigns. Individual students and cases will not be able to be identified from these reports.

Procedure for Breaching Confidentiality

In very rare circumstances advice officers may feel the need to break confidentiality. There are only two situations in which confidentiality **will** be breached:

- i. Where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to the student's own or to others' safety;
- ii. Where the law requires disclosure for the prevention and detection of terrorism;

The Student Advice Service recognises that breaching confidentiality will only be done in extreme cases, and when the advice officer involved believes it is in the student user's best interest to do so. If confidentiality is to be breached at least one other advice officer should be informed and asked for their advice. Ultimately it is up to the officer involved to make the final decision as to whether confidentiality should be breached under the requirements made above.

The breach of confidentiality must be recorded with the following information provided:

- i. Name of the student and brief outline of the situation, specifying the reason that confidentiality is being breached;
- ii. Who has been asked for advice before making this decision;
- iii. What would be achieved by breaching confidentiality;
- iv. To whom confidentiality has been breached.