

Bristol SU

Academic Advice

Service Standard

We are the Bristol SU Academic Advice service, providing independent advice on academic issues and university processes for University of Bristol students. We will signpost students to additional services when we identify a need we cannot address.

We actively look to build relationships with other services so that together we can ensure that students receive the most appropriate specialist advice and support.

What you can expect from Bristol SU Academic Advice

Our service is free, independent and impartial. The service will not be limited or influenced by political, religious or cultural bias. We provide students with the space and guidance to explore their options.

Our service is confidential. None of the information you give us will be shared with the University or other parties in relation to your case without your explicit consent. Further details can be found in our Confidentiality Policy.

We will only break this confidentiality if we believe that you are at risk of harm or pose a risk to others. In such instances we will always endeavour to discuss this with you prior to initiating emergency or safeguarding procedures.

Bristol SU Academic Advice encourages students to seek support for themselves. Where at all possible, we encourage students to contact us directly, rather than via another person such as a parent. If someone else contacts us on behalf of a student, we will not share any personal information without that student's consent, but we will notify the student that this has happened.

We provide non-directive support to all clients. All decisions about the best way forward for a client will be made by the client themselves, not the staff member. The aim is to empower clients to help themselves, so for example, we won't write an appeal for a client, but rather advise on content, processes and procedures.

We will not provide information, support or assistance outside our field of competence. We do not give advice on these areas as we do not have the expert knowledge and will signpost clients to appropriate services which meet their needs.

What we expect from clients

We expect clients to keep us up to date with any developments that occur.

We expect clients to be honest with us - we rely on the accuracy and reliability of information given to us by clients. If a student is found to have deliberately misled us as to the true nature of a situation, we reserve the right to withdraw that service.

We expect clients to keep appointments made for them, to arrive on time and if possible, to inform us if they are unable to keep the appointment.

We expect clients to treat our advisers with respect and will withdraw or restrict our service if clients behave in an abusive or threatening manner.

More details on circumstances in which we will withdraw service can be found in our Withdrawal of Service Policy.

Potential fraud and seeking support for illegal actions

Bristol SU Academic Advice cannot knowingly assist clients with fraudulent claims or assist a client where it is known that they are misrepresenting their situation or acting in an illegal manner.

If a client admits, or it becomes apparent, that this is the case the Adviser must clearly state their belief that the situation may be fraudulent and explain the consequences of the action to the client. The Adviser will also explain that the client should either disclose their change of circumstance or take appropriate action to cease the fraudulent action.

Data protection

Client information is held on a secure case management system and is only accessible by Bristol SU Academic Advice staff and the client (if the client requests access to them - complying with GDPR and Data Protection Act 1998 legislation). We retain this information for six academic years beyond the end of the academic year of your last involvement with the Service.

We will generate reports and statistics from all cases and enquiries the service receives – these statistics will be used in written reports on our work, for research purposes and to identify trends and patterns that may contribute to the Union's mission to improve the student experience. Individual students and cases will not be able to be identified from these reports.

To maintain our Advice Quality Standard (AQS) accreditation a small, random selection of our client files will be audited every two years by an AQS representative (files will only be selected to be audited if the client has given written consent for this). The case details will be viewed at our offices within the secure case management environment.

Subject Access Requests

Bristol SU Academic Advice service users can request to see the data we hold on them by completing the [Subject Access Request Form](#) with a description of the information you want to see and the required proof of your identity by post to the University of Bristol Students' Union, Richmond Building, 105 Queens Road, Bristol, BS8 1 LN. We do not accept these requests by email so we can ensure that we only provide personal data to the right person.

For further information contact bristolsu@bristol.ac.uk (FAO: Data Controller).

Where a subject access request is received the Advice Manager will coordinate the search and collation of information. Where possible the motivation behind the subject access request will be recorded to assist with service performance monitoring and improvement.

Student disputes/conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest may arise if two students in dispute with each other consult the same Adviser. No one Adviser will be able to support more than one student in these circumstances.

Every effort will be made to secure support for the second student by referring them to another Adviser. In circumstances where this is not an appropriate solution we will source external resource from another Student Union advice service.

Equality of Access

Bristol SU Academic Advice seeks to ensure equality of access to the service and will not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief or because someone is married or in a civil partnership (known as “protected characteristics”).

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any feedback on the services we provide as it is recognised that without feedback from our clients, we cannot assess the quality of service we provide and take steps to improve.

We want to hear from our clients about their experience of dealing directly with us. We will contact you at the end of the academic year following your enquiry to gain your thoughts on the service you received and would welcome your feedback.

Our aim is to provide a high standard of service to all service users – 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. You can find details of our complaints procedure [here](#).