WESTMINSTER STUDENTS' UNION

ADVICE SERVICE STANDARDS STATEMENT

Free | Confidential | Independent | Non-Judgmental | Empowering

What is the Westminster Students' Union Advice Service Standards Statement?

This Service Standards Statement outlines how our service operates, what you can expect from us, what we are unable to assist with, and how you can provide feedback or raise a complaint. It reflects our commitment to you and the expectations we have of all students engaging with Westminster Students' Union Advice.

If you access advice from our service, you agree to our terms of service and associated policies. It is essential that you understand this document. If you breach any of these expectations, we reserve the right to limit or withdraw the service from you.

Table of Contents

Our Principles 2

What We Can Help With 2

How You Can Access Advice 3

- Contacting us 3
- Appointments 3

What We Can Offer You 4

What We Cannot Do 4

What You Can Expect from Us 5

What We Expect from You 5

University Hearings 6

Conflict of Interest 6

Refusal or Withdrawal of Service 6

WESTMINSTER STUDENTS' UNION

Emergency or Crisis Situations 7
Confidentiality Policy 8
Complaints about the Service Provided 8

Our Principles

- **Free:** Our support is provided at no cost to students.
- **Confidential:** Your data will not be shared with third parties unless we have your consent or a legal obligation to do so.
- **Independent:** Our advice is independent of the University, ensuring your interests are represented in the information and guidance we provide.
- **Non-Judgmental and Impartial:** We offer advice without judgment and always treat students with respect and courtesy.
- **Empowering:** We aim to empower students to act for themselves. We provide advice and information about the University of Westminster's academic regulations and procedures, help identify your options and next steps, but we do not make decisions on your behalf.

What We Can Help With

We offer general guidance on:

- Academic Appeals
- Complaints (Individual and Group)
- Mitigating Circumstances
- Disciplinary Procedures

- Accusations of Academic Misconduct
- Signposting to other services

You may also find useful guides on our website and information on the University of Westminster support services here:

- www.uwsu.com/advice
- www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/support-and-services

How You Can Access Advice

We offer advice through:

- Online (Teams) appointments
- Phone appointments
- Email

Contacting us

- To request an appointment or send us a query, complete the online form: www.uwsu.com/advice
- We aim to respond within three working days; however, during busy periods of the academic year, the wait time might be longer.

Appointments

- Appointment Hours: Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm during term time. Any closures will be communicated in advance.

- Appointments are up to 45 minutes. If further support is needed, we will book a follow-up appointment.

What We Can Offer You

- We will empower you with the correct information to take the next steps.
- We are here to explain policies and procedures to help you understand your options.
- We can read over documents you receive and help you make sense of them.
- We can review your draft statements.
- We will help you to prepare for meetings with the University of Westminster.
- (Where possible) attending panel hearings/meetings with you as a "friend" as defined in the University's Regulations, Section 10.
- Where we don't have the expertise to help, we will refer you to a service that can.

What We Cannot Do

The Advice Service are here to empower you to act; with that in mind, we do not do the following:

- We do not act on your behalf.
- We cannot type up statements, emails, forms or letters for you.
- We do not submit forms for you.
- If we attend a meeting with you, we will not speak on your behalf.
- We do not offer welfare or counselling support, but we will link you with the relevant services.

- We will not speak to parents, guardians or 3rd parties about your case without your consent.

What You Can Expect from Us

- We will always treat students with respect and courtesy.
- We will aim to ensure that students wait no longer than five working days maximum to hear from an advisor; however, the wait may be longer during busy periods.
- We will attempt to be flexible and meet at a time most helpful for you within our operating hours. When students are unable to meet, we will provide guidance via email.
- We will signpost/refer students to a relevant university department that may be able to help when we are unable to provide information or advice.
- We cannot give any guarantees on the outcome of your case, and all advice is based on information provided to us by students.

Students' Union Advice is committed to accessibility. If you disclose any neurodiverse or disability-related needs, we'll make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to ensure fair access to our services.

What We Expect from You

- To treat our staff with respect and courtesy.
- You must provide us with accurate information about your case to the best of your ability so that we can support you effectively and give you the correct advice.
- Be on time and attend appointments.
- If an appointment is no longer required, you must cancel and provide 24 hours' notice.

- Let us know if you are running late. Please note: Appointments will still finish at the scheduled end time.
- Keep us updated on any developments to your case or any changes to your contact details.
- Take ownership of your case, including any actions you undertake.

University Hearings

- At our discretion, we may accompany you to a meeting or hearing, subject to staff availability and at least two working days' notice.
- You must inform us of the date, time, and location, and provide relevant paperwork no later than two working days before the hearing.
- If we cannot attend, it is your responsibility to arrange alternative support.

Conflict of Interest

If two students in dispute seek support from our service, we will attempt to assign different advisors. If this is not possible, we may have to decline support to one or both parties.

Refusal or Withdrawal of Service

Westminster Students' Union Advice reserves the right to withhold or terminate our service; this may be for several reasons, which may include:

- You miss two appointments without explanation.

    - We will not be able to offer you any further appointments unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why you were not able to attend.

- If we do not receive the requested information about you, and enough information about your case to support you.
- If we receive information from you that we believe is misleading or untruthful.
- We have provided the maximum support possible in your case.
- Abusive, threatening, or aggressive behaviour or language from you. If this happens, the appointment and/or correspondence will end and, if deemed necessary, the complaints procedures will be initiated.
- Conflict of interest that we cannot support (see Conflict of Interest).
- If a student misrepresents to a third party the advice given by Westminster Students' Union Advice, we reserve the right to clarify this with the third party.
- If our advisors are at a real or perceived risk to their safety or well-being.
- If there is a loss of confidence or an irreparable breakdown of the advisor/client relationship.

There is no right to appeal against a decision to adjust your level of service. However, the UWSU Complaints Policy can be used if a student is unhappy with any aspect of the service.

Emergency or Crisis Situations

- We are **not** an emergency service.
- We offer **practical information and advice**.
- We are not trained counsellors and do not offer counselling.
- We will refer or signpost you to appropriate services if your situation requires specialist support.

WESTMINSTER STUDENTS' UNION

Confidentiality Policy

We will not discuss your case with any third party without your consent, unless required by law or if there is a risk of harm to you or others.

Complaints about the Service Provided

If you are unhappy with the service:

1. Please raise your concerns in writing with us in the first instance.
2. If the matter is not resolved, you can use the UWSU Complaints Policy: www.uwsu.com/advice/complaints

Owner	**Advice & Wellbeing Team**
Approved	
Next Review	**September 2026**