

USSU Advice Centre Service Standards

What You Can Expect from Us

- Quality advice regarding academic issues
- Advice that is confidential and independent from the University
- Representation, when appropriate
- Prompt communication regarding your case, according to our service parameters
- To be directed to the appropriate self-help material (e.g. University FAQs, procedures)

How Our Service Works

When You First Get in Touch

- The USSU Advice Centre is operating virtually for the foreseeable future. To get in touch, please contact us via email or through our live chat. We are no longer operating a phone line.
- The Advice Centre is open 9-5, Monday to Thursday. Appointments are available on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The live chat is open at specific timeslots and these are advertised via our website at www.salford.ac.uk/advice/centre.
- We try our best to respond to all emails within two working days. If you contact us through the live chat, we will try our best to respond within 20 minutes.
- At the first point of contact, you will be made aware of the self-help material available for your situation and asked to consult this material if you have not already done so. This is to help streamline the advice process.
- If, after consulting the self-help material, you wish to be booked in for an appointment, you can do so by visiting our Bookings portal at www.salfordstudents.com/advice/centre.
- If you contact us through the live chat, we aim as far as possible to deal with your enquiry immediately. This can take several forms. You may be referred to self-help material or referred to the relevant service within the Union or University. For slightly more complex enquiries, the advisor on standby will give you advice through the live chat. Sometimes, you may be offered a short call with the advisor or referred to a full appointment.

Appointments

- Appointments are 30-minute slots, conducted by phone or through Teams video call.
- To book an appointment, you should follow the instructions on our Bookings portal, located on www.salfordstudents.com/advice/centre.
- After your appointment, the advisor you spoke to will send you a follow-up email to confirm the advice given in writing, including any actions required on both sides. It is both the student and advisor's responsibility to follow up on these actions.
- If you require a follow-up appointment, your advisor will let you know. If you would like a follow-up appointment, please book in with the relevant adviser through the Bookings portal.

Casework

- If you attend an appointment with us, we will create a casefile for you.
- Following your appointment, you will receive written confirmation, usually via email, of what was discussed, as well as any agreed actions. You should receive this within 48 hours of speaking with an adviser. Any delays to this timeframe will be communicated to you.
- Your case file will contain a copy of this confirmation, as well as any subsequent correspondence and documentation which you send to us.
- You are entitled to request a copy of your case file at any time. To do so you need to put this request in writing to advicecentre-ussu@salford.ac.uk.

How We Store Your Data

- The recording software we use is called AdvicePro. AdvicePro is used to record both enquiries (i.e. emails and live chat messages that do not progress further) and cases. It complies with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), and access to the software is limited to members of the Advice Team only.
- Our GDPR consent form is hosted by Microsoft Forms, which also complies with GDPR requirements. Likewise, Tawk, our live chat platform, is GDPR compliant and the information you provide on the live chat will not be visible to anyone apart from the Advice Team.

- For live chat enquiries, we record your student number, which you are asked to provide in a pre-chat form. No more personal or sensitive information is recorded beyond a keyword description of the enquiry's subject matter.
- For cases, additional personal/sensitive information will be recorded as provided on the consent form and stored on Advice Pro. We collect this information in order to analyse data on user demographics, as part of our commitment to providing a high-quality service for all students. By providing demographic information, you are supporting our objectives of providing quality for all.
- Both cases and enquiries are audited for quality assurance purposes. These audits are conducted internally and enable us to identify areas where our service would benefit from changes and improvements.
- We record your information in this way to produce statistics which help us improve our service.

Representation

- USSU advisors can provide representation by attending hearings with you. We normally only do this for University level hearings – for meetings at department level, you will be referred to the relevant procedure to give you an idea of what to expect.
- Sometimes, we are unable to provide representation due to staff workload or short notice. When this is the case, you will be notified and referred to the relevant self-help material.

Our Expectations for You

- Proactivity: We ask that you be proactive when seeking advice from us, particularly with regards to staying on top of your deadlines. At peak times, we are an extremely busy service and unfortunately may not be able to refer you to a suitable appointment if you approach us at short notice. It is also your responsibility to meet any deadlines agreed with your advisor and keep in regular contact with them while your case is in progress. Furthermore, we ask that you do your best to engage with the self-help material before booking an appointment.
- Patience: We promise to do our best to adhere to the service standards outlined above. However, as already mentioned, we are a service that experiences extremely high demand during peak times. If this is the case, we will let you know as far as possible and outline any changes to timeframes. We ask that you do not repeatedly contact us via email or live chat under these circumstances, as it further slows down our turnaround time.

- Punctuality: Appointments last 30 minutes – if you are unable to make it on time, please do not assume that your time with your advisor will 'roll over' beyond the arranged timeslot. If you cannot attend your appointment, please let us know beforehand so that we can offer the appointment to another student.
- Precision: Please try and ensure that the information you provide us with is as accurate as possible. Our advisors are experienced and non-judgemental, and you will receive the best help from us by being transparent about all details surrounding your case. This also applies to the data you provide for recording purposes – the more accurate this data, the more robust our analysis and the better we can support students in the future.
- Politeness: We promise to do our best to provide the academic advice that you need. However frustrating or worrying your situation, we ask that you treat the Advice Team with respect. We reserve the right to end a live chat or an appointment if a student is behaving inappropriately.