

The Advice Service is run by a team of professional Advisors and Advice Service Assistants. Our Advice Service Assistants are student staff studying at the University. We are here to support you with any questions, worries or concerns you might have during your studies. The types of issues we advise on include academic issues, housing, student finance and student life.

**Opening Hours**

We are normally open Monday to Friday both in and out of term time. Our standard opening hours are 10am – 4pm. You can e-mail us 24/7 and our mailbox is normally monitored regularly during our opening hours. You may receive a reply outside of these times as staff working patterns vary. We only usually close on weekends, public holidays and for staff training, development, or administration days. We may also have occasional closed days due to short staffing.

**Our Services**

We offer advice in person, over the phone and by e-mail. We have a limited number of appointments available each week. If you request an appointment, we will do our best to book you in. During busy periods we may only be able to provide advice by e-mail. In-person appointments are available face-to-face or by phone/video call. If you would prefer a face-to-face meeting, please let us know. Due to service demand, we can normally only offer one appointment per person.

**Accessibility**

Our aim is to provide our service in the most accessible way for you. We understand there may be times when we need to change the way we do things so that you can use our service. If you think we can help you by making some adjustments, please tell us.

**Our Core Principles**

- **Confidential** - we will not share your personal information outside of the service unless we have your permission to do so, or there are exceptional reasons. For example, information may be shared without consent for specific reasons such as safeguarding. Occasionally, support may also be sought from the Senior Management or Senior Leadership Team of the Students' Union. Please see our website for more information on our confidentiality policy.
- **Free** - the Service we provide is free of charge to all our clients.
- **Impartial and Independent** - all options for resolving difficulties will be explored and the advice provided will be non-biased. We are separate from the University and other external agencies. We also have checks to make sure our advice is independent and will not be influenced by third parties.
- **Non-judgmental** - our advisors are here to help with all types of problems no matter what it is. We will not judge you. We ask that you are open and honest with your advisor so they can give you accurate advice and information.
- **Empowering** - we want to help you gain the knowledge and confidence to make your own decisions and act in resolving your situation. We are here to support you in choosing the best course of action. We will make sure you know all the options available to you including any pros and cons.

**Contacting Us**

Office: 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Students' Union, accessible by stairs or lift.

Telephone: 0161 275 2952

E-mail: [advice.su@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:advice.su@manchester.ac.uk)

Web: <https://manchesterstudentsunion.com/advice>

Online: [Contact Form](#)

We aim to reply to e-mail enquiries within 2-5 working days. We usually reply to most e-mails within 2 working days, but our response times can be longer during periods of high demand or short staffing. When a deadline applies, please make us aware and we will try to get back to you in time.

**We cannot guarantee to give advice or meet your deadline at short notice.**

**Ongoing Support:**

If you have an ongoing case the best way to stay in contact with your advisor is by e-mail. If there are any developments in your case after your initial consultation, please update us as soon as possible if you would like further advice. If you have not managed to resolve the issue, we may be able to assist you further. It can help your advisor if you e-mail any relevant documents or letters you have received in connection with your case.

### **Casework and representation**

Our advice aims to empower you to take action yourself.

If you need to prepare a statement for a university procedure or need to contact a third party such as your landlord, we can support you by checking your draft and providing feedback to help strengthen your case. We can only usually check a draft for you once. We may not be able to review lengthy documents in full as we only have a limited time we can allocate to each enquiry. If you are working towards an official deadline, please give us at least 5 working days' notice to provide feedback on a draft.

We may be able to attend certain meetings with you. However, this depends on capacity within the Service. If you want an advisor to accompany you to a meeting, please tell us as soon as you can so we can check our availability.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The Advice Service is open to all University of Manchester Students. If you come for advice about an issue that involves another student, please be aware that the Service is also open to them to use. A conflict will arise when there are different sides to the same issue and both students ask for advice. We will make special arrangements so that each student is allocated a different advisor and where possible, separate line managers. The advisors will not discuss the case and will not pass information from one side to the other. Please speak to your advisor if you have any worries about a conflict of interest.

### **Restrictions to Service**

The Advice Service will not tolerate rude, abusive, threatening, or violent behaviour towards staff. Such behaviour could result in service being withdrawn. If you seek advice elsewhere (from a solicitor or equivalent), we may have to close your case. Receiving advice from separate organisations can create a conflict of interest.

### **Data Protection**

We are committed to treating your information with respect and ensure our processing complies with the UK Data Protection Regulation. Legitimate interest is our main legal basis for processing your data. If you like to know more about the other conditions we use, please see our full Advice Service Privacy Statement on our website.

### **How we use your information**

We collect and record your personal information, details of your enquiry and any advice given. We also keep a record of any ongoing contact we have with you. We do this to ensure we are giving accurate and appropriate advice and so that we can offer ongoing support with your case. We also maintain records for quality purposes.

We store your information on our secure case recording system. This system is encrypted, and your case file is only accessible to staff involved in running the Service.

### **Service Development, Campaigns and Policy Work**

We may use your data for statistical purposes to support our development, campaigns, and policy work. This includes monitoring who is using our service to help the SU, and the Advice Service improve. The SU works closely with other organisations such as the University to bring about positive change for students. We may use the information you provide for statistical purposes to support this work. The statistical data and reports we produce do not identify you.

### **Requesting your Case File**

The Advice Service will provide copies of the case records free of charge and within 1 month of the request. Any requests should be submitted by e-mail to [contact.su@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:contact.su@manchester.ac.uk), outlining the reasons for the request. You will be asked for ID before the information is given to you. You can find out more about your rights from the Information Commissioners Office - <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>.

### **Access to our Policies**

If you would like access to any Advice Service policies, please send a request to [advice.su@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:advice.su@manchester.ac.uk).

**Feedback, Compliments and Complaints**

Your feedback about the Advice Service is important to us, as it helps us to continuously develop and improve. If you have feedback, suggestions, or questions, please contact us during your case. We welcome all forms of feedback. We are interested to hear about the outcome of your case.

Formal complaints should be submitted by e-mail to [contact.su@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:contact.su@manchester.ac.uk). Following submission, your complaint will normally be forwarded to the Advice Manager, unless there is a more appropriate person to respond.