

Student Advice Centre Service Standards

What students can expect from us

- Quality and specialist advice
- Advocacy, support and representation
- Confidential, independent and non-judgemental service
- Regular and up to date communications on their case
- Up to date and comprehensive self-help tools (leaflets and website)

Appointments

- All students who make contact with the Student Advice Centre will undergo initial assessment by an Advice Support Assistant or a cover receptionist to assess the complexity of their case.
- Students will then be referred to self help material, seen by an Advice Support Assistant or offered an appointment with an appropriately trained Adviser or Senior Adviser.
- Advice is provided on an appointment basis only. We offer face to face, telephone and email advice. We open 10-5pm in term time and 10-4 in vacation and appointments are available throughout each day.
- In person and telephone appointments aim to be made with the appropriate adviser within 5 working days. However during busy periods or when staff are on leave, this may take longer. At certain times of year, specific advice areas will be busier, therefore waiting times may be longer. Students will be made aware of this when contacting the service.
- Email appointments, booked when students email advice@sheffield.ac.uk, will be allocated to an adviser within 1 working day and booked into an appointment slot for a reply. The aim is that the email is replied to within 5 working days. During busy periods or when staff are on leave, this may take longer. If this is the case, the auto reply for advice@sheffield.ac.uk is updated to notify students that there will be a delay in them receiving a reply.
- Where a case is assessed as needing urgent advice by reception, we will aim to see a student on the same day or as soon as possible after this. Diaries may be adjusted to accommodate such cases.
- Your Adviser will let you know if you need follow up appointments after your initial appointment. These will be booked by the Adviser or through SAC reception.

Casework

- Your adviser will advise you of any casework which is needed on your case. They will assess the urgency of this work taking account of any relevant

deadlines. We will aim to do casework within 15 working days. Advisers will update students about the progress of their case as they are working on it.

- Advisers will be working with a number of students at any time and will prioritise their workload taking account of the urgency and complexity of the cases. If there will be a delay in work being done on your case, you will be informed of this by your adviser.
- Advisers keep a record of all deadlines and key dates in their casefiles.
- Advisers will not take action on your behalf without your consent. We offer a confidential service and will not discuss your case with third parties without your consent. Our confidentiality policy sets out the exceptional cases where we would have to break client confidentiality. Written authorisation to act on your behalf will be taken where necessary for the case.
- Where necessary, following a face to face or telephone appointment, advice may be confirmed in writing but this would not be routinely done.

Recording

- All advice work is recorded on our case recording software AdvicePro. AdvicePro complies with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Only SAC staff have logins for AdvicePro and access to student cases.
- Our cases are audited every 2 years under the Advice Quality Standard and an auditor has access to case files for one day.
- We record all students' name and student registration number as a minimum. Additional personal data is recorded as necessary for each case in accordance with our case management policy.
- AdvicePro allows us to produce statistics which inform our service planning.

Representation

- Advisers and senior advisers can provide representation on behalf of students. This may be by telephone, email, letter or in person at a hearing. A decision will be made by your adviser if SAC representation is necessary in your case.
- If your case requires representation at a hearing and we are unable to provide a member of staff to accompany you due to workload or short notice of the hearing, we will aim to provide you with advice about how to request an adjournment or represent yourself.
- We do not routinely provide an adviser to attend meetings at department level between students and staff. You may be referred to self help material to allow you to prepare to attend.

What we expect from students

- Respect and Honesty: Our advisers cannot advise you accurately if you are not honest about your case. We operate a non judgemental service and act in the best interests of students.
- Patience in busy periods: At certain times of the year, or in certain advice areas there may be a higher demand than availability. We ask our students to bear with us and we will aim to assist you in the quickest possible time frames. We ask that you do not repeatedly send emails or book appointments as a way to contact your adviser. Advisers will keep in contact with their students about their case.
- Engagement: co-operation in taking action, sharing information, and meeting deadlines. In order for SAC staff to effectively advise you, it is essential that you keep in contact with your Adviser.
- Punctuality: appointments are 20 minute slots, therefore if you are more than 10 minutes late the Adviser may not be able to see you as they often have back to back appointments. If you cannot attend or know you will be late, we ask that you let us know beforehand to allow the appointment to be offered to someone else or the adviser's diary to be rearranged.
- Contact us in good time. The sooner you contact SAC, the sooner we can start advising you about your case. If there is an externally imposed deadline in relation to your case such as a hearing date and you do not contact us with sufficient time for us to offer full representation, we will only be able to offer basic advice and refer you to self help material.
- Effective communication: Please keep us updated on developments with your case and notify us of any change in circumstances which may affect your case. It is important that you meet agreed deadlines set with your adviser. Please let us know of any change in your contact details and ensure you check your emails while working with SAC. We ask that you notify us if our help is no longer required. If we do not hear from you for 30 days after trying to make contact with you, then your case will be closed.
- Not to seek advice from another agency about the same issue while using SAC. It is not helpful to the advice process if you seek advice from multiple sources. We ask that students only use SAC Advisers unless there is an explicit agreement with your Adviser that you should seek additional advice from a third party.