

# **Just Ask Service Standard**



We are the Bristol Students Union advice service, providing independent advice on academic issues and university processes for University of Bristol students. Just Ask 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 Just Ask**

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.

Just Ask 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 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.

Just Ask provides 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.

Just Ask will not provide information, support or assistance outside its 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**

Just Ask 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 Just Ask 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 Just Ask 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 Just Ask receives – these statistics will be used in written reports on the work of Just Ask, for research purposes and to identify trends and patterns that may contribute to the Unions' 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. The case details will be viewed at our offices within the secure case management environment.

### **Subject Access Requests**

Just Ask service users can request to see the data we hold on them by completing a subject [access request form](#). This form must be completed in paper copy and sent with proof of identity to [Chloe.maughan@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Chloe.maughan@bristol.ac.uk) . We do not accept requests via email and must ensure that we are certain that we are providing the correct information to the named individual.

Where a subject access request is received the Team Leader 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 Just Ask will source external resource from another Student Union advice service.

### **Equality of Access**

Just Ask seek to ensure equality of access to the service and will not discriminate, for example, on the grounds of colour, race, religion, nationality, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

### **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](#).

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