

Conflict Of Interest Policy

This policy aims to identify conflicts of interest and give guidance on the way that these should be managed.

A conflict of interest may occur:

1. When one student has already approached UWLSU Advice and another student who is involved in the dispute or case then approaches UWLSU Advice.
2. When a student is a friend or acquaintance of an Advisor working in UWLSU Advice.
3. Where a student has a complaint about UWLSU or is involved in a UWLSU disciplinary process.

Action to be taken

As soon as the Advisor is aware of a potential conflict of interest, they should disclose this to the student.

Re 1 above, if a student has asked for advice and subsequently another student who is in dispute with the first student approaches UWLSU Advice for advice, the service reserves the right to disclose the initial contact but not the nature of the advice given. No one Advisor will be able to represent more than one student in a dispute and every effort will be made to secure representation for the second student by referring them to another Advisor.

The Advisor should ensure that the student is aware that they will receive equal representation and guidance and seek to refer them to another Advisor. The Advisor should contact their colleague and arrange for them to contact the student as soon as possible. To ensure confidentiality and impartiality no information other than contact details should be revealed when a conflict of interest referral is made between Advisors.

Wherever possible, two Advisors managing the cases where a conflict of interest is present should not be supervised by the same manager.

Re 2 above, the Advisor should show the student the Conflict of Interest Policy and explain that it would be inappropriate for them to give advice and offer to refer them to another Advisor and take the same action as above. In the event that the student is a friend or acquaintance of multiple advisors, the Advisor initially allocated to the student should seek to refer them to another appropriate local service.

However, if both the student and the Advisor are willing to continue with representation, the Advisor may proceed with the case.

Re 3 above, UWLSU Advice is a confidential, independent and non-judgemental service. To minimise potential conflicts of interest relating to complaints either A), B) or C) should be followed below:

- A) If the student has a complaint about UWLSU, provided the complaint is not about UWLSU Advice, the Advisor can proceed with supporting the student to submit a complaint (provision for this is also made in UWLSU's Bye-Laws). The Advisor should discuss the case with the Advice Manager and should not enter into conversations with the UWLSU staff member investigating the complaint without the student's express consent as with any other case.
- B) If the student has a complaint about UWLSU Advice staff, the UWLSU Advice complaints procedure should be followed. The student's case should be transferred to another Advisor not

involved in the complaint should they wish to continue to access the service. The case can also be transferred to the UWLSU Advice Manager, however they should then hand investigation of the complaint over to the Representation & Advocacy Manager.

- C) If the student has a complaint about UWLSU Advice staff and B) above is not possible (i.e. because the student does not wish to continue to accessing UWLSU Advice or if all UWLSU Advice staff are involved in substance or unsatisfactory outcome of the complaint in some way, the Advice Manager and the Representation & Advocacy Manager should discuss possible referral or support options with the Head of Membership.

To minimise potential conflicts of interest relating to students in UWLSU disciplinary processes either A) or B) should be followed below:

- A) Provided the student's disciplinary does not relate to their actions towards UWLSU Advice staff and that service has not been withdrawn, the student can be represented as they would in any disciplinary case involving the University. The Advisor should discuss the case with the Advice Manager and should not enter into conversations with the UWLSU staff member investigating the alleged misconduct or any member of a disciplinary panel without the student's express consent.
- B) If the student's disciplinary relates in any way to their actions towards UWLSU Advice staff, the Advice Manager should review whether service has been withdrawn in this case. If it has, then the student is not entitled to representation and should be informed as such. If service has not been withdrawn, the Advice Manager and the Representation & Advocacy Manager should discuss possible referral or support options with the Head of Membership.

In all cases, the student(s) should be given a copy of the UWLSU Advice Standards Statement and assured that the UWLSU Advice policy to provide confidential, independent and impartial advice will not be compromised.