Advice Centre – Summary of Key Facts and Information

About Us

Hallam Students’ Union is a registered charity that works, independently from Sheffield Hallam University. SU Advice is a service within Hallam SU that offers free, impartial advice.

Our Mission

SU Advice supports you by offering information, advice, and guidance. We aim to empower you to make independent decisions and prepare you for life during and after university. We help you explore options to make informed choices based on our independent, expert, and free advice.

1. Our Service

The SU Advice service provides information, advice and guidance on university policies and procedures, student funding and finance, housing rights and basic welfare benefits.

* 1. What we do:
     1. Explain and clarify University processes and procedures.
     2. Guide so that you understandyour options and next steps.

* + 1. Offer Advice to assist you in navigating Sheffield Hallam University processes.
    2. Review documents and provide feedback on draft forms or statements.

* + 1. Accompany and support at formal University meetings such as appeals, complaints, and disciplinary panels.
    2. Signpost you to organisations or services when appropriate.
    3. Communicate with the University on your behalf to seek clarification (with your consent).
  1. What we cannot do:
     1. **Draft Documents**: We will not write initial complaints, complete documents, or respond to allegations for you. We can guide you through the process and offer advice and feedback where applicable.
     2. **Provide Legal Services**: We are not legal advisers and cannot advise on legal processes, including immigration matters. We can signpost you to organisations that can help.
     3. **Offer Debt Advice**: We cannot provide debt advice, including negotiating tuition fee debt repayments. We can help you locate an organisation that can help you.
     4. **Provide Wellbeing or Health Support**: We are not a crisis or emergency service, but we can refer you to appropriate resources.

1. Who we can help:
   1. **Current Students**: Anyone enrolled in a course at Sheffield Hallam University, including students from external Sheffield Hallam University programs.
   2. **Prospective Students**: Individuals who have received a formal offer from Sheffield Hallam University or its partner colleges.
   3. **Recent Alumni**: Former Sheffield Hallam University students who have graduated within the past 12 months or whose cases are still active beyond their graduation date.

* 1. **Prospective students** who have not yet received a formal offer from Sheffield Hallam University.
  2. **Students from The University of Sheffield** under our reciprocal agreement with their Advice and Support service, except in cases of confirmed conflict of interest.
  3. **Relatives or advocates of current students** who cannot contact us themselves (e.g., due to hospitalisation). If you’re unsure, please contact us to determine if we can provide advice.

1. How to access SU Advice

You can access SU advice in several different ways. We recommend starting with our self-help guides on our website first, which can be accessed [here](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/support/).    
  
Our guides and website content provides information on all our core services related to Academic, Housing and Money issues.

* 1. **What happens when I contact The Students’ Union**
     1. When you first contact the Students’ Union, be this in person, online or on the phone, your enquiry will be triaged by our customer service team, to ensure that you are directed to the most appropriate service.
     2. Please do not include information of a sensitive nature when providing initial information. If you need to share sensitive information, please summarise your enquiry and tick the box (if using our online form) to say that you have a sensitive issue. Or if on the phone or in-person, highlight that you feel the issue is sensitive.
     3. An example of a sensitive issue could be that you are involved in the University’s disciplinary or Fitness to Practice process and an allegation has been made about you or you have reported another student and want support through the process, and you do not wish to submit or upload the full details onto the online form.
     4. Once the customer service team have allocated your enquiry to The Students’ Union Advice team your case will be triaged by an advice coordinator and either:  
        1. you will receive information or general advice,
        2. further information may be requested
        3. Your case may be allocated to an adviser
        4. a case will be set up on our independent and confidential case recording system if further and ongoing advice is required.
        5. If you do not respond to an email from us requesting further information within 5 working days your enquiry will be closed.
        6. Once a case has been allocated to an adviser if you require further information or advice, you should contact your adviser.
        7. Once an advice case is closed and if you require information or advice again, you should contact us through the online portal and your case will be triaged by the customer service team.

1. Personal Information, Data and GDPR

Maintaining confidentiality and ensuring the security and protection of your data is our top priority.

Any further steps that are needed to support you, such as referring you to another service, will be clearly communicated and done only with your consent. Further details regarding our policies can be found on [our website](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/union/data-protection-privacy/) and [advice webpages](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/support/advice/).

1. Client Service Agreement

To have a positive and effective relationship with us, it is important to understand our services, what we can do and what we cannot do, and what expect from you. The “Client Service Agreement” below, outlines this.

* 1. What to expect from our service:
     1. We aim to respond to enquiries within 3 working days. During busier times this may not be possible. Response times will always be updated in any automatic replies.
     2. We will provide any follow-up communication and complete initial casework within 7 working days. If there is a delay, we will let you know.
     3. We will clearly outline what we’re doing, when to expect an outcome, and what you need to do.
     4. Students are expected to provide all relevant information to help with our support. The more information you give us, the better advice we can provide.
     5. We will make reasonable adjustments if we are made aware and are able to do so. If we can’t make these adjustments, we will let you know and look at other options.
     6. We will not chase you for information we have already requested.
     7. If you do not respond to us within 5 working days (or longer if agreed by the adviser), we will close your case.
     8. If we close a case due to you not following our processes, once closed we will not reopen it
     9. We will normally provide feedback in draft form once.
     10. We will not remind you of important deadlines, but we will, emphasise their importance and any potential consequences.
     11. If you miss an appointment without contacting us, we will close your case after 5 working days. If you miss a second appointment, your case will be closed.
  2. Please provide the following information:
     1. Details about your course and year of study.
     2. Previous study and funding if relevant.
     3. Who you have already spoken to about your situation and what action, if any, has been taken so far.
     4. Key dates such as hearing or deadlines.
     5. Copies of any correspondence such as meeting/hearing invites or outcomes.
     6. Any other key facts, dates, or information.
     7. Contact us in good time. Forms or applications should be submitted in advance as we may not be able to advise student’s if we are not given enough time before a hearing or deadline.
  3. Providing Information to us:
     1. We will close your case if you do not respond to requests for more information within 5 working days, unless agreed otherwise.
     2. When providing information, follow the requested format. For example, if you’re sharing an email about a hearing, forward the entire email to ensure we have all the important details.
     3. If you need feedback on a form, send it in a format that can be edited or commented on. Screenshots cannot be edited, and we cannot access your university account to view extenuating circumstances requests.
  4. Excessive Email Communications:

Please use email responsibly and avoid excessive emailing. We aim to respond within 3 working days.

As advisers, we are busy supporting many students, so we may not be able to respond immediately.

Knowing in advance about deadlines helps us to plan our workload accordingly.

* 1. Excessive Requests to Review Documentation:

Please be mindful when asking advisers for guidance, opinions, or feedback on forms, documents, or responses. Repeatedly submitting the same item for review, with little or no change between drafts, can be excessive and slow down progress on a case.

* 1. Inappropriate Requests:

Inappropriate requests include, but are not limited to:

* + 1. Demands that staff do things you can do yourself.
    2. Repeatedly asking for assistance that is beyond the staff’s expertise.
    3. Requesting long-term support that requires significant staff time, which could affect our ability to serve other students.
    4. Approaching advisers outside of the advice service area (on campus and on the street), for updates or further advice.
    5. Calling into the Advice Centre repeatedly without an appointment or having not replied to previous emails from an advisor. Any face-to-face conversations must be through an appointment between the student and advisor.
  1. Managing expectations and limitations of service:

The SU Advice Service is there to help, but there is no guarantee that an issue can be resolved even with the support of an Adviser. Any threatening behaviour or pressure on an Adviser to resolve an issue, may result in withdrawing services, suspending them, or limiting them.

* 1. Withdrawal of Service:

In addition to the circumstances already detailed in this document, some situations may result in the withdrawal, suspension or limiting of the advice service. For more information, please see the accompanying document “Removal of service”.

The level of advice and guidance provided by the SU Advice Service is at the discretion of the Advice Manager. If we decide to withdraw our services or are unable to advise you, we will explain ourreasons in writing.

* 1. As a student, you are expected to read, agree to and comply with these conditions of service.

Sheffield Hallam Students’ Union will deem any continued use of the Advice service, post the receipt of this document, to be your agreement to the conditions and terms set out in this document.

You can find our GDPR & Confidentiality policy, Complaints Procedure and Withdrawal Policy [here](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/support/advice/).

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| **Version:** | 1 |
| **Original Version Approved by and**  **date:** | Advice Team Manager, September  2024 |
| **Date for Review:** | August 2025 |