

STUDENT ADVICE

Confidentiality Policy, Record Keeping and Data Protection

All students who wish to receive advice from Student Advice must accept and consent to the terms and conditions set out below. If you do not accept these terms, we are unable to provide you with advice.

Confidentiality Statement

We are committed to providing a confidential service to our users which:

- Meets statutory and legal requirements.
- Respects users' rights and interests.
- Acts as a safeguard for the service provided by the adviser.

We will not release the information you disclose to us to anyone else without your permission, except in the circumstances noted in 2 below.

1. Definition of Confidentiality

We define confidentiality as a 'circle of confidentiality' within which Student Advice staff members may discuss information with each other. We will hold such discussions in an appropriate environment to ensure confidentiality is respected.

In some circumstances, we may need to obtain information from another departments in the University, e.g. the Finance Office, Credit Control, Registry Offices, Admissions or Visa Compliance. We may need to do this to obtain relevant information which may help to resolve your case, e.g., your student record, fee payment details, Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

We will not disclose your personal circumstances or the specifics of your case without your consent.

If we need to discuss your case with external agencies, we will set up 'consent to share', this will require you either contact the external agency to give consent, complete a consent form or send a consent email.

If you submit an enquiry to us via the University enquiry management system, currently called 'Compass' (this includes any live chats), you can view the Student Data Protection and Privacy statements that cover this service [here](#).

2. Disclosure

There are occasions when we need to disclose information without first obtaining your consent, for example:

- Meeting compliance obligations for immigration authorities (including the Home Office) or the police in order to comply with the University of Westminster's UKVI reporting obligations. The University's Student Visa Sponsor duties can be read [here](#). Please note that visa refusals and studying on an expired visa will need to be reported to the University's Visa Compliance team.
- Where we consider there to be a risk to you or the wider community and/or
- Where otherwise required by law



- Where a student's welfare or vulnerability is causing concern, their needs may be discussed with managers. This is to ensure that students are being supported in an integrated way, information shared is limited and with the Students' welfare in mind.

3. Record keeping

We need to keep a written record of the advice we give you and the action we or you have agreed to take. We may also need to keep copies of relevant documents and correspondence. All records are kept locked within the service. Paper files are kept in locked cabinets; electronic files are kept on our secure case recording system or on approved University email/enquiry management systems and approved drives; you can view the University Student data protection and privacy policy [here](#). We also keep some of the files in secure off-site archive storage. Advice case records are kept for 6 years after you have left the University. After this time, paper records are destroyed by shredding, and electronic records are permanently deleted.

4. Access to records

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, you have a right to access your record. If you require a full copy of your case record you will need to give notice of your request. For full details of the University of Westminster Data Protection Policy, please click [here](#).

If you require copies of documents from your case record, we can normally give you these on request. If your case record has been archived off-site, it will take up to seven working days to retrieve it.

5. Code of Ethics

The Student Advisers adhere to the [UKCISA/AISA Code of Ethics](#).

6. Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Procedure

We are always looking for ways to improve our service. If you have any suggestions or comments, we would like to hear about them. Please contact us via the [Student Centre](#)

If you have a complaint, please let us know. In the first instance by contacting the [Student Centre](#), the Student Advice and Funding Manager will hear any complaint. We hope that this way it can be resolved quickly, informally and to your satisfaction. If you are not happy with the way your complaint is dealt with by the Student Advice and Funding Manager, you can use the University's formal complaints procedure. Details are available [here](#).

Immigration advice is regulated by the [Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\)](#) If your complaint relates to immigration advice and cannot be resolved using the University complaints procedure, you can make a complaint to the IAA. Full details of the procedure are [here](#).

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