

ENSA Advice

Conflict of interest policy

ENSA Advice is an impartial advice service and as such individual advisers cannot support students when a conflict of interest arises. A conflict of interest occurs when an adviser holds some information that prevents them from providing impartial advice.

Advisers should aim to identify possible conflicts of interest as early as possible when handling a case and take the necessary steps.

Note that the following is not an exhaustive list and ENSA Advisers reserve the right to withdraw their service, upon consulting the Advice Team Leader, if they identify a conflict of interest not included in this policy.

When it is not possible to advise or support a student, advisers will redirect the student to an alternative advice provider within the university, or externally (e.g. Counselling and Mental Wellbeing staff; Safeguarding team, PDT, Student Experience Team, SHELTER, Citizens Advice Bureau) whenever possible.

1. Student on student conflict

This occurs when an Adviser is advising, or has previously advised, another student who is involved in the same issue, and there is a conflict between them e.g. two or more students involved in a same case of academic collusion, students in opposite parties of a complaint or non-academic misconduct, flatmates in conflict.

Any adviser identifying a student-on-student conflict should inform the relevant student(s) that they cannot continue to support them, and the case will be allocated to a different adviser if possible. No discussion on the case can take place between the advisers involved.

In deciding which student to support, ENSA should consider the nature of the incident giving rise to the conflict and should also consider which student approached ENSA first.

2. Student conflict of interest with ENSA Advice or adviser

This occurs when a student is involved otherwise with ENSA e.g. a staff member, sabbatical officer or a member of the trustee board, when a student has pre-existing personal connection with an adviser e.g. friend, family member, neighbour; or when a student seek advice from an external organisation (e.g. trade union).

Any adviser identifying such conflict of interest should inform the relevant student(s) that they

cannot continue to support them, and the case will be allocated to a different adviser if possible.

If the student knows all the advisers (e.g if it's a former sabbatical officer or an intern), the student may agree in writing to receive advice and acknowledge that advice received may be biased.

In the event a student is seeking advice externally, no ENSA Adviser will be able to provide them advice unless they decide to not seek external support.

3. ENSA Advice as a legal entity meets a conflict of interest in advising student

A conflict of interest may arise when a student has submitted a complaint against ENSA or a member of ENSA staff; or when a student is involved in a complaint or disciplinary matter arising from their participation to ENSA student representation, democracy and activities.

On these occasions, we cannot advise parties on ENSA proceedings or subsequent ENU procedures invoked.

If a student complains against services delivered by ENSA Advice; we reserve the right to withdraw our services temporarily or indefinitely.

Policy Approved in February 2024 and to be reviewed annually.