

Confidentiality Policy, Record Keeping and Data Protection

Confidentiality Statement

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

- Meets statutory and legal requirements and
- 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 3. 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 any such discussions in an appropriate environment to ensure that confidentiality is respected.

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 reporting obligations under the Points Based System. The University's Tier 4 Sponsor duties can be read here: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/606678/Tier_4_Sponsor_Guidance_-_Document_2-Sponsorship_Duties.pdf

Please note that visa refusals and studying on an expired visa will need to be reported to the University's Tier 4 Compliance Officer.

- Where we consider there to be a risk to you or to the wider community and/or
- Where otherwise required by law

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 also need to keep copies of relevant documents and correspondence. All records are kept locked within the service, on our secure case recording system or in secure off site archive storage. Advice 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 Data Protection Act 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 see www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/corporate-information/information-compliance-andrecords-management/data-protection

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. Copies are available on request.

6. Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Procedure

We are always looking for ways to improve our service. If you have any suggestion or comment, good or bad, we would like to hear it. Please email us at studentadvice@westminster.ac.uk

If you have a complaint, please tell us. In the first instance the Student Advice 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 manager, you can use the University's formal complaints procedure. Details are available here:

westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/your-studies/forms-and-procedures/complaints

Immigration advice is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). If your complaint relates to immigration advice and cannot be resolved by using the University complaints procedure, you can make a complaint to the OISC. Full details of the procedure are here: oisc.homeoffice.gov.uk/complaints_about_immigration_advice/complaints_scheme/the_complaints_scheme/

Debt advice is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. If your complaint relates to debt advice and cannot be resolved using the University complaints procedure, you can make a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service

www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/consumer/complaints.htm

Student Advice

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