

## **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.

#### **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. students involved in a same academic misconduct investigation, students in opposite sides 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 advisers.

If it is not possible to allocate the case to another adviser (i.e. not enough adviser availability), student(s) will be redirected to an alternative advice provider within the university, or externally.

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, or when a student has pre-existing personal connection with an adviser e.g. friend, family member, neighbour.

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 it is not possible to allocate the case to another adviser (i.e. not enough adviser availability), student(s) will be redirected to an alternative advice provider within the university or externally.

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.

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

This occurs when a student is involved in a complaint against ENSA or a member of ENSA staff.

On these occasions it will be explained that ENSA Advice cannot support the student and the student will be signposted to another service.

Policy Approved in January 2023 and to be reviewed annually.