



Service Charter 24/25 Academic Year

Advice & Support at Keele SU (ASK) Service Charter

ASK is a Keele SU service and provides free, confidential and independent information and advice to current student members of Keele SU.

The level of advice and support ASK can provide to students is determined by our available resources and our legal obligations. ASK's funding and resources permit the ASK team to provide the level of advice described in this charter.

The purpose of this charter is to provide clarity on the level of service offered by ASK and to manage student expectations about the limits of the ASK service.

Accessing the ASK service

Students can access ASK in the following ways:

- Pre-booked appointments
 - By telephone call
 - In person (on the ground floor of Keele SU)
 - By Microsoft Teams
- Email
- Keele SU Website

ASK is an appointment only service, we do not operate a drop-in service. ASK does not operate an incoming telephone line to our service. Please see the ['Get Advice'](#) page on our website for more information.

We ask that students put as much information and context in an email to ASK to allow us to provide tailored advice. This is the information that the ASK Adviser will use to inform our advice, and we do not have capacity to chase students for additional information.

Response times

ASK has adopted this Service Charter to manage demand on the service and the expectations of our students, in addition to the wellbeing of ASK staff. We aim to respond to students as soon as possible within the response window specified.

ASK aims to respond to emails within a 3 working day response period. During periods of peak demand, the response period can be longer.

ASK is not an emergency service and ASK staff do not access, read or reply to emails outside of our operating times of 9am – 4pm, Monday – Friday. ASK is closed on bank holidays, University closed days and a limited number of staff training days each year.

ASK staff will not reply to Microsoft Teams messages or calls from students. All communication should be sent to [su.ask@keele.ac.uk](mailto:su.ask@ Keele.ac.uk).

Advice Service

Subject to the restrictions below, students can receive high quality information and advice from an ASK Adviser. We define 'advice' to mean:

- Exploration of the student's presenting problem and related matters.
- Identification of issues,
- Providing information on a student's rights and responsibilities relevant to the problem and explaining options, including implications/consequences,
- Identifying actions that the student can choose to take.

ASK Advisers do not undertake casework, or act on behalf of students, unless supporting the student through a formal University process and where the ASK Adviser deems it necessary.

The ASK service employs an empowerment model of advice provision, this means that ASK will equip students with information on their rights and responsibilities to allow them to resolve their own problems. ASK will present options to students to allow them to make an informed decision on actions they take. ASK will not make decisions for students or tell them what to do.

ASK will make reasonable adjustments to this charter where a student is protected under the Equality Act 2010, the request still falls within the scope of the ASK service, and ASK has the available resources.

| Advice Category | Information | Advice |
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| University processes | ✓ | ✓ |
| Welfare Benefits | ✓ | ✓ |
| Housing | ✓ | ✓ |
| Student Finance | ✓ | ✓ |
| Employment | ✓ | |
| Legal | ✓ | |

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| Family | ✓ | |
| Health and Wellbeing | ✓ | |
| Consumer | ✓ | |

Restrictions

ASK cannot advise parents, guardians, family members, or friends of a student about a student's case, except where that contact has the express written authority of the student.

ASK cannot advise a student's legal representative and/or supplement the advice of a third party.

ASK provides a limited service to prospective students at Keele University where the enquiry relates directly to Keele University. The service to prospective students is provided at the discretion of the Advocacy and Advice Manager and is subject to available resources.

ASK can provide information and advice to a student who has recently left the University, but only on a matter that is related to Keele University. Examples include an academic appeal, academic misconduct or a complaint. All other matters such as welfare benefits, financial issues or housing will be signposted to quality assured community advice provision.

Services ASK will not provide

ASK has limits on the type of services that we can offer to students due to resource constraints and legal requirements. ASK will not provide the following services:

- FCA regulated money advice / debt advice,
- Professional legal advice (ASK staff are not legally qualified),
- Immigration or visa advice,
- Criminal law advice,
- Mental health support / counselling,
- Careers advice,
- Complaints and disciplinaries relating to Keele SU,
- Academic skills support,
- Employment issues related to Keele SU or Keele University.

ASK does not provide a home-visit service under any circumstances.

Withdrawal of service

ASK makes every effort to provide information and advice to students, however the service ASK provides is limited and there are circumstances where ASK will refuse to provide a service or will withdraw an ongoing service. In these circumstances students will be signposted or referred on to another agency (where possible).

When an ASK Adviser feels that, despite information available from in-house, up to date resources and their own experience and training that they are not capable/confident enough to take a case any further, or if ASK is not the appropriate agency, active referral or signposting will be completed. In these circumstances students will be signposted or referred on to another agency.

Please see 'ASK and University Meetings' for information on the role of ASK Advisers in University meetings.

The following are examples of where service may be withdrawn, this list is indicative and not exhaustive. The decision to withdraw service will be made by the Advocacy and Advice Manager:

- The student presents to ASK repeatedly without any advice needs, or presents with advice needs that fall outside of ASK's service offer,
- The student is not eligible to receive a service from ASK,
- ASK does not have the required resource, time or expertise to provide the level of service required or the student's case is not a justifiable use of ASK's limited resources,
- The student has not taken any action and returns to ASK repeating the same enquiry,
- The student is not willing or able to divulge enough information for advice to be delivered,
- The student has presented false and/or misleading information to ASK or a 3rd party. ASK will not assist students to present false or misleading information to the University or any 3rd party,
- The student's case would implicate ASK in any type of breach of law (criminal or civil) or would create a conflict of interest with ASK,
- The student transfers to another University or ceases to be a Keele University student,
- The student is aggressive, abusive or their behaviour is in breach of Keele SU policies,
- The Advocacy and Advice Manager determines that the student's behaviour or level of need represents an unacceptable level of risk to staff wellbeing,
- The student has breached the trust of ASK staff and there has been a loss of confidence in the adviser client relationship,
- The nature of a case changes and ASK is no longer the most appropriate service to help.

Students who book appointments and then fail to attend on 3 occasions or repeatedly rearrange appointments at short notice will have the ability to use the online booking system removed. Email advice will still be offered in these circumstances.

Where ASK's service is being withdrawn, the student will be informed in writing, with the reason(s) why this is the case, with suggestions of where else they can seek help and informing them of their right to complain if they feel this action has been taken unreasonably.

Academic Advice Expectations and Limitations

| KEELE ACADEMIC PROCESSES | | |
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| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Academic Appeals (All Types) | <p>provide information on appealing on the Keele SU website, including a guide to completing the appeal form.</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on the appeals process and give guidance on completing the appeal form and evidence requirements.</p> <p>give email feedback on a maximum of 2 drafts of a student's appeal form,</p> <p>offer guidance by email if a school report response is required,</p> <p>offer guidance and next steps on a 'not upheld' appeal.</p> | <p>provide more than one 40-minute advice appointment per appeal,</p> <p>provide feedback on more than two draft appeal forms per appeal,</p> <p>write an appeal form for a student,</p> <p>seek evidence for an appeal on a student's behalf,</p> <p>appeal on a student's behalf,</p> <p>be able to predict the outcome of an academic appeal,</p> <p>chase the Appeals Team at the University for a quicker response to a student's appeal,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Academic Misconduct (Academic Conduct Officer Level) | <p>provide information on academic misconduct on the Keele SU website</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in</p> | <p>provide more than one 40-minute advice appointment per case,</p> <p>attend Academic Conduct Officer meetings for 1st</p> |

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| | <p>person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on the academic misconduct process and give guidance how to prepare for an academic conduct meeting, including the relevance of Exceptional Circumstances.</p> <p>attend an Academic Conduct Officer meeting in a moral support capacity for cases where the outcome may lead to termination of studies (subject to sufficient notice and availability).</p> <p>offer guidance and next steps following the outcome of a case.</p> | <p>offences of plagiarism or collusion,</p> <p>attend an Academic Conduct Officer meeting without the student being present,</p> <p>be able to tell students what the outcome of their case will be,</p> <p>provide academic skills / teaching sessions on referencing,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| <p>Academic Misconduct (Academic Misconduct Committee Level)</p> | <p>provide information on academic misconduct on the Keele SU website</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on the academic misconduct process and give guidance how to prepare for an Academic Misconduct Committee, including the relevance of Exceptional Circumstances.</p> <p>attend the Academic Misconduct Committee to offer moral support</p> | <p>provide more than one 40-minute advice appointment per case,</p> <p>attend an Academic Misconduct Committee without the student being present,</p> <p>be able to tell students what the outcome of their case will be,</p> <p>present the student's case or answer questions on the student's behalf.</p> |

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| | (subject to sufficient notice and availability) offer guidance and next steps following the outcome of a case. | |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Health and Conduct Committee | <p>provide information on the Health and Conduct process on the Keele SU website,</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on the Health and Conduct process and give guidance on preparing for a hearing</p> <p>give email feedback on a maximum of 2 drafts of a student's statement to check for meaning and clarity,</p> <p>attend a Health and Conduct Committee in a moral support capacity (subject to sufficient notice and availability).</p> <p>offer guidance and next steps following an outcome,</p> | <p>have knowledge of a student's professional obligations or any codes of practice,</p> <p>attend a Health and Conduct Committee without the student being present,</p> <p>be able to write a student's Health and Conduct statement or any reflection,</p> <p>advocate on a student's behalf in a Health and Conduct case,</p> <p>present the student's case or answer questions on the student's behalf.</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Fitness to Practise Committee Regulation B5 | <p>provide information on the Fitness to Practise process on the Keele SU website,</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or</p> | <p>have knowledge of a student's professional obligations,</p> <p>present the student's case in a Fitness to Practise Committee,</p> |

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| | <p>Teams) to fully advise on the Fitness to Practise process and give guidance on preparing for a hearing</p> <p>give email feedback on a maximum of 2 drafts of a student's statement to check for meaning and clarity,</p> <p>attend a Fitness to Practise Committee in a moral support capacity (subject to sufficient notice and availability).</p> <p>offer guidance and next steps following an outcome</p> | <p>attend a Fitness to Practise Committee without the student being present,</p> <p>be able to write a student's Fitness to Practise statement or any reflection,</p> <p>speak on the student's behalf in a Fitness to Practise Committee,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Exceptional Circumstances (EC) Regulation B3 | <p>provide information on the Exceptional Circumstances process on the Keele SU website,</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on the Exceptional Circumstances process and give guidance on the EC form.</p> | <p>make decisions on EC claims or tell students if a claim will be accepted,</p> <p>seek out evidence on a student's behalf,</p> <p>write an EC statement for a student,</p> <p>submit an EC claim on a student's behalf</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Disciplinary Regulation B1 | <p>provide information on student discipline on the Keele SU website</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise</p> | <p>attend disciplinary meetings if the student is not attending,</p> <p>provide advice on criminal law, or any criminal law implications of a</p> |

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| | <p>on the discipline process and give guidance how to prepare for a discipline meeting, including guidance on a writing a statement and presenting any exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>provide email guidance on questions about the discipline process.</p> <p>give email feedback on a draft of a student's statement for meaning and clarity,</p> <p>Attend the following meetings with a student in a moral support capacity (subject to notice and availability):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk Assessment Panel (RAP) - Discipline investigation meeting, - Discipline Committee hearing. | <p>student's discipline case,</p> <p>question the Investigating Officer, the Committee or any witnesses in a Discipline Committee,</p> <p>present a student's case to a Discipline Committee,</p> <p>answer questions on a student's behalf in a Discipline Committee,</p> |
| OTHER ADVICE AREAS | | |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Housing | provide information on housing on the Keele SU website, | Undertake casework on a student's behalf or provide specialist level advice on housing, |

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| | <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on housing rights and responsibilities as a student,</p> <p>signpost students to quality assured providers of housing advice for complex queries,</p> <p>Provide a tenancy agreement checking service for students,</p> | <p>contact your landlord on your behalf unless ASK deems it necessary.</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Welfare benefits | <p>provide information on students and welfare benefits on the Keele SU website,</p> <p>provide a 40-minute advice appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to fully advise on welfare benefit entitlement as a student,</p> <p>signpost students to quality assured providers of welfare benefits advice for complex queries,</p> <p>help with form filling for up to 2 hours,</p> | <p>undertake casework on a student's behalf or provide specialist level advice on welfare benefits,</p> <p>conduct welfare benefit appeals or mandatory reconsiderations,</p> <p>attend tribunal hearings,</p> <p>attend welfare benefit medicals or assessments of any type,</p> <p>advise students in cases that go beyond ASK staff's experience or knowledge,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Consumer | <p>provide information on consumer rights on the Keele SU website,</p> | <p>undertake advice or casework on a student's behalf or provide specialist level</p> |

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| | <p>provide a 40-minute appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to give information on a student's consumer rights, including sending information to the student after the appointment,</p> <p>signpost students to quality assured providers of consumer advice for complex or specialist queries,</p> | <p>advice on consumer issues,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Employment | <p>provide information on employment rights on the Keele SU website,</p> <p>provide a 40-minute appointment (in person, telephone or Teams) to give information on a student's employment rights, including sending information to the student after the appointment,</p> <p>signpost students to quality assured providers of employment advice for complex or specialist queries,</p> | <p>provide tailored advice or casework on employment law,</p> <p>advocate for or represent a student to an employer,</p> <p>attend employment meetings of any type,</p> <p>attend employment tribunal hearings,</p> |
| Advice Topic | ASK Will: | ASK Will Not: |
| Other advice areas | <p>use the information sources available to us to provide a student with assisted information,</p> <p>signpost students to quality assured providers of</p> | <p>provide advice on areas that we do not have the resources or expertise to be able to deliver a service on.</p> |

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| | information, advice or representation where this is possible. | |
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