

RGUSU Advice Terms of Service

The RGUSU Advice Service is a confidential, non-judgemental and impartial space for students experiencing difficulties during their academic journey within RGU. The advice service recognises that students can experience a range of issues throughout their studies and will need accurate advice and support to help navigate these issues. In the interest of daily service operations and to reassure students of the level of support the service can provide at each step of the way, this Terms of Service document has been produced.

For any queries regarding the Terms of Service, please email advice@rguunion.co.uk

Advice Service Operational Information

The advice service is operational Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm, excluding university, union and public holidays. The advice service operates in a hybrid capacity and is based in the RGU Students' Union Office, Level 5, Riverside Building, Garthdee.

The service is free to access and is open to any fully matriculated student at Robert Gordon University. The advice service unfortunately cannot provide support to any students enrolled at RGU-affiliated institutions or partner institutions, such as International College Robert Gordon University (ICRGU). The policies and procedures for ICRGU can be found at [Policies and Procedures - International College Robert Gordon University](#) and ICRGU students are advised and encouraged to contact their Student President or Representatives for assistance.

For any enquiries students can contact the advice service via email (advice@rguunion.co.uk), booking an appointment ([Book an appointment](#)) and telephone. Any alternative forms of communication may not be picked up by the advice service and you risk your enquiry not being seen.

Support Areas

The Advice Service can support students on a range of academic challenges and where the service knowledge is exhausted, every effort will be made to determine an outcome for the student or signpost to the most relevant department.

Student academic challenges the service can advise on include:

- Academic Misconduct hearings
- Non-academic Misconduct hearings
- Appeals
- Extensions/Deferrals
- Authorised interruption of studies
- Fitness to practice hearings
- Complaints
- Signposting to relevant departments

Where a student has approached the advice service with a topic we cannot support, the student will be informed of this limitation and signposted to the correct university department. Where a student has booked an appointment and indicated in the notes they wish to discuss one of these topics, we reserve the right to cancel the appointment and signpost the student to the correct department.

These support topics include:

- Finance/money
- Visa and immigration
- Accommodation
- Counselling/mental health support
- School/course/module specific questions

Advice Service Appointments

Booking an Appointment

The RGUSU operates an online appointment booking system, found on the union website here:

[Book an appointment](#)

All appointment slots are 30-minutes: in-person appointments are available on Monday and Tuesday and online appointments are available Wednesday and Friday. Emergency appointments outside these times may be made at the discretion of the advice service.

When booking an appointment, we ask students to select the most appropriate appointment method. For example, please refrain from selecting an in-person appointment if an online one is needed. If multiple bookings are made, only the first booking will be accepted unless the student has contacted the service up to 24 hours before the appointment time to request any changes. Emergency changes may be requested outside of this timeframe and may be considered at the discretion of the advice service coordinator.

To allow for all students to be able to access the service, if a student has booked and missed 3 support appointments without any previous communication then they will be moved to email only support. On the first missed appointment students can re-book another appointment, on the second missed appointment an email will be sent asking if there are any barriers to attendance for alternative arrangements to be made, and on the third missed appointment the student will be notified that they will be moved to email only support.

Attending an Appointment

At the advice service we understand when students seek advice they may be facing stressful and traumatic situations that can impact emotional and mental health. We ask that students maintain a respectful manner when speaking with any member of the RGUSU team, especially within appointments. We expect students to show the same level of respect and dignity as with any other member of staff within RGU.

On appointment day, we expect students to arrive on time as the advice service is very small and the demand for support appointments is quite high. If a student is more than 10 minutes

late to a support meeting without any prior arrangements being made, the appointment time may be cancelled and re-allocated to someone else.

When attending an appointment students might want the moral support of friends, family, or their class rep, this is fine but we ask that any additional attendees are declared, preferably beforehand but at the latest at the start of the appointment.

All support appointments are confidential and non-judgemental, and we encourage students to be as open and honest about their situation as possible. The advice service cannot provide accurate advice to students if we don't have all the details. We also ask that students don't record their appointment(s), especially using audio or video supported devices, due to the confidential nature of each appointment. If a student requires a follow-up with a summary of what was discussed during the appointment, this can be provided upon request.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is at the heart of the advice service but there may be occasions where information regarding a case needs to be passed on; this includes where there are concerns for a students' safety, additional information is needed from a third party or if a crime has been disclosed to us. Where information needs to be disclosed, the advice service will keep the student informed as much as possible however this may not always be possible for all situations.

Service Engagement

The RGUSU advice service is here to act in the best interest of any RGU student and as such, we strive to deliver a high-quality service at every point in a students' journey with us. In order to continue to deliver this service, students are encouraged to engage as much as possible and to give feedback where they can to help with development and improvement. The advice service assures students that whilst they are engaging with us they can expect:

- Confidential and non-judgemental advice, support, representation and signposting
- Clear and regular communication on your ongoing case
- A welcoming, friendly and approachable advice service
- Up to date knowledge and information on academic processes and regulations
- Attendance at academic/non-academic hearings with students where the advice calendar allows. (Please note – this is not an advocacy role and attendance is for the moral support of the student only)
- Review and feedback on appeal documentation

Whilst the advice service is here for the students of RGU, we also have expectations for students engaging with us to maximise the experience for all students using the service:

- Respectful communication with the service – our advice service is very small and always aim to answer all student enquiries as quickly as possible to allow for time-sensitive situations, however expected response times may vary during peak hours. Any

changes made to response times will be advertised on the RGUSU page and in the service automated email response. We ask that students accessing the service be respectful of this timescale and refrain from sending multiple written communications (emails and teams messages) within the same day as this may delay response times.

- **Effective Engagement** – we expect that students reach out for advice as soon as possible to allow us time to provide effective support within any deadlines; otherwise, we may only be able to offer basic email support. For example – if you have been invited to a misconduct hearing, please reach out as soon as you receive your letter to allow for time to discuss the hearing process.
- **Inappropriate Content** – For certain university processes (appeals, complaints etc...) there will be a need to produce documentary evidence to accompany the relevant form. Do not send graphic pictures and videos of a medical nature to the advice service or as part of your evidence documentation, this will not be accepted as evidence. This includes injuries, hospital scenes, and surgical and deceased images. Appropriate medical evidence includes doctor letters, hospital paperwork and death certificates. Sharing graphic pictures or videos as noted above with the advice service may result in the withdrawal of support.

Breach of Terms

If a student fails to follow the outlined student expectations or breaches any section of this Terms of Service, they may be moved to an alternative support method. Where a student has failed to follow the outlined expectations of the service for the first time, they will be given a warning advising this. If a student failed to follow the service expectations a second time, they will be moved to an alternative form of support. This includes the case being passed to a different member of the RGUSU team or being provided support over email only.

Our advisors are trained and experienced in RGU University policy and procedures and where students continually disregard and ignore advice, it may not be possible to continue to offer support.

For extreme cases, the advice service withholds the right to withdraw support from a student. Where a student has consistently broken the service expectations, provided false or misleading information and/or behaved in a threatening manner, they risk support being withdrawn. This option will only be used in exceptional cases after all other support options have been exhausted. Where service is withdrawn, the student will be notified through a letter sent to their university email address.