

The Academic Regulations Appendix 23: The Role of a Student's Friend in Academic Conduct Procedures

2025-2026



The Academic Regulations

Appendix 23: The Role of a Student's Friend in Academic Conduct Procedures

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Regulations

1. Context

- 1.1 Edge Hill University has a number of formal procedures relating to student interactions with the University that involve meetings at which the student concerned is allowed to be accompanied by a friend. These procedures relate to:
 - Academic Misconduct Regulations
 - Appeal Procedures
 - Complaints Procedure
 - Non-academic Misconduct Procedure
 - Fitness to Practise Procedures
- 1.2 The above listed student casework procedures may include local and University level investigative meetings. This guidance on the role of a Student Friend applies equally at all stages of the relevant process.

2. Role of a Student's Friend

- 2.1 The role of student friend is to provide the student with moral, emotional or wellbeing support. The friend will have no formal role in the meeting and cannot act as the student's representative/advocate or ask questions
- 2.2 Normally, it is expected that a person acting as the Student Friend will be a member of the Edge Hill University community. However, they should not be connected to the case (eg they cannot be a witness to disciplinary proceedings) or have any other conflicts of interest.
- 2.3 It is the student's responsibility to identify someone to act as a friend and to provide them with relevant details of the case.
- 2.4 The friend may accompany the student to preliminary meetings, formal investigations and panel hearings.
- 2.3 Where a student's friend attends such a meeting, the friend is allowed to provide guidance to the student by providing moral support, taking notes and helping with papers. They may also quietly advise on issues such as points of procedure, items that the student may wish to raise and also suggest questions the student may wish to ask witnesses.

- 2.4 While the friend is not allowed to speak for the student or ask direct questions, they may read a pre-prepared statement on behalf of the student and summarise key points the student wishes to make.
- 2.5 If at any time the student considers they need a short recess to discuss any issues with their friend they can request such a recess via the Chair.
- 2.6 The friend is expected to conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner and must not interrupt the proceedings.
- 2.7 The friend is expected to respect and comply with the University's processes, procedures, terms and conditions.

3. Representation

Students' Union

- 3.1 The Students' Union offers students expert and personalised advice and representation, at no cost to students. Students are strongly encouraged to access this service, which is independent of the University.
- 3.2 Students may appoint a Students' Union official to provide support and/or representation at all stages of the procedures listed under 1.1.
- 3.3 The role of a Students' Union representative extends beyond that of a Student Friend in that a Students' Union official may also:
 - i. Present relevant points to the panel
 - ii. Ask questions to the Chair or Presenting Officer
 - iii. Summarise any points that the student may have missed when presenting their case.

Legal Representation

- 3.4 The University's internal processes to which this appendix relates are not judicial procedures. Whilst students and the University have the right to seek legal *advice* in the matter of a student casework process, legal *representation* is not normally necessary or permitted.
- 3.5 The University endeavours to provide access to well-trained staff and resources to support and guide students involved in a casework process. Students that are involved in a casework process are encouraged to access

this advice and support, and in particular to consult with the Students' Union's independent, and cost-free, Advice and Representation Service.

- 3.6 In highly exceptional cases, legal representation may be permitted where a case is considered by the University to be extremely complex or where the University agrees the consequences for the student are potentially very serious when compared to the consequences for other students subject to the same procedure. The potential for a student to be withdrawn from the University is not, of itself, a sufficient ground to permit legal representation.
- 3.7 Where legal representation is approved, representation from the Students' Union will not be permitted. The legal representative may act as the student's advisor as detailed in point 3.3 above.
- 3.8 Students seeking legal representation in an internal casework process must request permission for this as soon as possible and no later than three calendar days before the panel meeting (for example, a student must notify the University by 10am Tuesday, for a meeting due to be held at 10am on Friday of the same week).
- 3.9 Requests must be put in writing to the Head of Student Casework. The University will normally respond to any such request within one working day of receipt of the request.
- 3.10 Where a request is permitted the University may acquire its own legal representation.
- 3.11 Where a request is rejected, a written explanation will be provided. In all cases the University will provide a written response to student requests, explaining any relevant information and giving details about next steps.
- 3.12 For the purposes of our internal procedures, the University's decision in the matter of legal representation will be final.
- 3.13 In all instances students must meet the costs of any legal services they elect to use during a University process.

Key to Relevant Documents

This policy does not refer to other documents.

- Academic Misconduct Regulations
- Appeal Procedures
- Complaints Procedure
- Non-academic Misconduct Procedure
- Fitness to Practise Procedures

Annexes

There are no annexes to this policy.

End matter

Title	Appendix 23: The Role of a Student's Friend in Academic Conduct Procedures
Policy Owner	Director of Governance and Assurance
Policy Manager	Head of Student Casework
Approved by	Academic Board
Date of Last Review	July 2024
Date for Review	July 2025