

# Student Support & Development

## Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy

### Introduction

Within Student Support and Development (SS&D), there is a multi-disciplinary team of individuals with specialist knowledge and expertise in mental, spiritual and physical health, academic skills and structures, professional development, financial issues and models of student success in third level education. Combined, this expertise provides a unique platform through which students can be supported and developed through their time at the University.

### *Common Purpose*

The common purpose of all staff of SS&D is to provide as many opportunities as possible to the students of DCU to help them develop to their full potential. The levels of support and intervention required by individual students will vary from student to student.

### *Environment*

Our work is carried out within a supportive and open environment, which allows all student members of the DCU Community ease of access to support and developmental opportunities.

### *Confidentiality*

All members of SS&D have undergone Personal Data Protection Training and are bound by the rules of confidentiality, as outlined in this document.

### Scope

This policy applies to all staff of SS&D, both full time and part-time. The policy also applies to any agents providing services to SS&D.

### Policy Statement

SS&D understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a student shall be shared with any other School or Unit of the University, or any external agency or person, without that student's prior, expressed consent, except where issues of safety or legality apply.

Furthermore, in line with the University's Third Party Policy, staff will not discuss any student with a third party<sup>1</sup>, including parents, guardians or next-of-kin, unless consent is expressly granted by the student or where issues of safety or legality apply, as laid down in the DCU Contact with Third Parties Policy.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, 'third party' relates to any individual outside of Student Support & Development.

### **Written Consent**

It is the responsibility of SS&D staff to obtain consent in writing, before sharing any information with a third party, subject to the exceptions for safety or legal reasons referred to above. This written consent will be held on the student's file in SS&D. If a student chooses not to grant consent for information to be shared, this decision will be respected but the student should be aware that it may restrict the types of support available to them.<sup>2</sup>

### **Information shared between Student Support & Development Staff**

Where necessary, information may be shared between the different members of SS&D. Files are held centrally and can be accessed by relevant members of SS&D. Staff will only access this information when required in order to carry out the duties of their role and for the benefit of the student. Certain services such as Access, Counselling & Personal Development, Chaplaincy, the Disability & Learning Support Service and the Student Health Centre have additional enhanced confidentiality to ensure that they can adhere to ethical and professional guidelines.

### **A student-centric approach to support**

Where a student is availing of the services of various units within SS&D, practitioners and professionals within these services will share relevant information about the student in order to provide an informed and coordinated approach to the support of the student. Details of such discussions will remain confidential to the staff members providing this support and will not be shared outside of this group to other members of staff within SS&D. The Director of SS&D will also have access to this information in order to carry out their duty of care to students, as Director of the Service.

### **Services with Enhanced Confidentiality**

Access, Disability & Learning Support, Counselling & Personal Development, Chaplaincy and the Student Health Centre provide an additional layer of confidentiality to the student, due to the sensitive nature of the discussions which may take place with these services. Members of staff within these services will not disclose details of *conversations held in private* with students with other members of staff in SS&D or third parties outside of the multi-disciplinary team that is working to support the student, as mentioned above, unless obliged to do so, as outlined in the DCU Contact with Third Party Policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Where a student's safety or the safety of others is at risk, and where it is not possible to obtain consent in writing, confidentiality may be breached.

## Contacts

If you have any query about the above policy, please direct your queries to the Director of Student Support & Development, email [claire.bohan@dcu.ie](mailto:claire.bohan@dcu.ie).

## Related Documents

- 1) [DCU Contact with Third Parties Policy](#)
- 2) [DCU Data Protection Policy](#)

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

## Version Control

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