

Title: The Student Advocate: The Inherent Conflict Facing The International Student Adviser?

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to examine the role of an international student adviser working as an advocate within the tertiary education environment, and whether the role brings with it, an inherent conflict of interest. It will take examples from the writer's and others' personal experiences of student advising within the university setting and issues faced.

It will outline the varied roles of an adviser and the international student's need for an advocate. It will also examine the duties owed to various stakeholders, look at differing forms of advocacy, seek definition of the term "conflict of interest" and the forms that such conflict takes, and look at how any conflict can be most effectively resolved. In the case of irreconcilable conflict, the writer will examine appropriate referral action.

Is there a conflict of interest inherent in the role of an international student adviser acting as an advocate? Where are duties owed, and which duties are overriding? How can the role of advocating on behalf of a student be balanced with the employed status of the adviser?

The paper will detail the institutional background within which many advisers work, and the mandate for advocacy. It will give examples of the advocacy role, and the issues faced, examine various areas of ethical dilemma and how such dilemma can be avoided or appropriately managed so that service to the student is not compromised.

It is a topic to which many practitioners may relate. The intention of the paper is to provoke thought on this issue, and suggest and canvass methods by which the institution-employed international student adviser can perform effectively and comfortably, as an advocate for the international student.

Keywords:

International student adviser- role- job description- advocate- duty of care- duty to employer- retention- university interests- stakeholder relationships- legal obligations- reporting obligations- professional/personal boundaries- internal conflict- multi student obligations- conflict of interest- student v employer- relationship management (within office, within university and with external agencies)- conflict resolution- unmanageable conflict- appropriate referral.