

Protocol confidential advisor

SV Eureka

version 1.0, drafted December 2020

The first point of contact within the association for members struggling with conflicts, welfare or study-related problems is the confidential advisor. The confidential advisor is not a social worker, lawyer or psychologist, but can offer a listening ear, help clarify problems and, where necessary, refer students to appropriate (professional) help. The confidential advisor can also provide further support to the person seeking help in the steps that are taken after the conversations. In this way, the association can remain a safe and pleasant environment where everyone feels at home.

This protocol provides a guideline for the actions of the confidential advisor of study association SV Eureka. It serves as a source of information for the confidential advisor themselves, as a guideline and a code of ethics for the best possible execution of their duties. It is also a source of information for members who wish to turn to the confidential advisor and for bodies such as the General Assembly Meeting (GAM) and the board, to check the functioning of the confidential advisor. A document containing the most recent version of the protocol must therefore always be available for inspection by all members of the association.

It may happen that members of the association deem it wise to introduce changes regarding the form or content of this protocol. Fruitful discussions about this must therefore always be possible for both members and the confidential advisor, for example during an GAM. Any changes made must always be mentioned at an GAM so that everyone is aware of them.

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When can a member contact the confidential advisor?

If a member is troubled by study-related problems, runs into problems within the association with another member/other members or experiences more general problems with well-being, they can contact the confidential advisor. This first point of contact offers a sympathetic ear to talk about the (inter)personal problems and to determine together whether the member is in need of help and what the question is. One or more sessions can be scheduled for this purpose. Preferably this takes place at a physical location when possible, but it can also be organized via digital communication channels.

In addition to these initial conversations, it may be the case that the person seeking help wants to take concrete action. The confidential advisor can offer support in taking these steps in order to achieve the goals that are set. This support can take different forms.

First of all, this support can be offered from a distance. In this way, the person seeking help takes concrete steps himself, but can share with the confidential advisor how this process is going. For example, the person seeking help contacts an aid agency, the study advisor or an association member himself, but practical and emotional support can be offered during this process. Examples of this are that the confidential advisor is kept informed, interim conversations are scheduled to discuss how the situation is progressing or choosing to draft an e-mail together.

The confidential advisor can also take on a more active role in consultation. For example, an exploratory role can be chosen, where the confidential advisor contacts individuals or agencies to gain information, without having to share the case of the person seeking help. In addition, the confidential advisor may act as the representative of the person seeking help. For example, a person or authority may be approached on behalf of the member, representing their interests, questions or other personal views. In doing so, the person seeking help may, if desired and possible, remain anonymous. This last role can potentially give the member a stronger position, which is important, for example, when approaching a group of people or an administrative body. Consider, for example, approaching the Supervisory Board or the board of the association.

The role assumed by the confidential advisor will always depend on the support the person seeking help is comfortable with and on the context of the request for help. This will be different in each situation, so it is important to agree together what guidance is desired and what information may be shared with others. This is not limited to the examples mentioned; at different moments in the process, different forms of guidance can be chosen. The most important thing is to communicate clearly and openly about this.

When a member needs to contact the confidential, he or she can be reached in different ways. First of all, one can mail to the special e-mail address for the confidential advisor: vertrouwenspersoon@sveureka.nl. This address is the best way to ensure confidentiality. The current confidant can also be reached directly, for example by sending a WhatsApp message or a message via Microsoft Teams. To ensure that the request for help is answered in time, the confidential advisor should strive to respond within 2 working days.

A number of **examples of experiences or problems** that a member can approach the confidential advisor with are:

- Feelings of insecurity or bullying within the association or lecture hall
- Feelings of panic when writing the honors thesis
- Situations within the family or circle of friends impede studying
- Teachers do not consider functional limitations sufficiently
- An argument has arisen within a committee
- A member experiences more negative emotions than positive ones
- Study assignments are piling up and the member can no longer oversee the situation
- A member just feels the need to talk to someone

The position of the confidential advisor

Although each confidential advisor may have a personal approach with their own methods and conversation techniques, there are a number of requirements that must be met in order to execute the function as well as possible. In this way, members are best served, regardless of the nature of the request for help.

Values and qualities

A confidential advisor must guarantee a number of **values and qualities**, namely:

- Accessibility and visibility within the association
- Transparency about the role, position and tasks as a confidential advisor
- Confidentiality and independence
- The ability to lend a sympathetic ear and having a non-judgmental attitude
- Thorough knowledge of referral options and assistance providers within and outside the university
- Solution oriented and empathic acting ability
- Active commitment to a safe, trusted study association; "a warm bath".

The confidential advisor in function

A confidential advisor has no authority to offer psychological help or advice, other than what can be offered in a normal conversation. Professional assistance can therefore not be provided or promised from this position. The confidential advisor therefore does not offer structural counseling, but as a point of contact can offer a listening ear and refer to professional assistance or other (university) agencies. Here a supporting role can be assumed to guide the person seeking help through the process.

Being "only" a point of contact and especially referring people does not mean simply acting as an intermediary for (welfare) care; it is an important first step towards assistance. It is important to put people at ease and encourage them to accept the help they need and deserve. While some problems may seem less significant than others at first glance, it must be remembered that all steps toward greater well-being are helpful and important. All of the values and

limitations of well-being that have meaning for a person seeking help have the same for the confidential advisor and, when taken seriously, can have a great impact on the person seeking help.

As a confidential advisor one must adopt an active attitude to be accessible, approachable and known within the association and thus make it clear to members that they can turn to them. People seeking help can "knock on the door" of the confidential advisor or be referred to this person. The confidant can also support the board in noticing association-related unrest within, for example, a committee or an unwelcoming atmosphere in the chamber of the association. It is important to keep in mind that one does not go off book and proactively "interfere" with personal problems. It is always good to indicate that the confidential advisor can offer help from this position, but individual unsolicited advice or referrals should not be intended.

When a member contacts the confidential advisor, the objectives are to listen, to continue to ask questions and to find out what the problem is. It is the duty of the confidential advisor to create a safe space where one feels safe to speak freely, to express emotions and to share confidential (personal) information. Empathetic listening and thinking along, but also showing solution-oriented thinking are most important here. After one or more conversations the confidential advisor will assess whether and which referral possibilities may be of help. This means that one should not try (too much) to solve problems oneself, but that one should recognize when something goes beyond one's capabilities and a referral is necessary.

When to refer and to whom?

As mentioned earlier, a confidential advisor cannot provide professional help, but is well informed about possible help agencies to which referrals can be made. These are persons and organizations both within and outside the university. In consultation with the person seeking help, a referral can then be made to one or more institutions. With welfare questions, for example, it is important both to address personal problems thoroughly and to inform tutors or supervisors from the university about the problems in time. This may also prevent complications such as missing deadlines or study delays.

Some of these **referral options** include:

- The general practitioner (also for mental problems! Think of Nurse Practitioner and Mental Healthcare (POH-GGZ))
- The student psychologist

- Studying without Limitations (Platform Onbeperkt Studeren)
- The honors supervisor/coordinator
- The study advisor(s) of the own study
- The police
- Foundation 113 suicide prevention
- VIDIOUS legal aid
- Humanities welfare trainers

Here, of course, the confidential advisor may at their discretion also consider other agencies or individuals appropriate to provide the help in a given context. In determining whether referral is necessary, agencies can also assist the confidential advisor, such as a conversation with 113, a police helpline, or one of the university's various student welfare platforms. It is also possible that consultation with a university confidential advisor about the case in question could provide more insight. This may require asking permission from the member involved to discuss potentially reducible details (more on this is discussed under Privacy and Records).

Privacy and dossier formation

The confidential advisor has a duty of confidentiality, which continues to apply even after resignation, to all information shared in confidence. This applies at all times, unless statutory regulations dictate otherwise or in the event of a conflict of duties which results in a crisis of conscience. The confidential advisor shall inform the member of the nature and scope of his duty of confidentiality at the beginning of the first meeting. Whenever a breach of confidentiality needs to take place, this is brought to the attention of the member and, if necessary, the Board.

The guidelines of confidentiality are as follows:

- all information shared in confidence is covered by the duty of confidentiality
- sharing information about the case is only allowed with the (written) permission of those involved
- when a particular conflict or problem restricts the functioning of the association, a governing body of Eureka may be informed with the consent of those involved
- when consent leads to the sharing of information, an agreement must be made on the extent to which this information will be anonymised. Names, information that can be traced back to an individual or the nature of the problem in this case are omitted where desired.

For mental support of the confidential advisor, it is possible to consult with a confidential advisor at university level or from Vidius, as long as the identity of the people involved remains concealed. Confidential confidential advisors of other study associations may also be asked for advice, as long as no information is disclosed which can be traced back to the people involved.

Documents and anonymization

Documents in the drive assigned to the confidential advisor (vertrouwenspersoon@sveureka.nl) that may contain confidential information should be password protected. A password granting access will only be disclosed to those people who have been involved in the drafting of the document and who, if they wish to see it, have a relevant interest in its contents. If (one of) the people involved wishes that (certain) information is deleted, the information in question is removed from the archive.

The confidential advisor ensures that documents from all dossiers are anonymised as far as possible. Names shall be censored and clear references to person and identity shall be avoided as much as possible if this information is not relevant for the comprehensibility of the document and the case.

The storage period for files in the archive is as long as the confidential advisor is appointed. If it is deemed wise for files to be transferred to a succeeding confidential advisor, this may only be done with the consent of the members concerned. The same applies to messages in the confidential advisor's inbox.

Relationship to the Association

The relationship of the confidential advisor to the Association is defined in the Rules of Procedure of the Association. Below is the article on the confidential advisor as adopted on December 17, 2020:

Article 19

1. SV Eureka has a confidential advisor.
2. Anyone affiliated with SV Eureka can request a confidential conversation with the confidential advisor.
3. The confidential advisor is obliged to keep these conversations confidential. The confidential advisor is not allowed to share any information that they have obtained through their function without written permission of the complainant, save for legal obligations.
4. If the confidential advisor reasonably suspects that the safety of the complainant or other is jeopardised they can contact the relevant institutions.
5. The confidential advisor is not a member of the board or the Advisory Board.
6. New confidential advisors are appointed by the board through solicitations, in consultation with the current confidential advisor.
7. The confidential advisor is appointed for at least one year. They can decide with the board if they want to continue.
8. The confidential advisor can resign at any time, as long as they inform the board in writing, at least two weeks in advance.
9. In case of misconduct, such as a violation of the confidentiality clause, the confidential advisor can be removed from their office by the board. The confidential advisor can also be removed if a 2/3 majority for this is reached in a general assembly.

Former confidential advisors

In the future it may also be possible to contact former confidential advisors of SV Eureka. In this way experiences can be exchanged (according to protocol and in particular the obligation of confidentiality, of course) and possible tips on how to do as well as possible within the association can be shared. An overview of

previously appointed confidential advisors can be found here and will be updated as the position is transferred:

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Relationship to the Board

The position of confidential advisor is independent of the board. However, it is important to work with the board. First of all, the application and appointment of the confidential advisor is arranged by the board, in which the insights and experiences of the advisor to be replaced are important to make a good choice. It is therefore important that the confidential advisor informs the board when they decide to resign. In addition, a link with the board is very useful to be as informed as possible about the general atmosphere, problems and possible action points for the confidential advisor within the association. By keeping each other well informed about this, promotion for approaching the confidential advisor and possible activities can be organized as a result of these dialogues. Relevant documents for the confidential advisor are also forwarded, such as notes from the General Assembly of Members (GAM). To ensure that these tasks are streamlined, it is useful to maintain one permanent contact from the board for the confidential advisor. Separate from the RoP and the obligations therein, the confidential advisor may choose to deliver a semi-annual report to the board.

When a conflict arises that has an impact on or is relevant to the functioning of the association, the confidential advisor may choose to keep the board informed. In doing so, the regular duty of confidentiality is still upheld; thus, if necessary, it can be communicated that a conflict is underway, but no further detail is given as to the nature of the conflict.

In the case of breach of the confidentiality obligation or other misconduct, when it does not happen because the law requires it, the board can remove the confidential advisor. This can also be done by at least two-thirds of the GAM.

When a member approaches the confidential advisor with problems regarding a board member, the confidential advisor is free to go to the Supervisory Board about it when normally it would go to the board.