

University of Salford Students Union: Code of Conduct for members

Introduction

The Union is committed to ensuring that all students can take full advantage of activities and opportunities and enjoy a positive experience while studying at the University of Salford.

We seek to create a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff, students and visitors and expect all members of the Union to uphold this principle at all times. The following code of conduct sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected by all members and how the Union will deal with any complaints regarding behaviour and conduct.

The University of Salford Students' Union and its Board of Trustees have an ongoing responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of all Union members, and have the right to suspend, withdraw or terminate the membership of any member whose conduct is found to be in breach of this code, or any part thereof.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct constitutes misconduct and may also result in students being referred to the University's disciplinary procedures. [<University Code of Conduct available here>](#)

This policy applies to all members of the Students Union, including associate members. It does not apply to Union staff, who have their own disciplinary procedures, apart from student staff who are covered by both procedures.

Any breaches of the Elections regulations will be considered under the relevant Elections processes, but the list of penalties in appendix are also available to the Returning Officer in such instances.

Membership Code of Conduct

The Union operates within a values framework that underpins all our actions and decisions. These values are:

- **Student-powered:** We are undeniably focussed on the needs of our members
- **Change-makers:** We are creative, progressive and kind
- **Straight-forward:** We are open, candid and proactive
- **Effective:** We are professional and collaborative
- **Inclusive:** Equity is at the heart of everything we do

The following are examples of behaviour that constitutes misconduct under the Membership Code of Conduct. This is a non-exhaustive list.

- Any discrimination, bullying or harassment of any group or individual on the grounds of gender, race, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, religion or belief or sexual orientation. This includes any behaviour, verbal or physical, which may be interpreted as sexual harassment.
- Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening, abusive or offensive behaviour to any student, staff member, visitor to the Union or member of the public;
- Abusive, threatening or offensive language (verbal or written, including via social media and instant messaging) to any student, staff member, visitor to the Union or member of the public. This includes any behaviour which may be interpreted as bullying;
- Action likely to cause injury or impair safety on Union or University premises or at events or activities organised by, or on behalf of the Union;
- Damage to, misuse, or defacement of, Union (including group) or University property or in the local community caused intentionally or recklessly.
- Failure to comply with the Union Financial Regulations and with any decision on the use of Union funds made by a properly constituted body of the Union.
- Behaviour which could bring the Union or the University into disrepute;
- Failure to abide by other Union and University policies and procedures

Club & Society Membership Code of Conduct

In addition to the standards of behaviour expected of all members, sports clubs and society members must:

- Compete in a manner of good sporting conduct regardless of the nature of the competition, when representing the Union and the University in a sports fixture. This includes those participating in activity and spectators.
- Operate within the rules of the sport/ activity including any national guidelines which govern the sport/ activity
- Not carry out, take part in or promote 'initiation' ceremonies
- Not be unduly intoxicated during any event or activity where such behaviour could be deemed unacceptable, unprofessional or detrimental to the Union or University.
- During social events to be aware of behaviour and the impact on others, particularly members of the local community.
- To abide by any restrictions on the consumption of alcohol when using Union vehicles or during travel to activities using external travel companies.
- Comply with the Union financial policies governing the use of funds to clubs and societies.
- Report any concerns for the health and safety or welfare of its members

For further guidance on appropriate initiation, welcome and social events, please see the Union's Initiations policy and related documents in the relevant online 'committee hub'.

Procedure for dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct

Dealing with immediate risks

The Union operates a zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination or harassment. If any member acts in a way which contravenes this code, they will be asked to leave the premises or event immediately.

In the event of an offence being committed that is serious in nature and which could lead to the withdrawal of membership, any Union Manager may immediately suspend the rights of the member(s) concerned. The incident must be reported in writing to the Chief Executive Officer on the next working day. The suspension will remain in place until a Disciplinary Panel is able to consider the issue.

Procedure

Upon receiving a complaint about a member(s), a senior member of Union staff along with a Sabbatical Officer shall decide if the offence is minor or more serious in nature and the appropriate course of action, as follows:

Minor offences

In the case of a non-serious offence, a written warning will be issued to the offender, stating how the code of conduct has been broken and the potential consequences of further incidents. A copy of the letter will be retained for 3 years.

No further action shall be taken.

Serious allegations

In the case of a more serious allegation, a Union manager will investigate the issue. The appointed investigating manager will meet with those involved in the incident separately and seek to establish the facts of the case and any relevant information. Normally, this will happen within 7 working days.

The student and the accused may both be accompanied to an investigation meeting and may ask for witnesses to also be interviewed

Any offence that is likely to result in the suspension of the members rights or has already resulted in immediate action being taken, will be considered to be a serious offence.

Depending on the nature of the allegation, it may be appropriate to suspend the member's rights to enable the investigation to take place unhindered. The Chief Executive Officer will write to the offender informing them that their membership is suspended until further notice.

Any decision to suspend does not imply or prejudice the outcome of any panel hearing.

A disciplinary panel of three individuals will be convened, consisting of one Sabbatical Officer, a Senior member of USSU staff and either an elected voluntary officer, or where the allegation concerns a Club or Society, a committee member of a club or society not involved with the matter under investigation. The student panel member will not have any connection to any parties involved in the case and will not be from the same school of study. At least one member of this panel shall be from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. All USSU senior staff have undertaken inclusion training.

The investigating manager will present his/her findings to the Panel who will decide upon the most appropriate response, which will be one of the following:

- the complaint has not been substantiated and no further action is necessary.
- the complaint has been substantiated and an appropriate form of sanction, also to be determined by the Panel, shall be taken in line with the appendix to this procedure.
- further investigation or external advice is necessary. In this case the Panel will be adjourned and reconvened once the required information is available.

The Disciplinary Panel shall take into account suspension time already served when deciding on disciplinary action to be taken. The outcome of the Disciplinary Panel meeting will then be communicated to the member by email within 3 working days of the meeting.

Where the offence involves damage to Union property, the offender must cover in full the costs of repairing any damage caused. Failure to reimburse the Union for such costs will result in further action being taken against the individual(s) concerned.

While a member's rights are suspended they are not entitled to take part in any Union activity, including attending events or participating in the activities of clubs or societies, or make use of any services or facilities operated by the Union, with the exception of the Union's Advice Centre.

Where a member has their membership withdrawn, they cannot also take part in the democratic processes of the Union during the period of their membership is withdrawn. This includes standing for elected positions or voting in Union elections.

Where a complaint against a member is upheld and their membership is withdrawn, they will not be reimbursed for any purchases made, such as event tickets or club or society membership, which they can no longer participate in.

Anonymous complaints can not be acted upon, and anonymity can not be offered to complainants.

Unlawful behaviour or contravention of University policy

Where a complaint indicates a member may have acted unlawfully or against University policy, the relevant authority will be informed.

In such cases, investigations by the University and or the Police would take precedence and the Union would not convene a Disciplinary Panel until the outcomes from such investigations had concluded. However, dependent on the matter under investigation, the Chief Executive may consider it appropriate to suspend a member(s) rights until a conclusion had been reached.

Appeal

Anyone who has been notified of a disciplinary decision, either as a minor offence or a more serious incident dealt with by a full Disciplinary Panel, will be notified of their right of appeal.

The defendant must submit a letter of appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within 10 working days of written notification of any decision. The letter must state the reason for appeal.

In the case of minor disciplinary matters the Chief Executive Officer will review the decision with the President, based on any new evidence.

In the case of serious disciplinary matters an Appeals Panel shall be formed. The Appeals Panel will consist of three members of the Board of Trustees not involved in the original panel, one of whom must be an External Trustee. An Appeals Panel considering an appeal by a Club or Society will also include two members of another Club or Society Committee not involved in the original Panel.

The process for hearing the appeal will be identical to the original panel and witnesses may be called to discuss the incident.

After the hearing, any action may be removed, reviewed, or increased as the Appeals Panel see fit.

Review Procedure

Following a decision reached by the Chief Executive Officer or an Appeals Panel, if the student remains dissatisfied, they have the right to ask for further consideration of their case by a senior member of University staff who is appointed to act in this capacity on behalf of the University's Council.

Requests for review must be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the decision from the Chief Executive Officer or Appeals Panel via email to complaints@salford.ac.uk. The request should explain why the student is dissatisfied with the decision reached, provide any relevant information or evidence and provide the decision reached at the previous stage.

Upon receipt of the request, the University Secretary will appoint a senior independent member of University staff to undertake the review. The review will normally be undertaken on a documents only basis; however, if the person undertaking the review determines that it would be appropriate to meet with the student, this will be arranged as soon as possible.

The purpose of the review is to consider the final decision reached by the Students' Union and not to re-investigate the complaint. The review will consider if the Students' Union has properly followed and applied its processes and procedures and whether any decision reached by the Students' Union was reasonable, taking all circumstances into consideration.

The review will conclude if the complaint is justified, partly justified or not justified. If the review concludes that the complaint is justified or partly justified, then recommendations may be made to the Students' Union. Recommendations could include, for example, the requirement to rerun a process or hearing.

The review will normally be concluded within a period of 20 working days from receipt of the request with the student receiving the outcome in writing. The written outcome will constitute a 'completion of procedures' letter. The 'completion of procedures' letter will explain that if a student remains dissatisfied at the conclusion of the University's internal complaints procedure, they may ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review the complaint outcome. This will require completion of an OIA scheme application form upon receipt of the 'completion of procedures' letter. The scheme application form must be submitted within twelve months of the date that the completion of procedures letter was issued. The OIA website provides further information regarding the scheme and its eligibility criteria.

Appendix 1: Penalties for breaching the Code of Conduct

The following is a non-exhaustive list of penalties available to the Disciplinary Panel when considering a breach in the Union's Code of Conduct:

- Written warning
- Requirement to write a formal apology
- Requirement to attend mandatory training and/ or relevant guidance sessions
- Repayment of costs associated with damage to property
- Removal of committee position/ leadership position
- 'Ban' on entering Union premises and events
- 'Ban' on holding any committee or leadership positions for a period of time determined by the panel
- Temporary or permanent removal of membership of club or society, this includes removing the ability for the member to represent the University at sporting events
- Temporary or permanent removal of Union membership
- Referral to University disciplinary processes

Appendix 2: Example sanctions

Offence severity level	Offence Type	Influencing factors	Individual sanctions	Group sanctions
a	Failure to abide by policies, procedures and regulations	First time offence, no or minimal impact, no ongoing issues	Written warning	Written warning
		Subsequent offence, actions likely to cause injury, Union placed at risk or impact above £250	Final written warning	Final written warning
		Actual injury and/ or harm caused	Membership suspension up to 1 year Referral to institution and authorities as necessary	Group withdrawn from BUCS/ relevant competition for up to one year Referral to institution and authorities as necessary
b	Behaviour which could bring Union/ University into disrepute	One off incident / first time offence	Written warning	Written warning
		Individual is in a position of responsibility/ authority	Membership suspension up to 3 months Referral under procedure for Removal of Trustees, Officers or Reps.	N/A
		Serious misconduct resulting in reputational damage	Membership suspension up to one year Referral to institution	Group withdrawn from BUCS/ relevant competition for up to one year.

C	Damage to property	First offence and minor damage (below £50)	One month membership suspension where offence occurred in the Union or at Union activity Offender pays total cost of all damage.	Group pays total cost of all damage.
		Subsequent offence or more serious damage	Three month membership suspension where offence occurred in the Union or at Union activity Offender pays total cost of all damage. Referral to institution and authorities as necessary	Group pays total cost of all damage.
D	Anti-social behaviour	First offence with minimal repercussions	One month membership suspension may be considered where offence occurred on Union property or at Union activity Formal warning	One month ban may be considered where offence occurred on Union property or at Union activity Formal warning
		Subsequent or more serious offence causing damage to property or distress to others	Three month membership suspension Formal warning	Group withdrawn from BUCS/ relevant competition for up to one year Formal warning issued. Referral to institution if appropriate.
E	Use of offensive, threatening or abusive language, including via social media	First offence / one off incident with no ongoing issues for victim	Up to three month membership suspension Referral to institution and authorities as necessary	Final written warning issued. Referral to institution and authorities as necessary

		Subsequent offence, use of discriminatory language or incitement of others	Membership suspension up to 1 year	Final written warning issued. Referral to institution and authorities as necessary
f	Physically violent, indecent or threatening behaviour	First offence with minor consequences and no ongoing issues for victim	Membership suspension up to three months	Group withdrawn from BUCS/ relevant competition for up to one year Referral to institution and authorities as necessary
		Serious assault, assaults of sexual nature	Membership suspension from one year – lifetime ban	Referral to institution and authorities
g	Bullying or harassment of members	First offence. This includes initiation events by Clubs or societies.	Membership suspension up to one year	Replacement of entire club/ society committee Referral to institution or authorities as necessary
		Subsequent offence or behaviour based on discrimination against protected characteristic	Life time membership ban	Replacement of entire club/ society committee or disbanding of the club/ society as appropriate Referral to institution and authorities as necessary
h	Illegal activity	This would include theft, fraud, use and supply of illegal or controlled substances.	Membership suspension from one year – lifetime ban	Referral to institution and authorities as necessary

Appendix 3: Selection of disciplinary panel members

The disciplinary panel shall consist of three individuals from the following groups:

- One Sabbatical Officer **and**
- One senior member of USSU staff **and**
- An elected voluntary Officer **or**
- Where the allegation concerns a club or society, a committee member from a club or society not involved in the matter under investigation.

At least one panel member shall be from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background.

In the event of a disciplinary panel being convened, a club or society (not involved in the disciplinary matter) will be chosen at random and the Chairperson/ President asked to nominate a member of their committee to attend the panel. Where there is a conflict of interest because of personal friendships/ other matters, or where no one is able to attend the panel, another club/ society will be chosen at random. Student panel members must not be from the same school of student. For the avoidance of doubt, there should be no connection at all between the student panel member and the parties involved in the case.

Guidance and training on disciplinary panels will form part of all Union committee training, and all clubs/ societies will be expected to assist if requested during the year.

A briefing for all panel members will be delivered prior to a disciplinary panel taking place. This briefing will be taken by a senior member of USSU staff and will ensure that all panel members understand their role in the process. All senior USSU staff members undertake mandatory inclusion training.

Appendix 4

Disciplinary Panel Procedure

1. Chair to confirm meeting held under the Code of Conduct policy.
2. Chair to ensure that introductions are made, and the role of each person present is clear
3. Chair to ask student how they wish to be addressed (e.g. is first name acceptable) and use of pronouns
4. Chair to confirm any reasonable adjustments in place (student to be asked in advance of meeting) and acknowledge that hearings can be stressful, if student needs a break at any stage to ask
5. Chair to confirm meeting protocols (if online: use of raised hands, chat function, turn microphone off if not speaking, if helpful, could consider posting questions in the chat function)
6. Chair outlines what will happen (summarised below)
7. The investigating manager presents their findings
8. The student presents their case
9. Questions from Panel – student may also raise questions – all questions to be raised via the Chair.
10. If the complainant or the student wishes to call witnesses, they may do so to present evidence and answer any questions put to them through the Chair
11. Witnesses withdraw once their evidence has been heard and there are no more questions
12. Commentary deemed by the Chair to be irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious will not be heard/considered
13. Student has the right to make final submissions to the Panel. At this stage no new issues may be presented
14. Student and investigating Manager withdraw.
15. Panel members discuss the case and reach a conclusion (if possible)
16. Decision communicated orally to the complainant and student (or via email if the meeting has taken place through Teams)