

# Code of Conduct

## *for Bristol Students' Union*

*Last edited 15/11/16*



**BRISTOL SU**  
the best student life

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### What is the Code of Conduct?

This Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of all members and affiliated groups when participating in any activity under the name of Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU), both in-person or online. This Code of Conduct and the process set out within it is applicable to all complaints made to Bristol SU with regard to the conduct of its members or groups. Note that any student at the University of Bristol (UoB) is also subject to the University's Code of Practice and disciplinary procedures, as well as of course to the law.

The Code of Conduct is to sit alongside the 'Anti-bullying and Harassment statement' that sets out the principles in which students would like each other to act by.

## **Aims of this Code of Conduct**

- To protect members.
- To protect others that are potentially affected by members' actions.
- To ensure the highest possible standards of fairness, honesty and behaviour.
- To reduce the risk of harm, injury, harassment and nuisance to members and the community in general.
- To create inclusive and vibrant student groups.
- To detail the actions that can be taken should the Code of Conduct be breached.

## **To whom does this Code apply?**

- All members.
- All persons associated to a student group including, but not limited to, associate members, coaches/instructors and administrators.

## **Terms of the Code of Conduct**

All members agree to abide by the terms outlined below:

- Adhere to the Bylaws and policies of Bristol Students' Union.
- Behave in a manner which does not endanger or is anti-social towards other individuals and to abide by Bristol Students' Union's Health and Safety Policies at all times.
- Act in a way so as not to cause fear, threats, intimidation, harassment or unwelcoming conditions to others.
- Ensure all members feel welcome to participate in non-judgemental and non-threatening discussions, activities, services or events.
- Act responsibly at all times when participating in activities and to avoid actions which could bring the group, the Students' Union or sponsors/funders into disrepute.
- Be aware of how their actions may be perceived by others.
- Conduct themselves in a reasonable manner relating to language, noise and behaviour.
- Not encourage or pressure others into acting against the Code.
- Operate within the rules which govern the activity or the facility in which it is taking place.
- Not carry out initiation ceremonies as detailed in Appendix A.
- Not to consume alcohol whilst being transported to or from any activity organised under the umbrella of the student group or Bristol Students' Union.

## What happens if this Code of Conduct is believed to have been breached?

Committees of student groups are not expected to investigate potential breaches of this code, and should refer directly to the SU.<sup>1</sup>

All complaints that Bristol SU receive will be looked at against **this** Code of Conduct or our **staff** Code of Conduct. Where the complaint is outside of the scope of either codes we will refer to UoB.

If Bristol SU or UoB receives information that indicates anyone to whom this Code of Conduct applies may be in breach of it, then the following steps will be taken:

1. The information may be shared with UoB. In the first instance this would be with UoB's Deputy Registrar.
2. A designated member of staff will contact those members involved to obtain further information, and to check if any action has or will be taken by that party.
3. The alleged breach will then be investigated by a designated staff member and an officer, and if satisfied that a breach may have occurred it will be referred to a Review Group for consideration. The composition of this group will include both the staff member and officer mentioned above, and one other staff member. Any Bristol SU elected officer may sit on the review group, and any different Bristol SU officer may choose to represent any Student Group or student involved. The group or individual is entitled to bring a representative to support them.
4. The Review Group will make a ruling on the breach and issue sanctions befitting the severity of the breach of the Code using the decision matrix below.
5. Where it is believed UoB's regulations and policies may have been breached the University may decide to take action in addition to any action the review group imposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Student groups should not remove members at their own discretion.

## Sanctions for breaching the Code

Any breach of this Code of Conduct may result in one or more sanction as set out below. The matrix details the decision making process and likely sanctions.

### Code of Conduct Decision Matrix

	Likely severity of harm (injury to person and/or damage to reputation)			
<b>Breach of the Code of Conduct</b>		<b>Slightly harmful</b> minor or no injury/ no or low reputational damage (1)	<b>Harmful</b> external intervention (e.g. hospitalisation or other)/local level reputational damage to Bristol Students' Union (2)	<b>Extremely harmful</b> serious physical or mental harm/national level reputational damage to Bristol Students' Union (3)
	<b>No/minor breach</b> (1)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Moderate breach</b> (Organisational rules broken) (2)	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Major breach</b> (civil/criminal law broken) (3)	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

Any breach of this Code of Conduct may result in one or more of the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list) and that sanctions are decided at the discretion of the review panel. It may also be possible that group and individual sanctions are deemed necessary in one case:

### Group sanctions:

1	Warning
	Letter of apology to be written
2	Fine
3	Removal of one or more privileges <sup>2</sup>
4	Removal of privileges <sup>1</sup> for one month
	Removal of grant funding and/or the ability to apply for funding in the future
6	Removal of privileges <sup>1</sup> for one year
	Removal of stall at Welcome Fair
	Refer to University disciplinary action
9	Disaffiliation of student group for one academic year
	Refer to University disciplinary action
	Disaffiliation of student group for 3 academic years

### Individual sanctions:

1	Warning
	Letter of apology to be written
2	Ban from relevant activity <sup>3</sup> for 1 week
3	Ban from relevant activity <sup>3</sup> for 1 month
4	Expulsion of the individual from the relevant activity <sup>2</sup> for a period greater than one month
6	Expulsion of the individual from Bristol Students' Union groups or events for 1 year
	Refer to University disciplinary action
9	Refer to University disciplinary action
	Lifetime ban from Bristol Students' Union groups or events

<sup>2</sup> The privilege removed will be the one most relevant to the group involved, and may include privileges provided to them from other sources (i.e. University sports funding.) This may also include the groups Balloon Accreditation.

<sup>3</sup> The activity may also refer to those carried undertaken outside of the Students' Union.

## Appeals

If you are unhappy with the process, outcome of the ruling and/or the sanctions applied, you may appeal to Bristol Students' Union's Board of Trustees by submitting a request to Bristol Students' Union's Chief Executive within 10 days of receiving the decision, this should be sent to the Executive Manager. Your appeal will be considered on the basis of the information you submitted to the Review Group, and new evidence will not be considered.

Your appeal will usually be considered at the next scheduled Board meeting following submission of your appeal request. If the next scheduled meeting falls less than seven days after you submit an appeal request, consideration of your appeal will be delayed until the following meeting, to ensure that the Trustees have adequate time to consider your complaint. The decision of the Board of Trustees is final and binding on all parties.

## Appendix A

### Initiations (and pressured social situations)

In line with the majority of universities and as a result of a number of very serious incidents at other institutions Bristol SU and UoB do not permit Initiation Ceremonies<sup>4</sup>.

In the past students have caused criminal damage, been seriously injured and in at least three cases have died as a result of having to take part in an initiation. As well as this, initiation ceremonies are intimidating, humiliating and can amount to bullying. They do not encourage welcoming and inclusive student groups that Bristol SU wants.

Social activities such as welcome evenings, team meals, social nights, trips away and celebration events that welcome new members and offer a positive first impression of university life are encouraged. The following rules must be followed:

- All activities must be opt-in and have no bearing on the acceptance into the Student Group or team/squad selection etc.
- Peer pressure must not be exerted on individuals.
- Activities must not be humiliating, unlawful or degrading.
- Activities must not involve the forced consumption of any fluid/substance.
- Taking of alcohol to the activity/event must not be made a condition of attendance
- If activities involve alcohol then non-alcoholic drinks must be made available.
- Activities must not bring the reputation of Bristol SU, UoB or the Student Group into question or disrepute.

The organiser of the event and the Club Captains/Presidents of the group will be held responsible for any Initiation Ceremony<sup>3</sup> that takes place and will run the risk of being suspended or expelled from University should any instances occur.

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<sup>4</sup> Bristol Students' Union and UoB's definition of an initiation ceremony: An event at which members of the group are expected to perform an activity as a means of gaining credibility, status or entry into that group. This peer pressure is normally (though not explicitly) exerted on first year students or new members and may involve the consumption of alcohol, eating various food stuffs, nudity and behaviour that may be deemed humiliating".