



## **Student Groups & Volunteers Code of Conduct**

### **1. Context:**

- a. This Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of all student group members and volunteers, when participating in any activity or event, in-person or online, organised by the student group. This includes, but is not limited to, student group events, social events, travelling to and from an activity, trips, training, matches and online communication under the name of University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), the student group(s) or the University of Westminster.

### **2. Aims:**

- a. To protect members.
- b. To protect others potentially affected by members' actions.
- c. Ensure the highest possible standards of fairness, honesty, and behaviour.
- d. Reduce the risk of harm, injury, harassment and nuisance to members and the wider community.
- e. Create an inclusive student environment.
- f. Detail the actions that can be taken should the Code of Conduct be breached.

### **3. Scope:**

- a. All members of student groups (societies, sports and student media).
- b. All persons officially appointed to any team or individual competing in an event (including administrators and coaches).
- c. Spectators/supporters/external guests at student group events (Student groups are responsible for reporting any negative or abusive behaviour from spectators/supporters/external guests to the Union).

#### **4. Terms:**

- a. All members/participants of a student group agree to abide by the terms outlined below:
  - i. All members must adhere to the constitution, general rules, regulations, policies and bye-laws of UWSU and the University of Westminster. The terms also apply to the use of any social media accounts connected to the University, UWSU or the Student Group. This includes unofficial or personal accounts used for activity relating to the Student Groups.
  - ii. Members should not undertake any action which could bring the reputation of the Student Group, UWSU or the University into disrepute.
  - iii. A member must not participate in or omit to mention anything which might cause damage to themselves or others.
  - iv. Members must declare anything to a UWSU Staff Member which might cause damage to themselves or others, within a reasonable timescale.

- v.** Members must refrain from any form of harassment of others and respect the rights, dignity and values of others including when using social media, including Whats App groups.
- vi.** Members must not misuse or intentionally damage the student group, Union or University resources, equipment and/or spaces.
- vii.** Socials (and any related activity) must be opt-in only and have no effect on eligibility to hold membership of the student group or a committee position.
- viii.** Members of the student group should not pressure or coerce any other member into any action with which they feel uncomfortable.
- ix.** Members must not encourage or pressure others into acting against the Code of Conduct.
- x.** Members must always act responsibly when participating in activities and to avoid actions which could bring the group, UWSU, the University or sponsors/funders into disrepute.
- xi.** Members should be aware of how their actions may be perceived by others.
- xii.** Members must conduct themselves in a reasonable manner relating to language, noise and behaviour.
- xiii.** Members must operate within the rules, including national guidelines, which govern the activity.
- xiv.** Members must not carry out initiation ceremonies as detailed below.

- xv.** Members must not be unduly intoxicated at any event or activity where such behaviour could be deemed unacceptable or unprofessional.
- xvi.** Members must always abide by the law.
- xvii.** During social events, especially those involving the consumption of alcohol, to be aware of behaviour and the impact on others.
- xviii.** Members must not consume alcohol whilst being transported to or from any activity organised under the umbrella of the student group, UWSU or the University.
- xix.** Members take responsibility for their own understanding of this Code of Conduct and the repercussions of any breaches and must seek further information or clarification if they are unsure about how it should be applied.
- xx.** Student Groups must take all reasonable steps to ensure that they and their activities are accessible to all Members of UWSU. Student Groups must seek further information or clarification if they are unsure about how to do this.
- xxi.** Members must not breach any of the of data protection, health and safety, or equality and diversity regulations.
- xxii.** Members must ensure external speaker events are approved through the UWSU External Speaker Process.
- xxiii.** Student groups who are categorised as a religious-based society, are not permissible to give any religious instruction or advice.

This must be sought at the individual's own time and out of campus hours.

- xxiv.** Rooms may be allocated according to membership numbers.
- xxv.** Members must ensure that expenditure of funds is beneficial to the membership or in line with the student groups aims.
- xxvi.** Members must act within the mission, aims and values of UWSU.

## **5. Initiations:**

- a.** In line with the majority of Universities and as a result of a number of very serious incidents, including the death of students at other institutions, UWSU and the University of Westminster do not permit Initiation Ceremonies to be held through a student group and members of the Students' Union.
- b.** UWSU and the University's definition of an initiation ceremony is as follows  
*"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".*
- c.** Social activities such as welcome evenings, team meals, social nights, trips away and celebration events that welcome new members and a positive first impression of university life are encouraged. Initiation ceremonies involving intimidating, humiliating acts that can amount to bullying are not permitted. They do not encourage the welcoming and inclusive student groups that UWSU and the University encourages.

- d.** The following rules must be followed:
- i.** All activities must be opt-in and have no bearing on the acceptance into the Student Group or team/squad selection etc.
  - ii.** Peer pressure must not be exerted on individuals.
  - iii.** Activities must not be humiliating, unlawful or degrading.
  - iv.** Activities must not involve the forced consumption of any fluid and/or substance.
  - v.** Taking of alcohol to the activity/event must not be made a condition of attendance.
  - vi.** If activities involve alcohol, then non-alcoholic drinks must be made available.
  - vii.** Activities must not bring the reputation of UWSU, the University of Westminster, or the Student Group into question or disrepute.
- e.** The organiser of the event and the Society President/Club & Team Captain(s) of the group will be held responsible for any Initiation Ceremony that takes place and will run the risk of being disaffiliated from the Unions, funding from the Union will be ceased, all equipment and kit owned by the Union will be repossessed should any instances occur.
- f.** All organisers are encouraged to speak to the Sports Development Coordinator or Student Groups Development Coordinator for guidance regarding welcome events.

## **6. Breaches Of The Code:**

- a. If UWSU or the University receives information or a complaint that indicates an activity of a Student Group and/or it's member(s) may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, the following steps will be taken:
  - i. The Lifestyle Team will follow the process of the Volunteer & Student Group Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.
  - ii. Reports can be made anonymously, and strict confidentiality will be ensured, except in situations where individuals or groups present a significant risk to themselves or others.
  - iii. Pending the outcome sanctions will be enforced and can be found in the Volunteer & Student Group Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

## **7. Sanctions:**

- a. Any breach of this Code of Conduct may result in UWSU or University disciplinary action. Each of these can lead to one or more sanctions, which may include removal of the student from the Student Group or removal of group privileges.
- b. More serious breaches can lead to Union and/or University disciplinary action which may impose disciplinary sanctions which affect individuals' students to be a member of any student group, to be a member of UWSU or to continue their study at the University and can also impose fines.

- c. If the incident occurred at the end of an academic year the sanction(s) may be levied for the following year. Please refer to the Volunteer & Student Group Disciplinary Policy & Procedure for a full list of potential sanctions.

**8. Appeals:**

- a. A member or student group will have the right to appeal the outcome either of an initial investigation (except when the decision of the investigation is to recommend a full disciplinary panel) or the outcome of the Disciplinary Panel. Appeals of the outcome cannot be made by the individual(s) who submitted the initial complaint.