

USWSU Code of Conduct for Sports Participants and Student Groups

October 2025

This code of conduct sets out the expectations for all members of any student group as well as any individual who is participating in any sporting activity as part of the University of South Wales Students' Union programme of sport. The code of conduct is established to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members. It provides a framework for student groups and sports teams on processes relevant to managing incidents and how these align with the expected behaviors and values of all University of South Wales Students' Union members.

Definition of Terms:	
USWSU	University of South Wales Students' Union
USW	University of South Wales
Student Group	A group which is affiliated with USWSU. Normally it consists of groups that are clubs and societies.
Member	A student who is either: - a.) Member of USWSU – all students are automatically members - b.) Member of a student group or sports team
Committee	A group of students elected by the members of a student group to lead and manage the student group for the academic year.

Expected Behavior and Values:

At all times members are expected to adhere to the relevant Union policies outlined in the Union's Bye-laws which can be found at: <https://www.uswsu.com/about-us/howwearerun/>

Members, being students at USW are also required to uphold the student code of conduct and other relevant policies here: <https://www.southwales.ac.uk/academic-registry/student-regulations/student-conduct/>

In addition to this, all student groups associated with the Union's sporting programme set an expectation that all members and other connected parties shall always when representing the student group or team:

- Attend training prepared and equipped to participate
- Seek advice or assistance from coaches, instructors or Committee members if needed
- Raise any concerns in an appropriate manner with the Committee and/or the Union.
- Show respect to fellow members and other individuals you meet
- Follow the reasonable instructions and guidance of the Committee, activity leaders, coaches or other officials
- Promptly return any borrowed equipment in good condition and report any defects and any other requirements set out in a student group's equipment loan policy.

If a member does not meet the expected requirements or behavior, they will be in breach of this code of conduct. As such the student group will:

- Act as a collective and seek information and evidence from all relevant parties to ensure that they have a full understanding of the situation, giving all parties the opportunity to represent themselves.
- Using the **balance of probability**¹, determine whether it is likely that inappropriate behavior has occurred as well as considering any mitigating circumstances
- Take proportionate action in relation to the incident and in accordance with the framework below.
- Refer to the Union if an incident is, or could be deemed as major, repeated, or beyond their means and abilities to handle

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/balance-of-probabilities/balance-of-probabilities-accessible>

If a committee member has a conflict of interest associated with the incident, they must exclude themselves from this process. If necessary, a sabbatical officer of the Union will handle any potential breaches if all members of the committee are excluded in line with the Union's byelaws.

Expected Standards of Social Behavior

Every member of the Union and a student group must ensure the standard of behavior is always maintained.

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of examples which would be considered instances of where the standard of behavior of members is a concern and doesn't not align with Legal, BUCS, Union and/or University behavior expectations and therefore may result in disciplinary action if found to have taken place:

- Behavior causing or likely to cause physical harm to others; any form of harassment, unlawful discrimination or bullying of others.
- Drunken and disorderly behavior.
- Possession or sale of illegal drugs.
- Bringing the Union into disrepute.
- Theft or fraud.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Breach of any terms of membership of a student group's constitution.
- Breach of any Policies or Byelaws of the Union
- Impersonation of another student group/sport or individual

For the avoidance of doubt, this code of conduct applies to all members of sports teams or student groups as well as any supporters or associated people connected to the student group including both paid and voluntary coaches and instructors. In addition, this applies without geographic restriction, can be applied whether activity is an official student group activity or not and relates to behavior whilst travelling to and from events.

Student Group Social Media Usage

It is understood that student groups and sporting teams may hold social media accounts to promote their group and/or activity as well as showcasing a social atmosphere between students. While this is encouraged, sports participants are reminded that:

- Social Media accounts with reference to USW, The SU in its name, or bearing the University logo can be viewed by externals with more scrutiny
- Social Media accounts are not a space to make inappropriate comments about individuals or in relation to any race/sex/gender/orientation/disability



- Social Media accounts are not the space to showcase initiations, forfeits and or hazing activity.

Student Groups and Sports Participants are reminded that these accounts can be viewed as being representative of the University and that any incidents may lead to a ban on the use of social media for a student group and/or sport or further disciplinary action. The rule of thumb is if it is not in relation to the sport or student group's main activities, it likely should not be shown on these channels.

'Hazing' and "Initiations"

At USWSU, we want to ensure that all student groups and sports are safe, sustainable and sociable both on and off the field. While student groups have autonomy for the social environment they create, they also bear responsibility to ensure it is a safe and inclusive environment for all members. However, student groups and individuals have at times breached these standards and have conducted themselves socially in ways which are unacceptable. The Union expects an environment which upholds all standards of behavior but also fosters a space where:

- Members are free to participate or abstain from all social activity as they wish without needing to provide a reason for any other member or committee member.
- Members should not fear reprisal, recrimination, exclusion or any forms of discrimination due to their choices in participating in social activities.
- Social activity is lawful, upholding the values of the Union and USW, and are not done to humiliate, or have the consequence of humiliating and/or degrading participants.
- Does not bring the Union or the University into disrepute because of actions of members and non-members at social activities.
- Social activities are conducted in a manner which does not bring additional undue risk to participants or creates potential risks.

In reference to the terms of initiation or hazing, these are in relation to activities which are imposed as being requirements to join or participate in aspects of the student group or sports team as a rite of passage. This can include but is not limited to, the use of alcohol consumption in excessive amounts.

The Union does not tolerate such activities and takes a zero-tolerance approach to any initiation or hazing which occurs where there is excessive consumption of alcohol or instances which may be degrading and humiliating for those involved and will take appropriate action, including referring to the University or the appropriate police force where applicable.

It is the responsibility of all committee members, captains, coaches and the wider membership of a student group and the Union more generally to ensure such activities do not take place and respond to instances appropriately. Members are responsible for their actions, including facilitating or contributing to such activities, however committee members who do not appropriately manage and respond to such instances occurring or create opportunities for these to occur will be held collectively accountable.

Student groups and committees are reminded to make considerations for how activities and student groups can be an inclusive space which welcomes all students irrespective of personal circumstances or characteristics as well as how behaviors or interactions may be perceived in all circumstances.

It is expected that committees and all members will act with integrity and honesty in dealing with potential breaches of this code of conduct and are transparent with the Union on managing and resolving issues as they arise. To support student groups and sport participants, student groups are to adopt the framework below to assist in managing behavior issues.

In addition to this, we expect the following from all participants and student groups to take positive action to challenge inappropriate behavior. Such as:

- Clear communication of expected standards of behavior to all members upon joining and through the year
- Club/Societal activities and events to be organised with consideration of how to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent inappropriate behavior of members
- Challenging inappropriate behavior of members when it occurs and taking appropriate action. This action should be proportionate but clearly demonstrate that inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Such action could/should include:
 - Official and documented warnings to members.
 - Reporting of individuals/incidents to the Students' Union.



Undeb Myfyrwyr
Prifysgol De Cymru
University of South Wales
Students' Union

This code of conduct is available on the Union's website as well as provided in all captain packs and in student group leadership packs.

The Union are always available to discuss any issues or concerns members of committees have regarding behavior of members and will work collaboratively to manage these and if necessary, take additional action.

SU General Mailbox: studunion@southwales.ac.uk



Behavior Traffic Light Framework

This framework outlines three different stages of severity in reference to an incident where it is shown on the balance of probabilities that a member(s) has breached this policy:

STAGE 1 (GREEN)
This is the expected standard that all members should maintain. At this stage a member is adhering to the standards detailed in the code of conduct and the policies of the Union and University. Members at this stage should promote good behavior and call out any behavior which deviates from this.
STAGE 2 (AMBER)
This stage relates to incidents which have been flagged to the first level of reporting, either the student group committees or the Activities VP. This stage follows if a breach of standards has arisen which would lead to minor or moderate action being taken. This action could include (but not be limited to): A verbal or written warning (electronically) Suspension from any or all student group activities or events which are deemed proportionate to the incident in question. Potential licenses banned from SU Venues As part of this, action is to ensure that incidents are dealt with deliberately and, where appropriate, actions are taken to restore the student to Green. This can be achieved through the following (but not limited to) either: Signing a behavior agreement acknowledging your expectations for the future, and/or Providing, both a written, and potentially verbal, apology to the victim or aggrieved party, and/or Served an appropriate sanction.
Stage 3 (RED)
At this stage, an investigation has been undertaken into breaches and behavior and has ruled that a serious or repeated infringement of the standards of behavior has arisen. Course of action may include, but is not limited to: - Suspension or termination of membership of the Club or any of its activities - Referral to the Union's membership disciplinary process. - Permanent ban from sporting and/or SU activities and events. Where appropriate, referral to the University, or other external disciplinary processes including the police for criminal proceedings.



How to apply the framework as a committee

When undertaking investigation proceedings and applying the above framework, it is important that the following principles are followed:

- Process is fair for all involved parties and deal with facts rather than hearsay or unsubstantiated claims.
- Responding students (individuals who are alleged to have breached regulations) should be made aware of the allegations against them
- The investigation and allegations to remain confidential – confidentiality should be kept by all involved and breaches may be seen as infringing on appropriate rules.
- Reasonable timeframes – meetings for investigation and outcomes should be done in a reasonable timeframe, including the invitation to meetings and an appropriate response rate as to not prolong the process.
- The responding students should be made aware of their rights and responsibilities and referred to the Union for support where appropriate.
- Transparency – the Union should be made aware of any outcome of processes as soon as is reasonably practicable

All decisions arising from this student activity discipline process are subject to appeal to the Students' Union

Where a committee member feels they have a conflict of interest this should be declared, and it would be appropriate for them to abstain from the decision-making processes and where applicable, a nominee to take their place.

Where any such allegation or complaint relates to a committee member or any closely connected person, they should not be involved in the process. In such cases where the committee depleted in number due to this conflict of interest or where the behavior issues relate to the actions of a majority of the committee members, the matter should be forwarded to the Students' Union who will assist with the process.

Actions where there is a concern for a member's wellbeing, safety or where gross misconduct is alleged, the committee will be allowed to suspend the individual's membership pending investigation.



Failing to adhere to Process:

If a committee fails to manage instances of poor behavior of a member in line with these procedures, the Union reserves the right to manage the behavior in accordance with these procedures and the Union's disciplinary processes.

Reporting incidents to the Students' Union

If an incident occurs in your club/society and you undertake the processes above, there is an expectation that you will then report this to the Students Union via the appropriate contacts.

In the event of an incident please report it to the following email: ellis.thomas@southwales.ac.uk

Appeals Process

Any individual involved in disciplinary proceedings either by the committee or the Union is eligible to appeal the decision on the following grounds:

- Procedure has not been followed
- New information has become available which during the process of the initial investigation could not be presented for good reasons.
- The sanctions are disproportionate compared to the breach

Individuals cannot appeal based on any ground outside of the above. All appeals should be submitted to the Activities VP in writing within 7 days of the outcome being communicated.