



UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS* UNION

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP GENERAL POLICY

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STUDENT MEMBERSHIP GENERAL POLICY

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1. APPLICATION

Unless otherwise specified, the University of Essex Students' Union's Student Membership General Policy shall apply in respect of all activities, facilities and services provided by the Students' Union for Members both physically and virtually

2. DEFINITIONS

Where the terms listed below are used in this document they shall have the following meanings:

- Club(s) – any recognised Sports Club of the Essex Blades Sports Federation, as defined by Article 4 of the Essex Blades Sports Federation Constitution
- General Policy - University Of Essex Students' Union Student Membership General Policy
- Member(s) – a Member of the Students' Union
- Member(s) of Clubs – Membership of the Essex Blades Sports Federation shall be available to all members of the Students' Union who wish to join. Only members of the Federation shall be entitled to join clubs affiliated to the Federation.
- Member(s) of Societies – any full or associate member(s) of any Society
- Officer(s) – An elected sabbatical officer or part time officer
- Society or Societies - any Recognised Society or Societies of the Societies Guild as defined by Article 4 of the Societies Guild Constitution.
- Staff – An individual employed by the Students' Union
- Student(s) – An individual registered with the University of Essex
- Students' Union– the University of Essex Students' Union
- University - the University of Essex and partners i.e. Edge Hotel

3. ALCOHOL (GENERAL)

The Students' Union is committed to providing a safe and healthy study, work and leisure environment and developing a social culture which fosters and promotes the sensible consumption of alcohol.

The Students' Union is committed to reducing the risks associated with alcohol use within its community and where appropriate may take informal/formal action in response to unacceptable behaviour associated with the misuse or abuse of alcohol on the part of any Member or Officer and also reserves the right at its discretion to refer any such behaviour by any Student to the University of Essex

Progress Team for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct or to the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures in the case of members of staff.

The Students' Union recognises that the use of alcohol plays a part in the lives of some people and will be sympathetic to problems arising from the misuse or abuse of alcohol whilst not condoning such misuse or abuse. Any Member, Officer or Student concerned about their use of alcohol is encouraged - and where appropriate will be supported - to seek advice and assistance.

The Students' Union recognises its responsibilities regarding both the sale and the provision of alcohol and will exercise its duty of care by encouraging customers to drink responsibly and by ensuring that the sale and provision of alcohol by the Students' Union on campus is managed responsibly under license and complies with all legal requirements, including but not limited to the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.

The Students' Union will market and promote responsibly all events involving the consumption of alcohol that are organised by the Students' Union and there will be no active promotion of drinking games.

The Students' Union will ensure that soft drinks and free water are made available to customers whenever alcohol is being sold or provided by the Students' Union.

4. ALCOHOL (CLUBS AND SOCIETIES)

The Executive Committees of Clubs and Societies shall be deemed to be responsible for the actions of their members at any event or activity involving the consumption of alcohol and are expected to ensure that their members behave in an acceptable manner consistent with the fact that they are representatives of the University of Essex and the University of Essex Students' Union. They are also subject to the Code of Student Conduct

At any event where the members of any Club or Society are consuming alcohol, one or more members of the Executive Committee of any Club or Society should abstain from drinking alcohol so that the Executive Committee is able to meet its responsibilities set out in Article 2.1 of the General Policy.

Members of Clubs or Societies shall not be expected, pressurised or forced to consume alcohol at any social event on or off campus, and members of Clubs and Societies shall not expect pressure or force any individual to consume alcohol at any social event on or off campus and this shall extend to any 'tradition' of the Club or Society in question.

The following events and behaviours are not endorsed or condoned by the Students' Union:

- (a) any event or activity in which members of the Club or Society are expected to participate as a means of gaining credibility, status or entry

into that club, including but not limited to initiation events, 'mothers and daughters' events and/or 'fathers and sons' events

- (b) any occasion whereby pressure is placed upon members of a Club or Society by peers to participate in events or activities involving the consumption of alcohol, the consumption of concoctions of various food stuffs, nudity, bodily fluids, physical violence, or any behaviour that may be deemed humiliating.
- (c) any organised sustained drinking activities regardless of location or whether in person or virtually that encourage anti-social behaviour and excessive drinking of alcohol.

At any event or activity which is organised by a Club or Society at which alcohol is provided or served it is the duty of the Executive Committee of the Club or and Society in question to ensure that non-alcoholic drinks are also available.

5. BULLYING

The Students' Union is committed to establishing a learning, working and social environment that is free from any form of bullying.

The Students' Union considers bullying to be an offensive behaviour, which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, threatening or offensive environment or which humiliates or undermines an individual or group. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people. Bullying is typically unpredictable, irrational and sometimes unseen by others.

Examples of bullying include: repeatedly shouting at an individual or group, repeatedly 'telling off' an individual or group in front of other people. In certain situations, one-off actions may constitute bullying. Criticising an individual in an inappropriate manner or belittling them about their work, personality or appearance, persistently ignoring or 'talking down' an individual and pressurising an individual into behaviour or actions against their wishes

The Students' Union has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and for the purposes of Article 3 of this General Policy zero tolerance means that the Students' Union may take action and that informal/formal action taken will be proportionate to the circumstances.

Allegations of bullying on the part of a member of Students' Union staff or Officer may result in disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures. Allegations of bullying on the part of a Student Member may also result in the Students' Union referring any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress team for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. This does not exclude the Students' Union from conducting additional investigations into any allegations of a breach of Students' Union Policies and the impact the allegations may have on a Students' Membership.

6. HARASSMENT

The Students' Union is committed to establishing a learning, working and social environment that is free from any form of harassment and all Members, Officers, Staff and Students are expected to be treated and to treat each other with dignity and respect regardless of:

- gender expression, identity, affirmation or reassignment
- race, ethnic origin or national origin
- age
- socio-economic background
- disability
- religious beliefs or affiliations, or absence of religious beliefs or affiliations
- political beliefs or affiliations
- family circumstances, including maternity and paternity
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- sex

or any other distinction.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and is illegal under the Equality Act 2010. The Students' Union considers harassment to be unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, threatening or offensive environment for that person which interferes with their learning, working or social environment. Harassment can be in verbal, written or physical form and can cause stress, anxiety, fear or sickness on the part of the harassed person. Differences of attitude, background or culture and the misinterpretation of social signals can mean that what is perceived as harassment by one person may not seem so to another. However, this does not make it acceptable. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted as an excuse for harassment. Some general examples of harassment might include teasing, comments about personal characteristics or appearance, unreasonable criticism, cyberbullying, promises of reward or threats made to secure sexual favours or negative comments about someone's race, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief. Any act of harassment that involves the abuse of a position of authority or trust will be regarded by the Students' Union as very serious.

While the Students' Union is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all its students, officers and staff regardless of their gender expression, identity, affirmation/reassignment or their sexual orientation, it considers that it is the right of all individuals to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender expression, identity, affirmation/reassignment, or their sexual orientation within Students' Union and University community, and to disclose the gender expression, identity, affirmation/reassignment or sexual orientation of any Member, Officer, Staff or Student without their permission will be treated as harassment.

The Students' Union has a zero tolerance approach to harassment and for the purposes of Article 4 of this General Policy. Zero tolerance means that the Students' Union may take informal/formal action, and that action taken will be proportionate to the circumstances.

Harassment on the part of a Students' Union Staff Member or Officer may result in disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures. Harassment on the part of a Student Member may also result in the Students' Union referring any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress for investigation (or relevant external bodies such as the Police) under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. This does not exclude the Students' Union from conducting additional investigations into any allegations of a breach of Students' Union Policies and the impact they may have on a student's Membership.

The detrimental treatment of a person as a result of their making a complaint about harassment or giving evidence relating to such a complaint is unacceptable and may result in the Students' Union taking disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures and/or to refer bullying on the part of any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress Team for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. Individuals are also able to take legal action regarding Harassment.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Under the Equality and Diversity Act 2010, The Students' Union recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity throughout every aspect of the organisation and aims to create a culture and conditions where all Members, Officers, Staff and Students are treated with dignity and respect, and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential regardless of:

- gender expression, identity, affirmation or reassignment
- race, ethnic origin or national origin
- age
- socio-economic background
- disability
- religious beliefs or affiliations, or absence of religious beliefs or affiliations
- political beliefs or affiliations
- family circumstances, including maternity and paternity
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- sex

or any other distinction.

The Students' Union is committed to the use of non-discriminatory language in all internal and external documents, official correspondence, publications and other communications including verbal communication.

The Students' Union recognises that a wide variety of religions and beliefs are represented on campus and subject to operational requirements will seek to ensure the availability of facilities and opportunities for all its members.

Discrimination on the part of a Students' Union Staff Member or Officer may result in disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures. Discrimination on the part of a Student Member may also result in the Students' Union referring any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. This does not exclude the Students' Union from conducting additional investigations into any allegations of a breach of Students' Union Policies and the impact they may have on a student's Membership.

Within these procedures the Students' Union is committed to upholding the Equality and Diversity Act 2010. The Students' Union may also take action to report any Student to an appropriate external regulatory body, such as the Police if it is deemed necessary to do so.

The detrimental treatment of a person as a result of their making a complaint about discrimination or giving evidence relating to such a complaint is unacceptable and may result in the Students' Union taking disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures and/or to refer bullying on the part of any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress Team for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. Individuals are also able to take legal action regarding discrimination.

Within these procedures the Students' Union is committed to upholding the Equality and Diversity Act 2010. The Students' Union may also take action to report any Student to an appropriate external regulatory body, such as the Police if it is deemed necessary to do so.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Students Union is committed to the provision of a high quality, safe and healthy working and social environment for Members, Officers, Staff and Students.

The Students' Union has adopted a no smoking policy in compliance with both the University's no smoking policy and relevant legislation, including the Health Act 2006 and as a result of this smoking is prohibited in all Students' Union controlled venues and facilities including all offices, corridors, lifts, stairwells, toilets and under podia with the exception of the Sub Zero outside smoking area.

In the event that any Member or Student identifies an existing or potential hazard to health or safety of in any venue or facility controlled by the Students' Union this should be reported as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Health and Safety Policy.

9. REFUSAL, RESTRICTION, WITHDRAWAL AND BANNING OF SERVICE

Students' Union staff can refuse service, restrict service and withdraw service or ban from a service any individual, including any Member, Officer, Staff or Student, whether face-to-face or via telephone or via any electronic means of communication, who behaves in a manner which is abusive, threatening or violent, and in the event of such behaviour occurring such service, advice or assistance may be refused and, if applicable, the individual may be asked to leave the premises.

Any such behaviour on the part of a Students' Union Staff Member or Officer may result in disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures. Any such behaviour on the part of a Student Member may also result in the Students' Union referring any Student to the University of Essex Student Progress for investigation under the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct who may ban from using any services in the future.

The Students' Union may also take action to report any Student to an appropriate external regulatory body, such as the Police if it is deemed necessary to do so.

This does not exclude the Students' Union from conducting additional investigations into any allegations of a breach of Students' Union Policies and the impact they may have on a student's Membership.

10. MAKING A COMPLAINT

Should any Member or Student be concerned or believe that any Member, Officer, Staff or Student may have acted against any elements of the University of Essex Students' Union Membership General Policy they should follow the University of Essex Students' Union Complaints Procedure.

Any complaint made in this way against a Staff Member or Officer may result in the Students' Union taking disciplinary action as set out in the University of Essex Students' Union Staff Disciplinary and Capability Procedures. Moreover, any complaint made in this way against a Student Member may also be referred to the University of Essex Student Progress team for investigation under the Code of Student Conduct.

This does not exclude the Students' Union from conducting additional investigations into any allegations of a breach of Students' Union Policies and the impact they may have on a student's Membership.

Where the use of alcohol is a factor in any complaint against any Member or Officer the use of alcohol will in no way mitigate any disciplinary action taken by the Students' Union.

11. SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP PENDING INVESTIGATIONS

When an allegation is received in line with this policy, the Students' Union may take the decision to suspend a Students' Membership pending investigation. This will mean that they will be unable to access usual Membership Services, for example, Venues, Clubs and Societies. Any ban imposed by this policy will not impact upon a member's right to advice, counsel and guidance from the Students' Union via the Executive Officers and SU Advice.

If an individual is suspended they will be notified in writing via email to their Essex email account within 5 working days of the decision being made. The individual who is suspended must provide to the Students' Union any outcome from investigations carried out by the University of Essex Progress team, Police or other relevant regulatory bodies if their actions have been reported for external investigation.

Once any external investigations have been concluded, the Students' Union will use the outcome of these investigations to determine the impact on the status of a Students' Membership or whether further internal investigation is required before this decision can be made. The Student will be notified in writing.

12. APPEALS

An appeal against a decision may be made by a member in writing to the Students' Union President or the Senior Member of Staff (CEO or Director of Student Activities, Services and Support). Any appeal must include details of the time, date, location and the Students PRID and Essex email address.

13. SAFEGUARDING

As an organisation where the activities of which involve or may involve working with children, young people and adults at risk, the Students' Union has in place a Policy and Procedure on Safeguarding.

APPENDIX A: LINKS TO RELEVANT POLICIES

THE FOLLOWING POLICIES APPLY MORE SPECIFICALLY TO PARTICULAR AREAS OF THE STUDENTS' UNIONS ACTIVITIES BUT ARE SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS GENERAL POLICY

SOCIETIES GUILD CONSTITUTION

SOCIETIES GUILD CODE OF CONDUCT

REBEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

REBEL CODE OF CONDUCT

JUST START TERMS OF REFERENCE

JUST START CODE OF CONDUCT

ESSEX BLADES CONSTITUTION

STUDENT VOLUNTEERING POLICY

ISA CONSTITUTION

NETWORK CONSTITUTIONS

VENUES TERMS AND CONDITIONS

FINANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

SU ADVICE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SU VEHICLE DRIVER HANDBOOK

SAFE SPACE

ZERO TOLERANCE

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS UNION STUDENTS PRIVACY POLICY

ARTICLES OF GOVERNANCE

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE