



CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

In doing the work of our Union, we interact with many different people in a range of situations and it's important that we are mindful of our impact on them. This document highlights our responsibilities as staff members, representatives and ambassadors for the Union. It also outlines the standards of behaviour and conduct necessary in a democratic organisation, as we carry out our varied professional roles serving the membership.

PRINCIPLES

The University of Nottingham Students' Union is a democratic organisation run entirely for the benefit of our members. We have many important stakeholders including our students, the University, the environment and the wider community in Nottingham. We have a responsibility to perform and behave to the highest standards as we fulfil our roles. We should all aim to be ambassadors and role models. Our Vision – 'One Union Together' and our Values – Empowering, Inclusive and Collaborative - are central to how we go about our work and interact with all of our stakeholders.

As members of staff or student staff, how we behave has an impact on the Union's profile and reputation, and we should be mindful of this. We're professional people with important and valuable work to do, so we need to be accountable. This is equally true even when we're outside of work on Union business or in a non-work setting such as a social outing with colleagues. How we behave matters, both individually and collectively. Our Values apply when we're outside on Union business as well as internally with colleagues, students and visitors.

Anyone who breaches our policies or behaves in a way that causes harm to people, property or reputation will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. In extreme cases, this could result in dismissal.

Our Workplace

We want UoNSU to be a great place to work. We have set up an excellent range of benefits and opportunities you can access during your work with us. This includes a comprehensive set of Family-Friendly, Wellbeing and Leave, Flexible Working and Learning and Development Policies. We aim to give you the flexibility to manage your work in a way that suits both our needs, and we will actively support your personal, professional and career development aspirations. This is part of us living our Values and making our Union an inclusive and inspiring place to work. We ask in return that you give your best focus and commitment to your work at all times, that you support and care for your colleagues and that that you participate fully as possible in the life of the Union.

CONTENTS

This Code of Conduct document sets out the main issues relating to personal standards and behaviour at our Union. This is intended to be a summary of some key principles and themes for professional people, rather than a detailed list of 'do's and don'ts'. Individual policies are referenced where relevant.

The following areas are highlighted:

- Customer Focus
- Performance
- Respect and Equality
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Professional Conduct in a Democratic Organisation
- Personal Presentation
- Health and Safety
- Smoke-Free
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Conduct in Social Situations
- Safeguarding
- Communications and Technology, including Social Media
- Expenses
- Gifts and Hospitality

Customer Focus

Meeting the needs of customers whether this is to students, internally between ourselves or externally – is our top priority. We have a clear vision and focus on ensuring the highest standards of support and service for them, and an emphasis on personal accountability and continuous improvement in delivering this. This is explained in our Service Pledge.

Performance

UoNSU recognises that having a workforce that performs at a consistent and good level is fundamental to our success as a Union. How we perform individually and collectively makes a significant difference to the people we work with and to the lives of our students. The expectations set around what we need to achieve and how we go about it are the foundation for the Union's performance overall. All staff have a contractual responsibility to perform their duties to an effective standard and will be given all reasonable support and encouragement to do so. The [Performance Policy](#) explains our approach to managing performance. We intend that there should be a consistent approach to performance management across the Union to facilitate and support people making their best contribution and fulfilling their potential.

Our approach to performance is based on Objectives, Values and Learning (including values based behaviours). The Values in particular – Empowering, Inclusive and Collaborative - clarify the behaviours we want to see from all who work here. They describe what a good standard looks like and provide guidance so everyone behaves in a way which is consistent with our vision.

Respect and Equality

We are fully committed to making our Union a supportive and enabling environment for staff, for students and for all who visit us. More than this, we want the Union to be a place where people thrive and develop to be the best they can be, and where they feel comfortable about engaging with others in their work and socially.

One of our Values is Inclusivity. We treat people with respect and support whatever their race, age, sex or gender, pregnancy or maternity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion/belief or age. Whilst these are the areas specifically covered by the law, the principle is broader than that – we encourage, support and enable all staff and students. This is explained fully in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy](#).

We don't tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or intimidation by anyone to anyone. All of us have the right to carry out our roles in an enabling environment. We each have a responsibility for our own behaviour, and we should feel comfortable that we will be supported if we challenge others at the Union if they engage in behaviour which is inappropriate, disrespectful or threatening. This is explained fully in our [Dignity at Work Policy](#).

Confidentiality

During the course of your work at UoNSU, you may become aware of confidential information about people or our activities. This could include commercial or other sensitive organisational information, and personal information about students or staff, for example, during recruitment or line management duties. You are required to respect the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in these circumstances, to respect the appropriate channels of communication, and not to discuss or disclose this information unless authorised to do so.

You should also be aware of our [Data Protection Policy](#).

Professional Conduct in our Students' Union

As a democratic organisation, a key role of our Union is to represent members' interests and to provide them with representation and services which contribute to an incredible student experience. This is at the centre of all we do. To make this happen, staff and elected Officers need to work together effectively, with an ethos of mutual respect, teamwork and collaboration. Officers are elected to define and oversee the strategic direction and emphasis of the Union. Staff have a vital role in bringing professional expertise, advice and support in implementing the strategic and political direction agreed by members, and to provide continuity to the day-to-day operation of the Union.

So that there can be no accusations of influence or interference, staff members are only involved in supporting the Officers and students in carrying out the Union's democratic processes and political direction. Staff may, for example, be involved where their role involves organising or supporting elections or campaigns. Staff themselves must always be impartial, whatever your personal views, so you are asked not to wear badges or clothing which show support for a candidate or campaign, inside or outside of the organisation. Similarly, you should be mindful if you choose to join any Union clubs or societies so that the risk of influence, interference or conflict of interest can be avoided. Where you are unsure about the appropriateness of your involvement with a particular group, you should discuss this with your line manager.

As part of their responsibilities, all staff will act upon the policy and direction agreed by the membership. Staff members should not:

- Publicly comment on, question, complain about or disagree with student policy
- Get into public debate where policy is questioned
- Put ourselves in a position where we express views, in person or via any other means such as email or social media, which are different to the Union's.

These measures are there to protect you as well as to support the proper functioning of the Union itself.

As a member of staff, any questions, issues or complaints you have relating to your employment conditions or your work should be addressed through your line manager or a more senior member of Union staff. These issues should not be raised or discussed with any elected Officer. Similarly, any queries or complaints about the behaviour or conduct of an elected Officer should be addressed to your line manager.

Personal Presentation

Unless you have a uniform for your role, we don't have a set dress-code for staff. We expect people to dress and present themselves appropriately for work, particularly when attending external meetings on behalf of the department or the Union. Please wear your ID badge at work or when going to meetings so people know who you are - it makes life easier for everyone and communicates our brand. If you do have a uniform or protective clothing given to you for your role, keep it safe, clean and presentable. If it gets damaged or worn, let your line manager know. This is all part of presenting a professional and positive image at the Union.

Personal presentation doesn't just cover how you look. We expect people to arrive on time, well-prepared and fully-committed to whatever they're doing. This is part of seeing ourselves as professionals, but also about respecting other people's time and professional responsibilities, as well as the Union's resources.

Health and Safety

UoNSU is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff, students, visitors and contractors. Health, safety and welfare are integral to the operation of the Students' Union and a positive culture which supports this is essential to everyone's wellbeing.

This policy describes the ways in which this is managed, both in fulfilment of our important legal responsibilities and our clear commitment to creating a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where people can thrive. Make sure you understand the Union's [Health & Safety Policy](#).

Smoke-Free

Our Union is smoke-free. Everyone who works at or uses the Union has the right to be in a smoke-free environment, so we don't allow smoking inside our buildings or facilities, at any of our events or in any of our vehicles. Please refer to the [Smoke-Free Policy](#) for information.

Drugs and Alcohol

We have a clear requirement that staff should be fit for work when carrying out their duties for the Union. You should be in full control of your behaviour at all times and mindful of your impact on other people. You should not drink alcohol or take any illegal substances whilst at work.

If you believe that other staff are under the influence of alcohol or drugs at work, you are required to tell your line manager or another senior person. You will be supported in doing so, as we want to avoid any harm to the person themselves and other staff or students, or damage to our reputation or property.

If you have an alcohol or drug dependency, you are urged to seek help. We will support any member of staff with a dependency in seeking professional help or accessing treatment services.

Full details can be found in our [Drugs and Alcohol Policy](#).

Conduct in Social Situations

We're happy if people get together to celebrate at times. If it's a work party or celebration (such as a leaving 'do' or Christmas party), standards of behaviour towards colleagues and others still apply. This is true even if it's not organised by work. Be respectful of others and don't get carried away. You may drink alcohol but, if you do, keep it in moderation. Any drunkenness, taking illegal drugs or behaviour considered unprofessional or inappropriate can and will be dealt with under the Union's [Disciplinary Policy](#).

Similarly, if you go to social functions or other work-related gatherings on behalf of the Union, be mindful of your behaviour and conduct. If you feel it's acceptable to drink alcohol, do it in moderation, and with respect for the situation, our reputation and the others present. If you're not sure what might be appropriate in the situation, discuss it with your line manager beforehand. Be mindful also of your personal safety and conduct as you travel to and from these occasions.

Safeguarding

We aim to provide a safe place for children and vulnerable adults to visit and to participate in activities. Anyone working with children and vulnerable adults has an ethical and legal duty to ensure their safety and protection. We recognise our responsibility to develop awareness of safeguarding issues and are committed to practice which reflects our Union's duty of care in protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm.

You should be familiar with our [Safeguarding Policy](#) which outlines the responsibilities of all staff in relation to children and vulnerable adults, and particularly where you work with these groups.

Communications and Technology, including Social Media

Most people today use social media in their personal and working lives. The Union also uses social media to communicate with members and to promote what we do. It's both immediate and effective. Because of this, please be responsible, and be mindful about what you say or reveal via social media. This is to protect both you and the Union's reputation.

Make sure you fully understand the Union's [Communications & Technology Policy](#) and the implications for your role. Note this covers more than social media, including the appropriate use of IT equipment, mobile phones, email and the internet, and the potential risks associated with them. You are particularly asked to be aware of confidentiality when communicating via electronic media.

You are also asked to read our [Data Protection Policy](#) which outlines our mutual accountabilities and responsibilities around personal information.

Expenses

You will be reimbursed for any expenses incurred in carrying out your duties with the prior agreement of your line manager. You are asked to submit your expenses promptly so you're not out of pocket any longer than necessary. Expenses for travel, food, refreshments and overnight accommodation can be claimed. The rules, limits and guidance around these can be found in our [Expenses Policy](#).

Gifts and Hospitality

As a both a Charity and a democratic organisation, the Union has to take care to comply with the relevant legal frameworks, to avoid any potential conflict of interest or damage to our reputation. This places particular responsibilities on staff, notably around accepting gifts or hospitality. You should never ask for gifts or hospitality from others or accept anything which could place you under an obligation. We maintain a Union register of gifts and we have guidance for staff to support you on issues relating to gifts and hospitality. This can be found in our [Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#).

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