

SOCIETY STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Heriot-Watt University Student Union is a welcoming place for everyone. All our members should be able to participate in societies in a safe and fun environment. Student Union members are expected to adhere to university standards and behaviours, demonstrating respect for one another at all times.

This policy outlines the standards that affiliated societies and its members are required to uphold as a part of the Student Union.

It is a requirement that you and your society committee must read this document before re/affiliating with the Student Union.

BEHAVIOUR

Society members are required to adhere to University and Student Union standards of behaviour when participating in any society activity. University standards can be found [here](#). Student Union bye-laws are [here](#).

The Student Union operates a zero tolerance approach to any form of harassment such as sexual harassment, bullying and making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender identity, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age.

COMMUNICATION

Society members are expected to treat each other with respect at all times, whether online or in person. This includes avoiding use of inflammatory or hostile language such as defamation, slander or threats.

Sharing content or using language that goes against the Student Union's values as an inclusive and welcoming environment is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, ableist, xenophobic and other offensive material. The Student Union operates a strict no tolerance stance and any

society member found in breach of this will be subject to Student Union disciplinary action.

SOCIAL MEDIA

For the purpose of these guidelines, Social Media refers to any platform where content is posted and shared regardless of whether this is accessible to the general public or limited to those within your society.

Whenever using Social Media for society activity, members must not:

- U** Behave in a way which does not comply with the [University's Code of Conduct](#)
- U** Insult members, staff or other institutions. Discussion and debate are acceptable, personal attacks are not
- U** Make defamatory or slanderous statements about individuals, organisations or groups
- U** Post images or links that are discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate (see Not Safe For Work section)
- U** Reveal confidential intellectual property or information
- U** Breach copyright (e.g. passing off imagery (logos, photos) or other content as your own, showing a film without proper license)
- U** Make offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender identity, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age
- U** Use Social Media to bully another individual
- U** Undertake any other actions that would be considered unreasonable, offensive or discriminatory.

ADMINISTRATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All Societies must have at least 2 named administrators for any Social Media channels. Societies must inform the Student Union at the time of re/affiliation, who these named individuals are. These individuals are responsible for ensuring the application of these standards on their channels.

NOT SAFE FOR WORK CONTENT

Content that would be considered NSFW should not be shared on any platform associated with a society that is affiliated to the Student Union, unless it fulfils the

society's aims or is for educational purposes. Sharing NSFW content is in breach of Student Union standards and may result in disciplinary action.

Examples of NSFW content are:

- U Pornographic material (including simulated/animated)
- U Explicit nudity
- U Suggestive nudity
- U Gore/violence
- U Slanderous or defamatory posts, including forwarding or sharing posts of others
- U Images or links that are discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate

The Student Union reserves the right to make a judgement on whether content is NSFW at any time and will be guided by its values and policy to determine whether something is NSFW.

COMPLAINTS

In most cases, if a student has concerns about the behaviour, conduct or language of another student within a society, they are encouraged to address the issue informally if they feel able. If this is not appropriate, they should contact the Student Union for advice and support.

The Student Union has a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory behaviour, including but not limited to racist, sexist, misogynistic, ableist, homophobic and xenophobic conduct. Where a student engages in behaviour of this nature, they may be immediately suspended from society activity while the matter is reviewed.

Where the concern is about an individual student and cannot be resolved informally, students should report the behaviour through the University's [Report + Support](#) system. Students may also raise a complaint through the Student Union's own [complaints process](#), and we can advise on which route is most suitable.

Some issues relate not to conduct, but to how a society is being run. Where students believe a society leader is ineffective or unsuitable for their role, and the matter does not involve any behaviour covered under our zero-tolerance stance, societies should follow [Bye Law 10](#). This allows members to call a Society Extraordinary General Meeting and, through a simple majority vote, remove an office holder from their position.

If the issue relates specifically to the running of a society or the conduct of its leaders, the Student Union may take action under its own procedures. Where the Union believes there has been a breach of the University's Student Code of Conduct, we reserve the right to refer the matter to the University under its non-academic misconduct procedures.