

LUSU Safe Space Policy

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1. **Introduction**

The Union notes:

- 1.1. Under the Students' Union's Code of Conduct, there are 5 values that all students are expected to respect and support: Independence, Respect, Fun, Openness, Courage and Celebration
- 1.2. All students must adhere to the Union's Code of Conduct, but sometimes this is not the case
- 1.3. Students who are members of minority groups and/or have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are more susceptible to bullying, harassment and discrimination

The Union believes:

- 1.4. Students should be safe to express themselves and talk about their experiences everywhere and particularly in our Students' Union
- 1.5. Freedom of speech is important and valuable, yet intention to incite hatred is never acceptable
- 1.6. Without working to ensure the safety of our students, the Union cannot claim to effectively promote the welfare of students, nor to effectively represent students
- 1.7. This policy should enable students who are members of minority groups and/or have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to speak freely about their experiences in a safe environment. Members of oppressed groups will be able to express themselves without oppression with the aim of returning to public spaces equipped to battle that oppression

The Union will:

- 1.8. Ensure the Students' Union offices are a safe space which we define as 'a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.'
- 1.9. Follow procedures and encourage students to report any concerns they have to the Students' Union complaints manager or anyone they feel they can trust
- 1.10. Work to improve our events and spaces to ensure the safety of all students

2. **Purpose**

- 2.1. To ensure a safe and inclusive environment within the Students' Union and at Union events where all activities, services and operations are delivered in a fair and considerate manner

- 2.2. To ensure the safety of all students within the Students' Union and at Union events so that all student members can enjoy their time that supports their effective engagement and participation in all Union activities
- 2.3. The principles of the Safe Space Policy incorporate both in-person and online platforms and interactions. This ensures that all spaces affiliated with the Students' Union are being compliant with the policy

3. Definitions

3.1. Safe space

- 3.1.1. A space where everyone feels respected, supported, and able to express their opinions and experiences without fear of judgement, harassment, or discrimination.
- 3.1.2. A space where open dialogue can occur, and individuals are encouraged to engage in constructive discussions while being mindful of the impact their words and actions may have on others

3.2. Harassment

- 3.2.1. When a person behaves in a way which is intended to cause distress or alarm on more than one occasion
- 3.2.2. This can be the same type of behaviour of different types of behaviour on each occasion

3.3. Abuse

- 3.3.1. An incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour and/or violence that causes harm or distress

3.4. Discrimination

- 3.4.1. Treating people differently based on individual differences, including protected characteristics or personal disagreements

3.5. Content Notices

- 3.5.1. A verbal, visual or written warning given prior to exposure to material which some may find disturbing, distressing or that may evoke a strong emotional response

3.6. Forum

- 3.6.1. A network of students, led by an executive alongside the relevant Liberation and Campaigns Officer, that offers a space for representation and safety and offers an opportunity for student to challenge and campaign against discrimination, oppression and inequality faced by themselves or others.

3.7. LCOs

- 3.7.1. Liberation and Campaigns Officers (LCOs) work on a voluntary basis to secure change and foster student communities at Lancaster.
- 3.7.2. LCOs hold a position on the Union Assembly in which they scrutinise union policy and the political direction of the SU.

3.8. FTOs

- 3.8.1. Full Time Officers (FTOs) work to deliver policy and manifesto goals, develop and deliver Union strategy, link to University committee strands, student groups, and community engagement, and formally meet with the University Executive Board.

- 3.8.2. Reports to, and held accountable by, Union Assembly
- 3.8.3. Further information on FTOs to be found in the Full Time Officer Group Bye-Law¹

4. General Principals

- 4.1. All Students' Union members engaging in Union activity, including with our affiliated groups, must adhere to the General Member Obligations listed under the Code of Conduct
- 4.2. The Union has a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, abuse and discrimination, all of which are defined above
- 4.3. Where a student or third party believes there may be a breach of the Code of Conduct, a complaint should be made via the Students' Union Complaints Coordinator who will follow the Students' Union Complaints Procedure
- 4.4. The Students' Union supports students from different backgrounds and walks of life

5. Safe Space Policy

5.1. Peer-to-peer interactions

- 5.1.1. Pronouns are not to be assumed based on appearance. For clarification of someone's pronouns, they will be asked for accordingly
- 5.1.2. Introductions should include the persons name and pronouns for clarity
- 5.1.3. Trans+ individuals should be addressed using their chosen name and pronouns, regardless of legal name or name on Lancaster University IT systems
- 5.1.4. Views should be actively listened to in a calm and consensual manner during talks, arguments, debates and other interactions
 - 5.1.4.1. Disagreements are to be handled respectfully, without resorting to personal attacks, derogatory language, or offensive behaviour
 - 5.1.4.2. Consent should be acquired before sharing personal experiences, information, or engaging in discussions of a sensitive nature. This can be done through content notices.
- 5.1.5. Communication should be conducted with respect and empathy
- 5.1.6. Peers should be treated with courtesy, kindness, and understanding

5.2. Language

- 5.2.1. Offensive or derogatory language, including slurs, discriminatory remarks, or hate speech, has no place within the safe space
- 5.2.2. Everyone should be mindful and considerate of diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives of individuals within the safe space
- 5.2.3. Members should be aware of cultural differences and norms regarding communication. Cultural practices, beliefs and traditions should be respected.

¹ Link to Full Time Officer Group Bye-Law here: [5.Full Time Officer Group Byelaw - Trustee Board Approved.pdf \(amazonaws.com\)](#)

- 5.2.4. If you inadvertently use language that is offensive or inappropriate, be open to acknowledging and correcting your mistake
- 5.2.5. Provide constructive feedback to others regarding their language choices in a respectful and considerate manner.
 - 5.2.5.1. Encourage individuals to use inclusive language and challenge discriminatory or offensive language when necessary, while promoting a supportive and learning-oriented environment.
- 5.2.6. Recognize that language has the power to shape perceptions and create inclusive spaces.
 - 5.2.6.1. Use language as a tool to foster understanding, promote diversity, and create an environment where everyone feels valued, heard, and respected.

5.3. Content notices

- 5.3.1. Event organisers, facilitators, and contributors should be proactive in identifying content that may require a content notice
- 5.3.2. Content that may require a content notice includes, but is not limited to, discussions, presentations, or visual materials that address topics such as violence, explicit language, sexual content, or any other subject that may be distressing or triggering to some individuals
- 5.3.3. Content notices should be clearly communicated in advance of any event or activity where potentially sensitive content may be present
 - 5.3.3.1. This can be achieved through event descriptions, social media announcements, program schedules, or direct notifications to participants
- 5.3.4. Sensitivity and discretion should be exercised when discussing content notices, ensuring that individuals who may be affected have the opportunity to manage their participation accordingly
- 5.3.5. Individuals who have chosen to disengage or step away from content that has been flagged should be respected and supported without judgement or pressure
- 5.3.6. Content notices should be reviewed and revised periodically to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the safe space community
- 5.3.7. Feedback from participants and stakeholders should be actively sought and incorporated into the improvement process

5.4. Online presence

- 5.4.1. Online communication should reflect the same level of respect and empathy as face-to-face interactions
- 5.4.2. Respect the privacy and consent of others in online spaces. Do not share personal information or experiences of individuals without their explicit permission
 - 5.4.2.1. Obtain consent before tagging or mentioning individuals in posts or discussions that may be sensitive or personal in nature

- 5.4.3. Online platforms should have measures in place to address and prevent harassment
 - 5.4.3.1. Encourage reporting mechanisms for individuals who experience or witness online harassment
 - 5.4.3.2. Swift actions should be taken in addressing such incidents
- 5.4.4. Adhere to digital etiquette norms, such as avoiding spanning, trolling, or engaging in disruptive behaviours that hinder constructive dialogue
- 5.4.5. Foster critical thinking and encourage individuals to evaluate the reliability and accuracy of information they encounter online
- 5.4.6. Cyberbullying or online harassment in any form, including but not limited to stalking, threats, or targeted intimidation, is strictly prohibited
- 5.4.7. The Students' Union may implement monitoring and moderation practices to ensure compliance with the Safe Space Policy in online spaces. This may involve designated individuals or teams responsible for overseeing and moderating online discussions and platforms.

5.5. Privacy and confidentiality

- 5.5.1. Do not share personal information or experiences disclosed within the safe space without explicit permission from the individual involved
- 5.5.2. If there is a need to share information or experiences shared within the safe space, explicit consent must be obtained from the individual(s) involved.
 - 5.5.2.1. Prioritize obtaining consent in a clear and unambiguous manner, ensuring that individuals understand how their information will be shared and the potential consequences.
- 5.5.3. The discussions that take place within the safe space are intended to create an environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, experiences and perspectives
- 5.5.4. Facilitators and organizers of safe space activities or events have a particular responsibility to maintain privacy and confidentiality. They should establish clear guidelines and expectations regarding confidentiality, communicate these guidelines to participants, and ensure that all involved parties understand their role in upholding confidentiality.
- 5.5.5. If discussions or events within the safe space are recorded or documented, such as through audio, video, or written notes, explicit consent should be obtained from participants before capturing or storing such information.
 - 5.5.5.1. Ensure that participants understand the purpose and potential uses of the documentation.
- 5.5.6. The Students' Union is committed to safeguarding personal data and information shared within the safe space.
 - 5.5.6.1. Appropriate measures should be implemented to protect the privacy and security of individuals' information in accordance with applicable data protection laws and organizational policies.
- 5.5.7. Individuals should be made aware of support services available within the Students' Union for any concerns related to privacy, confidentiality, or breaches of trust.

5.5.8. Clear reporting mechanisms should be in place to allow individuals to report any violations or breaches of privacy.

5.6. Complaints

5.6.1. Where an individual or group may be reported to not adhere to this guidance, the focus will be on education rather than discipline

5.6.2. If an individual wishes to make an official complaint about an individual or group, they are to follow the Unions Complaints Procedure²