

Safe Space Policy
Proposed by the Deputy President (Welfare) Marissa Lewis
Seconded by Deputy President Clubs & Societies Yas Edwards

The aim of this policy is to create an environment in our venues that all students, staff and visitors feel safe, happy and protected in.

The Safe Space Policy will encompass all Union-run venues and would involve adopting a zero-tolerance approach to the following behaviours towards any members, staff or other persons:

- Violence
- Sexual harassment
- Discriminatory comments and behaviour
- Abuse and unwanted attention

This policy will ensure that complaints of this nature are dealt with in a consistent way which is fair to all parties, that staff are supported and trained to handle these situations, and that we actively encourage reporting of incidents which can be under-reported due to their sensitive nature.

Definitions

Violence

In this context, violence would include all acts of physical intimidation or aggression, including threats of violence.

Sexual Harassment

The definition of sexual harassment is any of the following behaviours performed without the consent of the other party:

- Unwelcome sexual gestures or innuendoes
- Wolf-whistling, cat-calling or other offensive sexual noises
- Groping, pinching or smacking someone's body
- Exposing sexual organs to someone
- Entering a toilet ascribed to a gender you do not identify as

Discriminatory comments or behaviour

All students should be treated equally and not be subject to abuse because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability status or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

Violations of this policy would include:

- Verbal expressions of discrimination e.g. direct insults, chants, etc.
- Physical expressions of discrimination e.g. acts of violence or exclusion
- Discriminatory dress including offensive slogans and costume e.g. 'blackface'

Abuse and unwanted attention

Everyone has the right to visit and work in an environment free of intimidation and abuse. As a Union, we would tolerate no physical or verbal abuse towards anyone in our venues. This includes all afore-mentioned violations of the policy.

Consequences of incidents

Incidents can be either brought to the attention of staff working in the venue on the day the incident occurs or they can be raised through a web-form¹. Each term, the Deputy President (Welfare) will collate an anonymised report of these incident reports.

If someone is found to have been in breach of this policy, there are various actions that may be taken against them:

- Verbal warning – in some cases due to misinterpreted social cues, a simple request to stop the behaviour can be sufficient action. This would be the decision of the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) or the nominated staff member on the day.
- Ejection from the venue – in cases of harassment or intimidation, it may be appropriate to remove the person from the venue. This would be the decision of the DPS or the nominated staff member on the day.
- Exclusion from the Union's Licenced Premises – it may be appropriate that person may be barred from entering these spaces. This is the decision of the DPS or the manager of the site in which the incident took place. This decision will be upheld by all of the Union's Licenced Premises.
- Union disciplinary procedures – for more serious incidents or repeated incidents, the Union may take disciplinary action, as outlined in Bye-Law E. This would be the decision of the Union President.
- College disciplinary procedures – for serious incidents, it may be appropriate to refer to College disciplinary systems. The decision to refer the case will be made by the Union President.

From here onwards, the term 'harassment' will be used to cover all violations of the Safe Space Policy.

1. The web-form is not currently active, but it has been agreed that one will be developed by the Union Communications team.

Beliefs

1. The Union should be a social space that all users feel equally safe and protected in.
2. The Union, as an employer, should take steps to ensure staff members are working in a safe environment.
3. The Union takes all cases of harassment seriously and action must be taken to ensure our Union is free from harassment.
4. Users of our venue should know how to report cases of harassment, be supported through this process, and all complaints should be dealt with in a consistent, fair way.

Resolves

Imperial College Union resolves to adopt and implement the Safe Space Policy