

USU DISCIPLINE POLICY (STUDENT GROUPS) 2026

DRAFTED BY: Governance Officer

DATE PREPARED: March 2026

APPROVED BY BOARD ON:

VERSION: 2

EFFECTIVE DATE:

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE:

This Policy is adopted by USYD Student Union Ltd (ABN 52 688 637 818) (USU), a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

This Policy must be read consistently with the USU Constitution and USU Regulations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- a. Govern the management of misconduct matters as they relate to Affiliated Student Groups

SCOPE

1. This Policy applies to all USU (University of Sydney Union) members, workers and guests that relate to activities run by the USU and its affiliated student groups, including:
 - a. Misconduct by other USU members, affiliated student groups and workers
 - b. Misconduct that occurred at a program, space, event, or function
2. This Policy applies to all USU members, affiliated student groups and workers
3. Nothing in this policy precludes the USU from initiating civil or criminal proceedings against an individual as defined in above.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
affiliated student group	includes but is not limited to a USU registered club or society, a USU volunteer group, a USU revue or a USU debates team.
guest	means a member of the public who is visiting a USU space, or attending an activity, event, or function, or participating in a program, run by USU or an affiliated student group.
Governing body	A committee, delegate, or the Board of Directors of USYD Student Union Ltd, exercising authority in accordance with the USU Constitution and USU Regulations.
Head of Department	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head of Department of Programs • the Head of Department of People and Culture; or any other Head of Department nominated by the CEO to perform functions in accordance with this policy.

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For the latest version of this policy always check the policy section

member	means a person who is a registered member of the USU.
program	includes but is not limited to programs, activities and events run by affiliated student groups, and activities and events run by the USU.
outcome	Means the outcome of an investigation of misconduct
Respondent	means a person whose conduct is the subject of a report or complaint.
Rule infraction	A breach of USU program rules or regulations.
USU worker	means USU employees, contractors, outworkers, apprentices, work experience students and volunteers.
student	has the meaning given by the University's (Student Discipline Rule 2016) .
University	means the University of Sydney.
USU	means USYD Student Union Ltd (ABN 52 688 637 818).
Board	means the Board of Directors of USYD Student Union Ltd, exercising powers under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and the Constitution

SECTION 1 - POLICY PRINCIPLES

The USU is committed to celebrating and harnessing the diversity of ideas and backgrounds in our communities and to creating an environment of involvement, respect, and inclusion for everyone.

Accordingly, the USU requires all students who engage with its programs, events, spaces, and services to conduct themselves in accordance with this Policy and with the University of Sydney's [Student Charter 2020](#) and the following USU policies: Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy (Student Groups) 2021, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy (Student Groups) 2021, USU Complaints Procedure (Student Groups) 2021, USU Affiliated Student Groups Code of Conduct 2021.

The USU operates as a not-for-profit entity in furtherance of its charitable purposes as set out in the Constitution. All actions under this Policy must align with those purposes.

		Responsibility
1. Misconduct Definition		
1.1	Misconduct may include but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) conduct that prejudices the good order and government of the USU (ii) conduct that prejudices the good name or position of the USU (iii) conduct that impairs the reasonable freedom of other persons to pursue their co-curricular interests or participate in USU programs or activities. 	All

<p>1.2</p>	<p>Misconduct includes breaches of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) USU Constitution b) USU Regulations c) Code of Conduct for Affiliated Student Groups 2021 d) Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy 2021 e) Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy 2021 f) Clubs and Societies Alcohol Policy 2020 g) Any other relevant policies of the USU; or h) Any other governance documents relevant to USU Programs; 	<p>All</p>
	<p>including but not limited to the Clubs Handbook, Revues Handbook, Debates Committee Guidelines and Procedures.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, breaches of the USU Constitution and USU Regulations are primary governance breaches.</p>	
	<p>Misconduct also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Knowingly providing false or misleading information to the University or USU b) Damaging property of the USU c) Engaging in unlawful or criminal activity within a USU group or activity d) Failing to comply with directions given by USU employees or affiliates e) Refusing to leave an event activity or program when instructed by the USU or University; and f) Failing to comply with any conditions set by the USU CEO, Board or Head of Department 	<p>All</p>
<p>2. Penalties</p>		

2.1	<p>One or more penalties may be imposed on student groups or individuals found guilty of misconduct, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) suspension or termination of membership in accordance with the USU Constitution and applicable provisions of the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth). b) expulsion of an individual from leadership position/s. c) expulsion of a group from USU affiliation. d) exclusion of an individual or group from USU or group events, for a period up to one year. e) exclusion or suspension of any USU membership or program privileges for individuals or groups for a period up to one year, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. participation in festivals. ii. access to room bookings. iii. access to storage facilities. f) suspension of an individual from a leadership position or student group, for a period up to one year. g) suspension of group's USU affiliation or funding for a period, up to one year. h) deeming a group ineligible to apply for specific grants. i) repayment of monies. j) a written warning. <p>All penalties must be imposed in accordance with procedural fairness and any requirements set out in the USU Regulations.</p>	HOD/CEO
2.2	<p>Considerations when imposing a penalty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the nature, frequency, and seriousness of the misconduct. b) any previous misconduct by the individual or group. c) whether the penalty will be relevant to the nature of the misconduct. d) previous penalties imposed on individuals or groups. e) the timing of any admission of misconduct. f) any relevant mitigating circumstances. g) any other relevant matters considered appropriate. 	HOD/CEO
3. Preliminary Misconduct Assessment		
3.1	<p>Assessment of an alleged instance of misconduct may involve discussions with relevant parties or respondents, collating documents, or information relevant to the matter.</p>	HOD
3.2	<p>Where discussions are held, all relevant parties are welcome to bring a support person.</p>	HOD

3.3	<p>The USU may deem that no further action will be taken in instances where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Insufficient information or evidence is provided b) The complaint is frivolous, malicious, or vexatious c) The matter is deemed resolved <p>Where the complaint is found to be frivolous, malicious, or vexatious, a further investigation will take place and the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.</p>	HOD
3.4	<p>Should the Grievance fall outside the remit of the USU, the Complainant may be directed to the relevant department of the University of Sydney. Where matters fall outside USU jurisdiction, referral must be consistent with the USU's status as an independent legal entity.</p>	HOD
4. Investigation		
4.1	<p>Respondents will be given a right of response in relation to any alleged misconduct within a reasonable timeframe to respond to any allegations.</p>	All
4.2	<p>Investigators must make findings of fact and may make recommendations for complaint resolutions in accordance with USU policies and procedures. Recommendations may include referrals to other governing bodies of the USU or University, or the USU CEO.</p>	All
4.3	<p>When matters are referred as outlined in 5.2, Investigators must provide all information gathered including any written statements or reports written</p>	All
4.4	<p>Investigators must give any relevant HODs and the USU CEO detailed, written reasons for their findings and recommendations.</p>	All
4.5	<p>At the conclusion of the investigation, the USU must determine the outcome, and provide the respondent and where relevant, the complainant, with a written statement including the reasons for the outcome and any rights to an appeal. Determinations must be made in accordance with delegated authority under the USU Constitution and Regulations.</p>	HODs/CEO
4.6	<p>Outcomes should be determined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Relevant HOD/s in consultation with People & Culture HOD and CEO b) Where the matter is a minor rule infraction, it may be referred to the governing body of the relevant USU program at the discretion of the USU <p>Rule infractions include but are not limited to allegations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) branch stacking and electoral fraud b) breach of tournament rules c) providing inaccurate or misleading records to the USU; and 	HODs/CEO

	c) financial mismanagement Any referral to a governing body must comply with the governance structure established under the Constitution.	
4.7	Complaints are to be handled in accordance with the USU Complaints Procedure 2021. Where the outcome of the Complaints investigation demonstrates that an individual or group is guilty of misconduct, punitive action may be taken in line with Section 2 of this policy.	HODs
5. Appeals		
5.1	Appellants may appeal based on alleged failure of due process or on the outcome of the complaint.	All
5.2	Appeals must be lodged in writing, within 30 days of the date on which the appellant was notified of the outcome of the misconduct investigation, unless a time extension is granted at the discretion of the USU	All
5.3	Appellants must set out in their written appeal their reasons for believing that due process has not been observed, or their reasons for appealing the outcome of the initial complaint, in the preliminary assessment or investigation.	All
5.4	Appeals are to be considered by a panel of 3 HODs of the USU who have not previously been involved in the investigation or outcome. Where they have been previously involved, appropriate managers may undertake this role on the panel. Where the matter has been referred to a governing body as per 6.1, the appeal will be considered by at least 3 members of the USU Board of Directors who have not previously been involved in the outcome of the complaint. Where possible, this should include the USU President and relevant portfolio holder. Appeals involving Board consideration must be conducted consistently with directors' duties under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).	CEO
5.5	Appeals will be considered based on the written materials unless an exception is deemed appropriate.	All
5.6	The USU will provide the appellant with a written statement of the outcome of the appeal, including: a) reasons for the outcome b) if the appeal is upheld, what steps will be taken to address the failure of due process, where relevant The outcome of the appeal is final.	HODs/CEO
6. Referral to a USU Governing Body		

<p>6.1</p>	<p>Outcomes should be determined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Relevant HOD/s in consultation with People & Culture HOD and CEO b. Where the matter is a minor rule infraction, it may be referred to the governing body of the relevant USU program at the discretion of the USU <p>Rule infractions include but are not limited to allegations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) branch stacking and electoral fraud b) breach of tournament rules c) providing inaccurate or misleading records to the USU; and d) financial mismanagement. 	<p>HODs/CEO</p>
<p>7. Confidentiality</p>		
<p>7.1</p>	<p>Except as provided in clause 7.2, the USU will keep confidential all information relating to a report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination, unless the complainant consents to disclosure of part or all the information for a specified purpose.</p>	<p>All</p>

7.2	If a complainant decides not to report an incident to the Police, the USU will use its best efforts to protect the confidentiality of information relating to the report, while meeting its obligations under the <i>Crimes Act 1900</i> (NSW). Note: The USU is required to report information about the commission of a 'serious indictable offence' to the Police in accordance with sections 316 and 316A of the <i>Crimes Act 1900</i> (NSW).	All
7.3	In some limited circumstances, the USU may need to report an incident of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to the Police against a person's wishes, to ensure their safety or the safety of other USU members, workers, or guests, or to meet its legal obligations.	All

SECTION 2- GOVERNANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner	People & Culture/Programs
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APPROVALS PROCESS

A new USU Policy and amendments to an existing USU policy must be submitted to Board as a Motion on Notice after being subjected to the following procedure:

Draft Policy > P&C/Programs HOD > Governance Committee > Board

All amendments suggested after the submission of the motion shall be noted and submitted to the above procedure before being approved.

Approval of this Policy must comply with governance requirements for a company limited by guarantee, including approval by the Board in accordance with the Constitution.

RECORD OF APPROVALS

Entity	Approval Date	Name	Notes
P&C HOD			
Programs HOD			
Governance Committee			
Board			

Version Number	Amendment Date	Approved by	Amendment
1			

RESCISSIONS AND REPLACEMENTS

This document, in conjunction with the USU Affiliated Student Groups Code of Conduct 2021, USU Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy 2021, USU Complaints Procedure 2021 and Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment Policy 2021 replaces the following, which are rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document:

1. Grievance Response Guidelines for Student Groups 2018
2. USU Debating Society - Equity Policy
3. Internal Grievance Guidelines (Student Groups) 2018

GOVERNANCE

This Policy is governed by the USU Constitution, USU Regulations, the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), and ACNC governance standards.

In the event of inconsistency, the USU Constitution and applicable law prevail.

USU is an independent legal entity and not part of the University of Sydney. References to the University do not affect USU's independent governance.