



## **Union of Brunel Students' Social Events, Alcohol and Initiation Policy (including Code of Conduct)**

### **Social Events policy for all full and associate members of the Union.**

They can act as an effective team building exercise, whereby new club, society or other group members can meet and socialise with other members. Yet it is important that they are accessible to all students who wish to join.

The following need to be considered:

- All Union members (Students) must recognise and adhere to all Union of Brunel Students' policies and in particular the Equal Opportunities Policy. Every single student is entitled to an equal chance to get involved in the social, campaigning, democratic, activities-based and commercial aspects of the Union.
- It is an individual's choice whether they attend or partake in any social event. Non-attendance must never be a barrier to participation in any of the group activities, democracy or competitions.
- The Union purpose states "*The Union exists to ensure that every Brunel student has the opportunity to enjoy, challenge, influence and benefit from all aspects of their studies and the wider student experience*" (strategic plan 2021) It follows that each member will have a different response to activities, and no peer pressure<sup>1</sup> (intended or not) should be placed on any member to undertake any activity to initiate them into membership that they would not do willingly.
- The committee of each sports club or society is responsible for the welfare of all members and must take the necessary measures to ensure that an adequate level of safety and wellbeing is maintained.
- All members of sports clubs or societies are representatives of their group and the Union. Members must show respect towards members of the public and other members of the University, at all times.
- The Union of Brunel Students recognises that social activities are an important part of activity groups; however, they must not involve activities of:
  - a sexual or sexually degrading nature,
  - any activity that is illegal,
  - any activity that encourages irresponsible drinking or the use of drugs,
  - any activity that causes harm or damage to others or property,
  - any activity that promotes or glorifies discrimination of any kind and
  - any activity that brings the Union or the University into disrepute.
  - this list is by no means exhaustive, all actions taken by a club or society are subject to investigation and/or disciplinary proceedings

### **Alcohol and Initiation Policy**

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<sup>1</sup> Peer pressure is defined as follows: when a peer group or individual encourages another person to change their values or behaviours to suit other people's convenience.



The Union recognises that for many students, alcohol can be part of life, and as such, it has no wish to discourage responsible drinking. The Union is, however, committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its students and as such is concerned about the effects that irresponsible drinking may have upon students, whether physical, social or academic. Furthermore the Union is also mindful of the fact that many students do not want to drink alcohol when they attend events. This can be due to health reasons or lifestyle, but in particularly students who are from countries or faiths where they are not routinely exposed to, or permitted to drink alcohol. Where the consumption of alcohol is perceived as being 'expected', this may dissuade student from attending.

The Union does not approve of irresponsible drinking. This policy sets out how the Union expects to minimise the effects of alcohol abuse. Furthermore this policy encourages students to think about the impact of alcohol misuse on themselves, as well as upon those around them. Whether they are on or away from campus, as an individual or representing the University/ Union.

### **The Union - Bars**

The Union is committed to providing great entertainment, events and services to all students and guests. The Union is also committed to provide a safe environment for students and their guests to enjoy the range of activities and services on offer. The Union acknowledges that when consumed responsibly, alcohol can, for some, add to the enjoyment of events and as such, are committed to promoting safe drinking among students.

The bars will actively engage and participate in University, local and national safer drinking and drink aware campaigns and staff members will receive specific training on their responsibilities under legislation and local union policy.

During the operation of events where higher attendance is anticipated, the Union provides licensed door staff to further ensure a safe, enjoyable environment for all. Should any individual/s be identified as having potential problems with alcohol misuse, relevant Support Services are liaised with to establish the most appropriate way to support them.

### **The Union - Sport**

There is often an association with alcohol and sport, be it through sponsorship, spectator drinking or alcohol consumption post game. In moderation this relationship between alcohol and sport can be a positive one. It is when this relationship is not moderated, that problems may occur.

All sport club committees **must** attend a formal annual training session on how to effectively run a club at the start of term one. During this training, it is explained that forced drinking and initiations are not tolerated and responsible drinking is promoted. It is recognised that some spectators want to consume alcoholic drinks at sporting events. If the event is taking place in a licensed area, only alcohol bought from the licensed bar can be consumed at that venue. Alcohol cannot be brought onto the premises as it would contravene licensing laws. Anyone wishing to book an event that includes the sale of alcohol must give sufficient warning to allow licences and permissions to be obtained. Without this permission events, must be alcohol free.

### **Initiations**



The Union of Brunel Students believes the practice of initiations is a dangerous and degrading exercise that jeopardises the safety of members and reflects negatively on the public image of students. The Union is also aware that unforeseen circumstances resulting from such activities can cause anguish that may affect students and their families both personally and academically. It is also a requirement of the British Universities Colleges Sport (BUCS) that all Universities must have an initiation policy to compete in the BUCS competitions.

### **Definition**

**An 'Initiation Ceremony' is defined as:**

*An event in which members (often new members) of a club are expected to perform a task or tasks, as a means to gain credibility, status or entry in to the club. This may be achieved by peer pressure (although not explicitly) and may compromise a person's inherent dignity by forcing or requiring an individual to partake in activities such as: drinking alcohol, eating mixtures of various foodstuffs, nudity and any other behaviour that may be deemed humiliating. This also extends to online initiation activities on social networking sites or blogs, etc. Individuals should not be pressured into divulging personal information, be subject to comments, photos or images that demean or compromise the dignity of individuals or groups. '*

**Initiation Ceremonies' are not allowed at Brunel University London, on or off site.**

### **Discipline**

Any student who identifies a concern over their drinking habits will be referred, in the first instance, to the University services for further advice and assistance. Yet it is important to note nuisance or anti-social behaviour which can be investigated under the Union's regulations for inappropriate or poor behaviour. Being intoxicated will not be recognised as sufficient mitigating circumstances from being investigated. It is important clubs and societies are not used as an excuse for excess drinking, especially if it can lead to anti-social behaviour.

Many student clubs and societies have specific committee positions (Social Secretary's) that are responsible for organising social events. Organised 'socials' often involve certain forced rules based around alcohol consumption. Some students may feel uncomfortable and/or pressured to consume excessive amounts of alcohol. Members must respect their peers, by recognising that not all students wish to or like to drink alcohol, and may stop at any time. Any individual found pressuring another student into forced drinking sessions will face disciplinary action.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

1. Complaint is received by the HR Manager.
2. HR Manager sends the complaint to the Student Activities department to be tabled at the respective meeting.
3. The Sports Federation/Societies Guild, the Vice President Student Activities and the Student Activities Department determine the consequence.
4. Consequence is communicated to club/society and monitored by the Student Activities department.
5. If the club/society wishes to appeal, the appeal will be heard by the Union's cabinet group.



When the complaint is received, the club or society is still in operation. Action is not taken until the consequence has been decided.

### **Consequences**

Any breach of this policy will result in one or more of the following:

- Club/Society receives a fine (up to £250)/ account frozen
- Community service for club/society member(s)
- Union grant withdrawn
- Member(s), team(s) or club removed from specific match, matches or removed from all competitions
- Withdrawal of facilities for clubs/societies
- Suspension or complete closure of the club/society
- Member(s) referred to The Union's disciplinary procedure
- Referral to the police
- Removal of recognition of club/society activity from the HEAR

If any incidents occur at the end the academic year, the sanctions may be levied for the following year. As a member of The Union you must understand that you have a responsibility to report to The Union should any activities break this code.

### **Advice & Support**

Excessive drinking can be the first outward sign that a student is under stress or experiencing other forms of emotional ill health. Students are strongly encouraged to seek support from the University or Union's Services, who are not only well placed to help and advise, but are also able to refer students more effectively to specialist services.

Students who feel that their own, or a friends use of alcohol is becoming problematic, are encouraged to talk to somebody about this. A student may feel comfortable talking in the first instance to family or friends. They can also talk to a member of Union staff in the Advice and Representation Centre (ARC). The service is confidential. The **ARC** is based in the Hamilton Centre and for further details please visit <https://brunelstudents.com/advice/>.

In instances whereby a student is admitted to hospital as a consequence of alcohol consumption, the Residence Support team and University Security will, when made aware, ensure that the student and their friends are appropriately supported.

### **Recommended Levels of Consumption**

The government's Chief Medical Officer advises that men and women should not drink more than **14 units** per week, these should be spread across a week i.e. daily unit guidelines of **2-3 units** of alcohol for men and women (generally one unit is equal to half a pint of **4%** beer, one single spirit measure or a **125ml** glass of wine **ABV 8%**). Large portion, or spirits poured without a measure can easily have double or triple the Units.

It is also recommended that individuals should have 2 or 3 alcohol free days every week. All students should be aware that the overconsumption of alcohol can damage health, both in the short and long term. Individuals react differently to alcohol; factors including weight, height and gender may, as such, determine these effects. In addition to this, eating habits, sleeping patterns and even mood may make a difference to how students will feel after consuming alcohol.



**The Union therefore advises that individuals should adhere to recommended levels of consumption.** Further Information on safe drinking and how to calculate the units of alcohol can be found at [www.DrinkAware.co.uk](http://www.DrinkAware.co.uk)

### **Risks of Alcohol**

Alcohol is often a common factor in anti-social behaviour, accidents leading to physical injury and can impair academic performance. The Union believes that intoxication is not an excuse for bad behaviour and students who cannot control their behaviour should drink less. Students should also be aware that excessive alcohol consumption can also make them vulnerable and put them at risk.

### **Education and Publicity**

The Union will encourage safer drinking, whilst increasing awareness and understanding of alcohol misuse and related issues. We will do this by undertaking to regularly educate and publicise the risks associated with the misuse of alcohol. Along with the University, we will produce publicity material to raise student awareness in the form of posters and leaflets and information on the web. At other agreed points in the Academic Calendar, the University and Union will deliver Alcohol Awareness events and/or campaigns.



## **Team Brunel Code of Conduct**

Team Brunel (as individuals and collectively) is committed to welcoming, and providing a positive experience for, any Brunel student who chooses to participate (indicated through membership). As such it does not tolerate, and will not act in such a way as to discriminate or discourage participation through:

### **Bringing Team Brunel into disrepute**

- On the pitch. *Examples of which would include any breach of the points below within a match environment, violent behaviour, undue disrespect of officials, failure to follow instructions or policies required by the sport's governing body, the facilities, etc.*
- In the wider world (stash means you represent Team Brunel wherever you are). *Examples would include the cause of offence to members of the public, wilful damage of property, filming or otherwise sharing private or inappropriate activity.*

### **Sexual Bullying and harassment, discrimination or sexualised banter**

- *We will not use our gender or the gender of others as the basis of intimidation, discrimination or bullying. This could include sex based language, inappropriate and uninvited proposals or touching (although this might fit better in the general/licensed venues section)*
- *We respect individuals, their choices and their rights. We will not denigrate or discriminate against individuals based on their gender.*

### **Racist, anti-religious, anti-cultural or anti-ethnic language or behaviour**

- *Our activities will never discriminate or cause people to feel discriminated against due to their race, religion, culture or place of birth. This could take the form of language used to humiliate others or activities.*

### **Homophobic, bi-phobic, transphobic or other anti-sexuality language or behaviour**

- *We will not use the sexuality of others, or lack of, as the basis of intimidation, discrimination or bullying. This could take the form of language designed to humiliate, or to define someone's sexuality, or implied, as a negative thing.*

### **Initiations, and restricting activity or participation to those who act in a certain way, undertake defined tasks or any other peer imposed filters**

- *If you choose to join our club, you're a part of us. We'll never require you to undertake tasks or activity to "prove yourself", will accept your choice how you get involved socially, and never denigrate you "in the spirit of fun".*
- *We will not exert Peer pressure: No group or individual should encourage another person to change their values or behaviours, to suit other people's convenience.*

As a member of Team Brunel I understand and accept these commitments, will abide by them, and recognise that failure to do so will be challenged.



## **Societies' Code of Conduct**

The Societies' Guild (as individuals and collectively) is committed to welcoming, and providing a positive experience for, any Brunel student who chooses to participate (indicated through membership). As such it does not tolerate, and will not act in such a way as to discriminate or discourage participation through:

### **Sexual Bullying and harassment, discrimination or sexualised banter**

- *We will not use our gender or the gender of others as the basis of intimidation, discrimination or bullying. This could include sex based language, inappropriate and uninvited proposals or touching (although this might fit better in the general/ licensed venues section)*
- *We respect individuals, their choices and their rights. We will not denigrate or discriminate against individuals based on their gender.*

### **Racist, anti-religious, anti-cultural or anti-ethnic language or behaviour**

- *Our activities will never discriminate or cause people to feel discriminated against due to their race, religion, culture or place of birth. This could take the form of language used to humiliate others or activities.*

### **Homophobic, bi-phobic, transphobic or other anti-sexuality language or behaviour**

- *We will not use the sexuality of others, or lack of, as the basis of intimidation, discrimination or bullying. This could take the form of language designed to humiliate, or to define someone's sexuality, or implied, as a negative thing.*

### **Initiations, and restricting activity or participation to those who act in a certain way, undertake defined tasks or any other peer imposed filters.**

- *If you choose to join our club, you're a part of us. We'll never require you to undertake tasks or activity to "prove yourself", will accept your choice how you get involved socially, and never denigrate you "in the spirit of fun".*
- *We will not exert Peer pressure: No group or individual should encourage another person to change their values or behaviours, to suit other people's convenience.*

As a member of the Societies' Guild I understand and accept these commitments, will abide by them, and recognise that failure to do so will be challenged.