

STUDENT CODE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The preamble to the University's Student Charter states that '*Students and staff of the University are members of a single community, working in partnership within available resources to provide a research and learning environment in which all members are given the opportunity to realise their full potential*'. In the Charter, the University undertakes to provide equality of opportunity, quality monitoring and enhancement, academic, administrative and student support, a range of non-academic facilities, and the opportunity of student representation, all contributing to the overall teaching and learning experience.

For the University to be successful in its undertakings, it must have not only the co-operation of its student members, but their active participation in creating a productive social and learning environment. The Charter therefore includes a number of expectations of students, some of which relate to student behaviour.

When the Charter was approved, it was agreed that more detailed service level agreements and 'mini-charters' might be proposed with the aim of elaborating the Charter provisions, and that this would be a desirable development, provided that these lower level statements did not conflict with the main Charter. In relation to student behaviour, a view has emerged, articulated by the student members of the Staff/Student Council (December 1998), that the Charter provisions set out above required reinforcement in the form of a Student Code of Social Responsibility.

The Student Code of Social Responsibility which follows is in three sections; the first is a statement of the formal regulatory position, the second is an explanation of University membership, and the third provides clarification and guidance on what constitutes good behaviour in a University context.

Regulatory Framework

The Student Charter requires students to:

- treat all University staff and fellow students with respect and consideration and refrain from any action which may cause offence to others
- accept responsibility for pursuing their studies diligently
- comply with University Regulations and procedures
- meet University and departmental deadlines
- keep appointments with University staff
- observe such health and safety regulations as are currently in force
- use University facilities with care and consideration for others
- use computing and library services and teaching rooms with respect and with consideration for other users, in compliance with appropriate regulations and legislation
- comply with regulations governing University accommodation to ensure that all residents live in a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere
- be sensitive to the needs of local residents living adjacent to University or private accommodation occupied by students

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- use the network of support services with consideration for the needs of others
- take responsibility for consulting advisers in a timely and efficient manner
- ensure that they maintain the University's good name when they participate in extra-curricular activities
- attend the meetings of committees of which they are members
- provide feedback to those they are representing

In addition to the Student Charter, the University has a number of regulations and formal statements which set out its expectations in relation to student behaviour. These are:

- (a) Regulation on Personal Conduct
- (b) Regulations Concerning Residential Accommodation
- (c) Statement on Harassment
- (d) Regulations Concerning Freedom of Speech

Where student behaviour fails to meet the University's expectations, the Code of Student Discipline may be invoked.

Membership of the University

A current view of higher education is that the relationship between universities and their students can be defined in commercial terms. Students are therefore 'clients', 'customers' or 'stakeholders'. This view obscures the position in traditional universities established by Royal Charter, in which students and staff are defined in Statutes as 'members' of the university. This membership commences with matriculation (i.e. initial registration) and extends for life to those who graduate.

The position of students as members of the institution is intuitively understood by those who deal with the University's students in a social and domestic context. Landlords and neighbours automatically complain to the University about anti-social behaviour, the police expect the University to use its own disciplinary powers when minor offences are committed, and when cases involving students are reported in the press, the University's name is inevitably mentioned. This is not because the University has any quasi parental or family relationship with its students, but because members of the University 'society' are expected to adhere to the society's rules, and the general public expects the University to be able to take action when it observes breaches of those rules.

The main issue, then, is one of reputation, and this is why 'behaviour which brings the University into disrepute' is specifically listed as an offence in the Code of Student Discipline. An anti-social act committed by a member of the University might possibly have no adverse consequence at all for that individual, but could damage the University's reputation as an institution and also by implication have a negative impact on the general reputation of all the other members. University membership therefore carries with it certain moral obligations, and the purpose of this code is to remind students of these. In addition, more serious acts of violence or harassment committed by one student upon another undermine the fabric of the society of which both are members. These are the facts of University life which underpin the following precepts.

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Precepts of Behaviour

The following summarises the University's expectations of its student members. It is intended as a reminder to all students of their responsibilities and of the impact of their actions should they fail to meet expected standards of behaviour.

In a social context, the University expects students to:

- remember that their behaviour outside the University reflects on the institution and on the reputation of all its students and to act accordingly
- treat fellow members of the University and members of the general public with courtesy at all times
- be sensitive to the right to a peaceful existence of those living in and adjacent to student residences (both University-owned and in the private sector)
- in particular to refrain from noisy or uncontrolled behaviour at night or in any circumstances where this would cause offence to neighbours or, in University residences, would prevent other students working or revising
- respect the cultural diversity of the University and the local community
- maintain University property and premises in good order
- refrain from causing damage to public or private property
- be aware of environmental issues by disposing of litter and waste responsibly and minimising use of paper and other consumables

In an academic context, the University expects students to:

- play their part in creating a suitable environment for study by refraining from talking or making any unnecessary noise, eating or drinking in the Library or in lectures
- use computers in open access laboratories for legitimate academic purposes and with consideration for others' needs
- attend classes on time so as not to interrupt other students' concentration
- attend meetings with University staff when asked to do so