

Proposal paper: Code of Conduct

For the Members' Meeting - Annual General Meeting (AGM) - on 3rd February 2021

This proposal is for members' input into the development of a KCLSU Members' Code of Conduct. It is proposed that the Code should form the basis of a mutual agreement between King's College London Students' Union (KCLSU) and its members – including the values and behaviours that the Union applies towards its members, and the values and behaviours of our members towards each other, the Union, and the wider society. Members are invited to attend our annual meeting (AGM) to participate in the identification of values for King's students.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The KCLSU Articles of Association state, that “The Board of Trustees will establish and monitor a ‘code of conduct’ that all Members shall be required to adhere to, including when Members are involved in activities or at events that are administered or organised by the Union.
- 1.2. The Articles further state that “The code of conduct or the disciplinary procedure for Members may include a range of sanctions for breach of the code of conduct by a Member, including the suspension or removal of some of the rights and privileges of Membership, including the holding of office.”
- 1.3. With this requirement in mind, and after a period of Governance review during 2020, it is proposed that KCLSU now works with the Members, the Sabbatical Officers and KCLSU staff to develop such a Code of Conduct. This will form an overarching governance framework to sit alongside the existing Members' Complaints Procedure and Members' Disciplinary Procedure, as well as the existing Union policies and procedures that are in place to serve and protect our Members. As a result, the Code of Conduct will serve to protect our Members' interests and wider society. Breach of the Code, as agreed by our student-led Trustee Board, can lead to disciplinary action.

2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

- 2.1. The essential objective of the proposed Code of Conduct should be to make it clear to all King's students that a condition of membership of the Union is to observe and follow the policies and procedures agreed by the student-led Union. In turn, the Union will make it clear in the Code the values, behaviours and services that are expected of KCLSU in support of the Members.
- 2.2. The Code will be an overarching agreement between Members and the Union, from which all the existing policies and procedures (and any future ones to be developed) will follow.

3. THE INPUT OF MEMBERS ON 3RD FEBRUARY 2021:

- 3.1. We would like to invite members to join us on 3rd February 2021 to propose values and behaviours that students expect to see within the King's community.
- 3.2. The KCLSU values as laid out in our 2019-25 Strategy are: Collaborative, Transparent & Accountable, Unbureaucratic, Inclusive, Sustainable and FUN!
- 3.3. King's is one of the best Universities in the world: world-renowned and respected. The values and behaviours of KCL students should reflect and live up to that, and enable students to fully enjoy their time at the University as well as their association with their Union. KCLSU is one of the oldest Students Unions in the UK. All have a right to be treated with dignity and respect but, in turn, this carries responsibilities to treat others in the same way, and to play a decent and honest role as part of the student community, wider society and world we live in.
- 3.4. The meeting on 3rd February 2021 will first invite members, through the use of the interactive Mentimeter tool, to suggest values and behaviours appropriate for members (students) of the Union. This could include, for example, values of: **Personal safety / Happiness / Opportunity to thrive / Success / Treated with dignity & respect / Treat others with dignity & respect / Tolerance, etc**
- 3.5. The second Mentimeter activity on 3rd February, will invite our members to suggest values that reflect students' responsibilities to society and the wider community. For example, these might include: **being future leaders / role models / working to benefit and improve society / working towards environmental sustainability / respecting the right to freedom of expression.**

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1. After the Members' meeting on 3rd February 2021, the team at KCLSU will incorporate the values and behaviours proposed into the design and content of the new draft Code.
- 4.2. Additional consultation on the content of the Code will take place with the Chairs of the Union Development Committees (UDCs) and Liberation Networks, in advance of final agreement by the KCLSU Board of Trustees.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1. Existing KCLSU policies and procedures

KCLSU have existing policies and procedures in place that frame the behaviours expected of members as part of the governance structure of the Union: These include:

Safe Space Policy (Freedom of expression)

"KCLSU is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive space for all students. This policy is applicable to our whole student community, whether an individual or a member within a group, KCLSU ratified student activity group, representative forum or sport team". "KCLSU will arrange mitigation to ensure the safety of our members and ensure a balance of opinions at any academic discussion or debate. Freedom of speech is important, yet intention to incite hatred is never acceptable."

Zero Tolerance: bullying and harassment

"KCLSU celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to establishing an environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying. We have a zero tolerance approach to harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimization and all students, staff, visitors

and contractors are expected to be treated, and to treat each other, with dignity and respect regardless of:

- Age; disability; gender identity; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race, religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; political beliefs and affiliations; family circumstances or other personal characteristics”.

Student Activity Groups and Sports Clubs (SAG)

SAG’s Code of Conduct already in place as part of the Initiations Policy to ensure: “inclusivity, protect members’ welfare, avoid behaviour that encourages excessive alcohol consumption or causes adverse peer pressure on members, or causes offence or be considered violent, or that might lead to damage to property.”

Student / Staff Protocol

This existing protocol set out guidance within the democratic structure of the Union for the working relationship between KCLSU Sabbatical Officers, Staff (including Student Staff and all other staff employed by the Union) and members.

5.2. Ten point mutual agreement

It is proposed that the Code will be in the format of a 10-point agreement to include:

Members side of the agreement (draft for consultation):

Students’ commitment – as members of KCLSU (on and off campus)

1. Agree to support and uphold the values and behaviours of the Union at all times.
2. Play a part in being a member of the King’s community – treat other students, staff and our neighbours in the community with respect and dignity.
3. Be attentive to our commitment to inclusion, diversity and equality for all – members should not discriminate on grounds of race, ethnicity, age, gender/gender choice, religion, faith, disability or skin colour (see wording in Zero Tolerance Policy).
4. Foster academic success by upholding the highest standards of ethical academic behaviour.
5. Members agree not to behave in a manner which is abusive, offensive, defamatory, distressing, aggressive, threatening, coercive, intimidating or otherwise considered to be harmful to other members, staff or the public.
6. Members agree to follow our policies and procedures, as laid out in the KCLSU website, and in particular to respect our Safe Space, Freedom of Expression, and Zero Tolerance policies in respect of others.
7. To respect the democratic principles of free and fair elections.
8. Not to bring King’s, KCLSU or the student community into disrepute.
9. Show respect for King’s and KCLSU property.
10. Agree to comply with KCLSU’s policies and procedures for members, including the Members’ Complaints Procedure and Members’ Disciplinary Procedure.

KCLSU to agree to (draft for consultation):

KCLSU – commitment to students

1. To support and empower students to make positive change
2. To provide a great student experience for all to get the most out of their university experience
3. To provide support and advice to students who may need to complain to KCL, or who otherwise need representation in their contact with the College
4. To provide community engagement opportunities for students to develop interests, skills and challenges to connect with each other.
5. To provide a measure of complaint resolution through the KCLSU complaint systems.
6. To support student wellbeing and provide stability and a caring student community away from home
7. To provide an inclusive environment for all
8. To apply a range of disciplinary penalties to be applied in the event of the breach of the Code.
9. To enable and support the democratic processes of the Union by facilitating free and fair elections.
10. (open for consultation with SLT and WLT)