

Safe Space Policy

1. Statement of Intent

Imperial College Union is dedicated to creating an environment in our spaces in which all students, staff and visitors feel safe, comfortable and protected. Regardless of ability, age, cultural background, education, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or any other personally identifying factor, everyone should feel welcome in and able to access our spaces.

We encourage all users of our spaces, be they part of the Imperial community or not, to be proactive in creating such an environment and will take a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviours that undermine this. We will take actions accordingly to ensure individuals or groups of individuals are protected.

2. Scope and jurisdiction

This policy applies to all users of Union-run spaces. As constituent parts of the Union, this policy also applies to all spaces run by clubs & societies, Constituent Unions and management groups. In this policy, space refers to both physical space (e.g. bars, offices) and digital space (e.g. emails, official social media channels, virtual meetings).

This policy describes actions that should be taken in response to incidents in which unacceptable behaviours occur. For certain incidents, Union and/or College disciplinary action may be taken. At this point, the jurisdiction of this policy ends and that of the relevant disciplinary procedures begins.

3. Violations of the Safe Space Policy

The following are examples of behaviours that would represent a violation of the policy.

- **Violence and/or threat** - all acts of physical intimidation, aggression or force, including threats of violence.
- **Sexual misconduct** – any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Can include, but is not limited to, sexual comments or jokes, cat-calls/wolf whistling, sexual gestures, unwelcome sexual advances,

any non-consensual touching/groping, exposing genitalia, sharing of inappropriate images/sexual content.

- **Discriminatory and/or exclusionary behaviour** – any unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Includes ageism, ableism, sexism, transphobia, racism, religious prejudice (e.g. Islamophobia, anti-Semitism), homophobia and discrimination based on marital status.
- **Bullying and/or abuse** – any behaviour (physical, verbal or cyber) that intends to cause physical or psychological harm.
- **Coercion** – any behaviour that forces someone to do something they are not willing to do through threat, intimidation or manipulating a social power imbalance. This includes initiations or other compulsory (or effectively compulsory) degrading rituals that can negatively impact the physical or mental wellbeing of an individual.

4. Reporting of Incidents

Incidents occurring in physical spaces can be:

- a) Brought to the attention of staff working in the venue on the day the incident occurs in order to take immediate action. Any such incident must be included in staff reports for that day.
- b) And/or, reported through the [complaints form](#) on the Union website and investigated under the disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.

Incidents occurring in digital spaces can be:

- a) Brought to the attention of Union staff by messaging central social media channels or emailing the communications team.
- b) Reported through the [complaints form](#) on the Union website and investigated under the disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.
- c) And/or, reported to the relevant digital platform through their reporting mechanisms.

It is the responsibility of any staff member dealing with a report to offer appropriate support to the reporting party. Each term, the Deputy President (Welfare) will be expected to produce an anonymised summary report of incidents raised in staff reports and complaints forms and present this to the Community and Welfare Board.

5. Consequences of Violations

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

- Verbal warning – for incidents that are deemed minor by the staff member and have caused relatively minimal concern to the reporting party, a verbal warning asking an individual to cease their behaviour/remove offending digital material may suffice. This would be the decision of the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) or the nominated staff member on the day.
- Ejection from the venue – for incidents deemed non-minor (usually including 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.
- Suspension of individual editor rights from social media accounts or distribution rights to email lists for a defined period or indefinitely.
- 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 action could be against an individual or a student group if many individuals from a group are involved.
- College disciplinary procedures – for serious incidents, particularly of those pertaining to physical violence or sexual violence, it may be appropriate to refer to College disciplinary systems. The decision to refer the case will be made by the Union President or Governance Committee.