

Student Conduct Procedure

Student Conduct: Our Values

What is student conduct?

Being a proud member of the Staffordshire University community means engaging with your studies and supporting others to do so. As a student you are entitled to respect. As a member of our University, we expect you to respect and be tolerant of others, including other students, staff and the public. This means listening to others, celebrating the diversity of our community and following the University policies, regulations and the law.

The following list will help you understand what conduct is expected of you as a member of our University community;

- Treat others with tolerance, dignity and respect, either in person or online.
- Follow all University regulations and policies.
- Respect your environment, both on and off campus.
- Treat University property with respect
- Follow health and safety rules and guidelines
- Act within the law and do not negatively impact on the University's reputation

Why is this important?

We want to create a safe and supportive space where you can enjoy your studies and achieve success. Setting out how we will treat each other, the University and our community, will help the University to do this.

It's not just about what you do at Staffs. Good conduct will always be expected of you, be it in University, work or the community. Being clear on what is expected of you while you are studying with us will help you to understand and meet real-world expectations, preparing you for the next step on your journey.

Student Misconduct: An Explanation

What is student misconduct?

Misconduct is where you act in a way which does not meet the expectations outlined above. The University provides an indicative list of examples of student misconduct in the "Decisions on your Student Conduct" section.

How Does Student Conduct Apply to Me?

**What if I am
studying with
a partner or
am on
Placement?**

If you are studying on a Staffordshire University course which is being delivered by a partner institution, it is the partner's rules on student conduct, not these, which will apply to you.

Please contact your institution for more information.

**What if I am
studying on an
apprenticeship
course?**

If you are studying on an apprenticeship course the University will discuss this issue with your employer and will agree whether employer or University procedures will be followed.

**What if the
Students'
Union are
concerned
about my
conduct?**

The Students' Union has its own procedure for considering student misconduct which happens in its venues or within clubs and societies. This can be found [here](#). However, if the reported misconduct is one of the listed Examples of Serious Misconduct, the Union may refer your case to the University to decide what action to take.

If the University does act, as part of any outcome, the University may decide to refer your case back to the Students' Union to decide whether it wants to also restrict your access to its facilities.

If the University decides not to take any action, the Students' Union can still do so, under its own procedure.

**What if I am
arrested or
the Police are
investigating
me?**

If you are arrested or are being investigated by the Police, you must tell the University straight away.

The University may decide that a [Temporary Suspension](#) is the right thing to do, for example if we are concerned about your safety or the safety of others, or if the offence would impact on the reputation of the University.

The University will not investigate your case while the Police are. We will wait for the outcome of the Police investigation or court case before deciding what to do. However, if the case is taking a long time, and you are not able to move on with your course, you may need to take a Break in Study.

Once the outcome of your legal case is known, the University might decide to take action against you, even if the Police do not.

What should I expect and what can you expect of me?

We understand that going through a student conduct investigation will be difficult for you. However, we will treat you in a sensitive and non-judgmental way. We will handle your case confidentially and the only people who will know about your case will be those involved in providing us with evidence or making a decision. We will share with you all the information we are using to reach a decision and give you every opportunity to tell us your side.

We know that this is a difficult time for you, but we expect you to be honest and respect those dealing with your situation and we will treat you in the same way.

Support and reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, you can request that a reasonable adjustment is made to prevent you from being disadvantaged. For example, you may ask us to move the location of a meeting or give you extra time to read paperwork. Please let us know as soon as possible if this applies to you. Remember our support and wellbeing services are available to you throughout this process.

Precautionary Actions

Why might the University take precautionary action?

The University has a duty to consider the safety and wellbeing of the University community. Because of this, we might decide that we need to put immediate actions into place, to make sure that everyone involved is safe and supported.

This does not mean that the University has decided that you have done something wrong, but it is thought to be in the immediate best interest of either you, staff or other students.

What precautionary action might you take?

Some common precautionary actions are listed below.

Temporary Suspension

If there is something which indicates a serious concern for the safety or wellbeing of any member of the University community, including you, we may decide to issue a Temporary Suspension. You can find more detail on this in the [Temporary Suspension Procedure](#).

Non-Contact Agreement

If the concerns raised relate to interactions between students, we will normally issue a non-contact agreement to everyone involved. Everyone will be asked to sign a copy of identical agreements. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students involved, to ensure all students are supported and that they also understand the boundaries on any interactions.

These agreements are intended to be a supportive measure, especially in those circumstances where we know that continued interaction between students would not be helpful to the wellbeing or ability to study of those involved, or those around them. Non-contact agreements will normally remain in place until a student is no longer registered with the University.

While these are intended as supportive measures, failure to engage with this process may be considered under the University's Student Conduct Procedure.

Investigations into your Student Conduct

How are concerns about my conduct raised?

The University can receive reports about your conduct from other students, staff, members of the public or the Police. Where a concern or report is received, the University will refer it to a senior manager decide whether to start an investigation.

If the concern relates to something which has happened in an area managed by Student Services, such as the library or Student Hub, decisions on your student conduct will be made in conjunction with a senior representative from Student Services.

Please see the "Other Things" section if the concern relates to something which has happened within the University's accommodation.

Investigation

If the senior manager decides that there is enough evidence to show that the concerns are an example of misconduct, they may issue one or more of the outcomes for misconduct (See Examples of Outcomes for Misconduct).

If they need more information, or think that the issues are more serious, they will ask a member of staff or investigate the concerns raised. This person is called Investigating Officer and will have been trained by the University to carry out investigations.

The Investigating Officer will meet with the people who have raised the concerns and anyone else who can provide evidence about the case. They will also meet with you. We recommend you contact the Students' Union as soon as you can to arrange representation. Alternatively, bring along a supportive student friend.

We will try to carry out the investigation as quickly as possible. However, the investigation may include evidence from a number of people, and we need to make sure that we have enough information about your case to make a decision. The Investigating Officer will write a report and make a

recommendation to the senior manager about what should happen next. The recommendation will take account of the following:

- a) Is there evidence of student misconduct?
- b) Is there evidence of multiple instances of student misconduct?
- c) Is there evidence that this has had an impact on other members of the University community?
- d) Is the misconduct a serious offence?

We will normally aim to complete this stage of the Student Conduct process within 7 weeks of the case being raised, excluding bank holidays and University closures. Completion timelines may need to be extended beyond this in cases where external matters are ongoing, for example where the process is awaiting the outcome of an ongoing police investigation. Timelines include, where appropriate, the arranging of a Student Conduct Panel.

School/Service Conduct Decisions

The senior manager will review the Investigation Report, including any recommendations, and will decide one of the following:

- a) Take no further action
- b) Apply one or more of the poor conduct outcomes
- c) Refer your case to a Student Conduct Panel

You will be informed in writing about the outcome of the investigation and the decision we have reached. If a student conduct outcome has been applied (option b), you will be advised of your right to appeal. Please see [What if I think the decision is wrong?](#)

Student Conduct Panel

If it is judged that your case should be referred to a Student Conduct Panel, the Registry will arrange this meeting.

The Student Conduct Panel will include;

- An Executive Dean or Director (Chair)
- A member of the Quality Enhancement Committee or Academic Board.
- A nominee of the Students' Union with no connection to your case

The Investigating Officer will normally attend to answer questions about their report. A member of the course team may attend to answer course related questions.

An agenda for the meeting will be sent to you with your invitation to attend. If you do not attend the meeting, or provide a valid and timely reason why you are unable to attend, the meeting will proceed in your absence.

We know this can be a difficult time, so we always give you time to prepare, at least one week's notice (excluding bank holidays). We recommend you contact the Students' Union as soon as you can to arrange representation. Alternatively, bring along a supportive student friend. If you want to, you can write a statement before attending. You will need to send this to us at regulations@staffs.ac.uk 48 hours before the meeting.

It's important that we discuss the concerns with you, so you need to tell us as soon as possible if you can't attend the meeting at the date or time that we ask you to. We will do what we can to rearrange the meeting. If you don't tell us, and don't attend we may hold the meeting without you.

The Student Conduct Panel can apply one or more of the sanctions listed below.

Someone will take notes at the meeting and you will be sent a copy of the decision within one week (excluding bank holidays).

Decisions on your Student Conduct

Below is a list of examples of the types of behaviour which might be viewed as misconduct. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

Examples of Poor Conduct	Examples of Serious Student Misconduct
<p>Antisocial behaviour;</p> <p>Disruptive behaviour on University premises such as setting off fire alarms or obstructing access to buildings or rooms;</p> <p>Inappropriate, abusive or threatening behaviour, in person or through social media;</p> <p>Compromising the safety and/or wellbeing of staff, other students or visitors;</p> <p>Behaviour likely to damage the reputation of the University, such as disruptive behaviour in the community;</p> <p>Damage to University property or abuse of its facilities;</p> <p>Causing a health and safety concern;</p>	<p>Repeated instances of misconduct</p> <p>Sexual misconduct</p> <p>Violence, harassment and hate crimes</p> <p>Fraud</p> <p>Refusal to comply with a Student Conduct decision (subject to the right of appeal)</p> <p>Conduct which may be considered a significant or serious criminal offence.</p>

<p>Internet access abuse, such as visiting inappropriate websites, uploading or downloading inappropriate content and sharing computer viruses;</p> <p>Conduct which may be considered to be a minor criminal offence.</p>	
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Below is a list of possible outcomes for proven cases of misconduct:

Outcomes for Poor Conduct or Serious Misconduct	Added outcomes for Serious Misconduct
<p>A written and/or verbal warning;</p> <p>Agreement to a behavioural contract;</p> <p>Requirement to submit a written apology;</p> <p>Submission of a reflective account;</p> <p>A temporary restriction on access to buildings or facilities;</p> <p>A requirement to pay reasonable costs for any damage or losses incurred by the University;</p> <p>A written or final written warning about your conduct in University accommodation;</p> <p>Issue a Notice to Quit University accommodation.</p>	<p>Restricted access to University facilities or resources.</p> <p>Suspension from study</p> <p>Recommend to the Vice Chancellor that you should be expelled from the University.</p>

What if I think the decision is wrong?

Can I appeal?

If you feel that a decision on your conduct is wrong, you can appeal. You will need to put this in writing, to regulations@staffs.ac.uk with your evidence, within two weeks (excluding bank holidays) of the decision.

You may appeal against a conduct decision for the following reasons which you must make clear in your appeal:

That the procedure was not followed properly, and this has affected the outcome;

That the decision reached was unreasonable due to bias or the harshness of the sanction.

That you have new evidence which you were unable to provide earlier in the process for valid reasons;

The Registry will check that your appeal is:

- On time, within 2 weeks (excluding banks holidays) of the decision.
 - Meets one of the reasons to appeal.
- and
- Is supported by evidence.

If your appeal does not meet all the above, we will not consider it and we will write to you explaining the reason why.

The Appeal

Appeals against the decision of a senior manager

If you are appealing against a sanction given by a senior manager, this will be considered by another senior manager. This includes sanctions given as part of an accommodation conduct issue.

Appeals against the decision of a Student Conduct Panel

If your appeal is eligible, it will be considered by a Student Conduct Appeal Panel. This will always be held at Staffordshire University and may require virtual attendance if you are a distance learning student. The Panel is made up of the following;

- An Executive Dean or a member of the University Executive (other than the Vice Chancellor) or nominee (Chair)
- A senior member of management from another School
- A nominee of the Students' Union with no connection to your case

The Chair of the Student Conduct may attend to explain the decision and answer any questions.

If you do not attend the meeting or provide a valid and timely reason why you are unable to attend, the meeting will proceed in your absence.

We always give you time to prepare, this is one week (excluding bank holidays). We recommend you contact the Students' Union as soon as you can to arrange representation. Alternatively, bring along a supportive student friend. If you want to you can write a statement and send it to us 48 hours before attending. It's important that we discuss the concerns with you, so you need to tell us as soon as possible if you can't attend the meeting at the date or time that we ask you to. We will do what we can to rearrange the meeting. If you don't tell us, and don't attend we may hold the meeting without you.

Someone will take notes at the meeting and you will be sent a copy of the decision within one week (excluding bank holidays).

The Appeal Decision

The Appeal will result in one of the following decisions:

- a) To agree with the previous decision
- b) To start a new investigation because our procedure was not followed.
- c) To change the decision of the Student Conduct sanction (but not to increase the penalty) because there is new evidence to consider or the previous decision was unreasonable or biased.

How long will this process take?

We will normally aim to complete this stage of the Student Conduct process within 5 weeks of the appeal being submitted, excluding bank holidays and University closures. This includes, where appropriate, the arranging of a Student Conduct Appeal Panel.

What if I still think the decision is wrong?

If you disagree with the appeal decision, you have the right to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within one year of the decision. You can find out more by clicking [here](#).

Other Things

How does student conduct relate to other procedures?

If you are registered on a course with professional or Fitness to Practise requirements, and we find that misconduct has happened, we may refer your case to the member of the School Management Team with responsibility for Fitness to Practise. They will decide if we need to refer to the [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#)

**What happens
with misconduct
in University
accommodation?**

There is a Code of Conduct for students living in university accommodation. This explains what level of conduct is expected of you in university accommodation. Reports of misconduct in accommodation will normally be dealt with by the ResLife Team. The Team may issue you with one of the outcomes for moderate misconduct.

Where an incident of misconduct in accommodation is considered to be more serious, the process outlined in the “Investigations into your Student Conduct” section will be followed. Where appropriate, someone from the ResLife team will be involved in the investigation. This is to ensure that any contextual information about the accommodation processes, including the accommodation licence, is considered appropriately.
