

UMSU Workplace Conduct Policy

Effective date January 2025
Review Date January 2028
Policy Owner CEO

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy provides clarity and consistency about standards of practice and behaviour in the workplace aligned with UMSU's values, to create a safe, healthy and productive workspace, and to protect the interests of the organisation.
- 1.2. The policy sets out the elements of a healthy and sustainable organisational culture and provides expectations in respect of our behaviour toward others.
- 1.3. The policy supports and supplements our legal obligations in areas such as child safe practices, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), financial probity, equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and privacy.
- 1.4. The policy represents a framework for ethical conduct that all those involved with UMSU have an obligation to uphold. It may also provide the basis for disciplinary action for those who fail to meet their obligations.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The policy applies to all UMSU staff, elected student representatives, volunteers, and contractors.
- 2.2. This policy applies to all activities, and all people involved in those activities, that take place:
 - 2.2.1. on UMSU premises; or
 - 2.2.2. are undertaken in the course of UMSU's operations; or
 - 2.2.3. at work-related activities; and
 - 2.2.4. includes social contact with other UMSU staff, elected student representatives or volunteers outside of work hours.
- 2.3. The policy describes obligations incorporated into staff employment contracts, volunteer agreements and student representative Roles and Responsibility Statements.
- 2.4. The policy is supplemented by, and should be read together with, other UMSU Regulations and policies, including the [Students' Council Charter](#), the UMSU [Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#), the UMSU [Child Safety Policy](#), and the UMSU [Complaints Policy](#).

3. Workplace Culture

- 3.1. UMSU recognises the benefits of a positive workplace culture for staff, elected student representatives, and volunteers. Healthy workplaces encourage commitment, productivity, and engagement, helping us all further UMSU's objectives.
- 3.2. UMSU is committed to promoting and providing a safe and healthy environment for work and student experiences which is free from unacceptable conduct and behaviour, and staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and other members of the community are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- 3.3. To help achieve this objective, staff, elected student representatives', and volunteers' behaviour should align with UMSU's values, promoting the best interests of the organisation, and conducting themselves consistently with the objectives of the Constitution.
- 3.4. UMSU staff, elected student representatives, and volunteers are expected to treat others with respect and courtesy, to uphold the principles of equal opportunity, and not partake in victimisation, vilification, violence, bullying, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or any other anti-social behaviours.
- 3.5. Staff, elected student represents, and volunteers can contribute to a positive and supportive organisation culture, by:
 - 3.5.1. valuing and respecting diversity and cultural difference;
 - 3.5.2. taking all reasonable steps to disclose and avoid conflicts of interest, or misusing their position or information;
 - 3.5.3. ensuring that services, events and activities are accessible to, and take into account the needs of all individuals;
 - 3.5.4. being equitable in our decision-making, service provision and access to support; and
 - 3.5.5. being mindful of the health and safety of themselves and others in the workplace.

4. Unacceptable conduct

- 4.1. Unacceptable workplace behaviour can include:
 - 4.1.1. failing to obey a lawful and reasonable instruction by a supervisor;
 - 4.1.2. failing to follow UMSU's Regulations, policies, and procedures;
 - 4.1.3. unreasonably disruptive behaviour;
 - 4.1.4. bullying and harassment;
 - 4.1.5. unlawful discrimination;
 - 4.1.6. sexual misconduct (further described under the UMSU [Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#));
 - 4.1.7. unauthorised absence from the workplace;
 - 4.1.8. creating a risk to the individual's, or others' health and safety or generally failing to observe occupational health and safety requirements;
 - 4.1.9. use of derogatory, violent or abusive language;
 - 4.1.10. concealment or misrepresentation of a material fact on engagement at UMSU;
 - 4.1.11. wilful dishonesty in the course of the engagement with UMSU; and
 - 4.1.12. any criminal conduct.

5. Maintaining Safer Spaces by Mindful Interaction

- 5.1. UMSU is committed to providing:
 - 5.1.1. Safer Spaces in all UMSU physical, digital, and online environments;
 - 5.1.2. accessible and supportive spaces, events, and activities that are free of harassment, discrimination, vilification, bullying, and victimisation; and
 - 5.1.3. the best possible working, communication, and social environment for staff, elected student representatives, volunteers, members, and visitors.
- 5.2. Mindful interaction refers to an individual's awareness of how their conduct, including their communications, language (verbal and physical), behaviour, actions, practices, and other interactions, can directly or indirectly affect others. It is central to the creation and maintenance of Safer Spaces.
- 5.3. Mindful communication:
 - 5.3.1. means constructive dialogue that respects the difference in individual's physical and emotional boundaries;
 - 5.3.2. is expression (including non-verbal communication) which is inclusive of differences in language and cultural backgrounds, and is free of barriers to constructive dialogue;
 - 5.3.3. attempts to be aware of the experience of other individuals and allows for their informed consent around potentially triggering topics or conduct;
 - 5.3.4. is free from personal attacks, insults, intimidation, silencing tactics, bullying, discrimination, vilification or language that is hostile, offensive, derogatory or demeaning of others;
 - 5.3.5. does not perpetrate victimisation; that is, the bullying, punishing or threats of punishment of someone who has made a complaint or supported another person who has made a complaint; and
 - 5.3.6. does not include speaking over others, interrupting others, dominating a conversation, or being condescending.
- 5.4. Mindful decision-making is an inclusive process based on open and constructive dialogue and involves active collaboration and consultation with other participants.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1. All individuals in UMSU Spaces have a responsibility to:
 - 6.1.1. be mindful of their interactions as described in s.5 of this policy;
 - 6.1.2. show respect to others;
 - 6.1.3. leave a space when asked to do so because of unsafe behaviour;
 - 6.1.4. abide by the University's policies regarding conduct;
- 6.2. Elected student representatives have a responsibility to:
 - 6.2.1. be familiar with the UMSU Constitution, its regulations and UMSU policies;
 - 6.2.2. act in conformity with the Students' Council Charter
 - 6.2.3. avoid using or threatening to use violence;
 - 6.2.4. abstain from the use of physical, emotional, or other intimidation to influence a motion at any UMSU meeting, or to influence the outcome of a meeting or hearing.

- 6.3. Social Media Administrators have a responsibility to:
 - 6.3.1. avoid making and immediately deleting any comments or posts on UMSU online spaces which:
 - 6.3.1.1. breach UMSU policy;
 - 6.3.1.2. discuss any complaints, disputes or grievance being dealt with under the Constitution or UMSU's policies;
 - 6.3.1.3. discuss any staff employed by UMSU or the University;
- 6.4. Where an individual witnesses Unacceptable Conduct, they are expected to inform UMSU management.
- 6.5. Staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors are expected to:
 - 6.5.1. follow health and safety guidelines and procedures and to be aware of, and report, any potential hazards.
 - 6.5.2. observe confidentiality and refrain from unauthorised disclosure of UMSU information, regarding either UMSU or its staff, elected student representatives or volunteers.
 - 6.5.3. act in a courteous, respectful manner when dealing with fellow staff, elected student representatives, suppliers, contractors, students and members of UMSU, the broader university community, and the general public.
 - 6.5.4. behave honestly and openly and with integrity in their dealings with UMSU generally, and specifically in relation to other staff, elected student representatives and volunteers.
 - 6.5.5. refrain from unlawful discrimination against or harassment of any staff member, elected student representative, agent, contractor, supplier or visitor.
 - 6.5.6. avoid conflicts of interest in any decisions.
 - 6.5.7. inform UMSU of any change in their circumstances that may affect their ability to perform their normal duties at UMSU.
 - 6.5.8. refrain from deliberately misusing or damaging UMSU's property in their possession, care or custody or using UMSU's assets, intellectual property or the services of other staff (including contractors) for private use or gain.
 - 6.5.9. consider the impact of their actions on the environment and local community, including in relation to the disposal of waste, use and storage of chemicals, and use of natural resources.

7. Organisational Guidelines

Finances

- 7.1. Staff, student representatives, volunteer program directors, volunteers and contractors will observe the highest standards of integrity in financial matters and will:
 - 7.1.1. comply with requirements of relevant legislation, UMSU's [Financial Regulations](#) and any attendant policies and procedures; and
 - 7.1.2. authorise the use of organisational funds only for purposes of UMSU and where they have delegated authority to do so.

Privacy & Confidentiality

- 7.2. All staff, student representatives, volunteers and contractors must:
 - 7.2.1. respect others' privacy and confidential information and comply at all times with UMSU's [Privacy Policy](#);
 - 7.2.2. only access private or confidential information when it is required for work purposes; and
 - 7.2.3. only release confidential information if authorised to do so.

Conflicts of interest

- 7.3. A conflict of interest occurs in situations involving an authority to act which may be compromised by a potential benefit to the decision maker which is in conflict with the best interests of the organisation.
- 7.4. Staff, elected student representatives, and volunteers are responsible for identifying personal or business circumstances that may give rise to potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest, and act in accordance with the UMSU [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#).
- 7.5. When making decisions within their specific authority to act, staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors will act in the best interests of UMSU and must not allow their own interests or the interests of others to interfere with that obligation.
- 7.6. Where a conflict of interest is present or declared, UMSU will manage that conflict by ensuring the conflicted individual is not in a decision-making position in respect of the relevant issue.

Public comment

- 7.7. All staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors must ensure that public comments (either verbal or written) made in a *private capacity* are not attributed as official comment of UMSU.
- 7.8. All staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors must abide by UMSU's [Publishing Regulations](#), [Student Media](#) and [Social Media Policy](#) when using social networking sites and commenting on the organisation in any manner.

Workplace Bullying, Sexual Misconduct and Unlawful Discrimination

- 7.9. UMSU does not tolerate any form of workplace bullying, sexual misconduct or unlawful discrimination.
- 7.10. Workplace bullying is a form of harassment. It includes repeated, unreasonable behaviour that demeans, intimidates, victimises, threatens or humiliates people, either as individuals or as a group. Examples include:
 - 7.10.1. verbal abuse, threats, sarcasm or other forms of demeaning or intimidating language or communication;
 - 7.10.2. psychological harassment;
 - 7.10.3. physical intimidation;
 - 7.10.4. hazing;
 - 7.10.5. deliberate change of work duties for the purpose of victimisation;
 - 7.10.6. sabotage of another person's work or wilful gossip and 'white anting';
 - 7.10.7. exclusion from work activities of which the person would reasonably expect to be a part; and

- 7.10.8. threatening to take unjustified action against a person unless that person complies with unreasonable requests.
- 7.11. Unlawful discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability as provided under the relevant legislation.
- 7.12. Sexual misconduct is covered in the UMSU [Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and UMSU's expectations and complaint resolution in relation to sexual misconduct is set out in that policy.

8. Training and UMSU's Positive Duties

- 8.1. To ensure this policy is understood and implemented, UMSU will provide regular information, education, and training in relation to these values and principles.
- 8.2. All staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors must:
 - 8.2.1. Be aware of and comply with this policy.
 - 8.2.2. Report anything that may be contrary to this policy and comply with mandatory reporting requirements, including under the UMSU [Child safety Policy](#).
- 8.3. UMSU must:
 - 8.3.1. Ensure all staff, elected student representatives, volunteers and contractors are aware of their responsibilities under and have access to this policy; and
 - 8.3.2. Take appropriate action to address alleged breaches of the policy by staff, elected student representatives, volunteers or contractors.
- 8.4. The Human Resources Manager will provide advice to staff and elected student representatives in relation to their responsibilities under this policy and its application.
- 8.5. The Volunteering manager will provide advice to volunteers in relation to their responsibilities under this policy and its application.

9. Progressing disputes or complaints under this policy

- 9.1. Complaints made regarding alleged breaches of these guidelines will be dealt with in accordance with the principles set out in the UMSU [Complaints Policy](#).

Responsibility for Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinator, Student representation & General Secretary (Student Representatives) Human Resources Manager (Staff and contractors) Volunteer Manager (Volunteers)
Supporting Policies & Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UMSU Alcohol Policy UMSU Child Safety Policy UMSU Complaints Policy UMSU Conflicts of Interest Policy UMSU Health and Safety Policy UMSU Interaction Protocols & Policy UMSU Prevention of Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Policy UMSU Privacy Policy UMSU Resolution of Complaint Procedures UMSU Resolution of Complaint Procedures – Investigation UMSU Social Media Policy UMSU Student Media Policy UMSU Volunteer Policy
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> (Vic) <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> (Cth) <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> (Cth) <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) <i>Age Discrimination Act 2004</i> (Cth) UMSU Constitution UMSU Council Charter UMSU Discipline Regulation UMSU Publishing Regulations UMSU Enterprise Bargaining Agreement or equivalent
Definitions	<p>Social Media Administrator means an elected student representative who manages any UMSU online space as part of their duties.</p> <p>Safer Spaces mean spaces which are welcoming, engaging, and supportive. Safer spaces are as broadly inclusive as possible as a result of the mindfulness of the individuals within these spaces. Safer spaces are free from violence, aggression, abuse, bullying, manipulation, discrimination, and non-physical abusive behaviour.</p> <p>UMSU Events mean any social, political, public or student event which has either been organised as an event by UMSU, or in which UMSU is officially participating.</p> <p>UMSU Offices means the physical offices, spaces, and facilities enclosed within the buildings in which UMSU is located and which the University has designated for the use of UMSU whether that use is shared with the University or exclusive to UMSU.</p> <p>UMSU Spaces means the UMSU Offices and extends to any space, whether physical or digital, which is used for UMSU related activities and events, communications, or other operations.</p>
Status	Final – in force
Approval	CEO and Students’ Council

Change Table

Version #	Issue Date	Amendment Details	Approval Date	Approved By
1. Consultation Draft	November 2024	First iteration		
2. Final Policy	January 2025	-	17 January 2025	Students' Council & CEO