

Code of Conduct for Sports Coaches

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- Establish and maintain high standards for sports coaches
- Ensure that a high degree of ethical standards, integrity, responsibility, competence, and confidentiality are always practiced
- To safeguard members of Worcester Students' Union (WSU) using our services

Worcester Students' Union (WSU) requires all coaches to adhere to this code of conduct when undertaking the role of coach.

Coaches are not permitted to engage in coaching activities until the Student Activities Manager has received and reviewed the necessary coaching qualifications and verified the coaching insurance certification. You will receive an email confirmation upon approval to coach.

1. Issues of Responsibility

Sports coaching is a deliberately undertaken responsibility, and sports coaches are responsible for the observation of the principles embodied in this Code of Conduct.

1.1. Humanity

WSU operates a policy of equality of opportunity and is committed to promoting a positive and inclusive culture, in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We value different identities, perspectives, and backgrounds. We must ensure that no students are unlawfully discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, as a consequence of their age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. All personnel working with students must comply with this policy at all times. You can find WSU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy here

<https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/equalityanddiversity/>.

Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every club member and have a responsibility to promote a positive and inclusive environment. Any allegations of bullying or intimidation from students, staff or any other associated personnel must be reported to a member of WSU staff who will investigate in accordance with the WSU disciplinary procedures and Code of Conduct as outlined in the Constitution and by-laws, which can be found here

<https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/documents/>.

1.2. Relationships

The sports coach will always remember that students are primarily enrolled at the University of Worcester for educational purposes, and this must take priority. The sports coach will be concerned primarily with the wellbeing, health, and future of any individual club member and only secondarily with the optimisation of performance. Hence, sport coaches must ensure there is a balance between the development of performance and the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the individual.

At the outset, you should outline what is expected of students and what they are entitled to expect from you as their coach. You should develop an appropriate working relationship with each club member and the student committee based on mutual respect. Coaches must encourage club members to develop independence through accepting responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training and competition.

All personnel working with members of WSU clubs must be responsible for the setting of boundaries between working relationships and friendships with their athletes, in both practice and communication. The coach must be mindful that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by others as impropriety.

In the case whereby any athletes or members behave in an inappropriate way towards the coach, you are advised to report any incidents to a member of WSU staff within 48 hours, who will investigate the issue, taking appropriate action.

Many sports coaches are current and former students of the University. To ensure avoidance of difficulties or problematic situations and to maintain mutual respect, we strongly encourage coaches not to engage in club/society socials and to maintain a level of distance in this respect. Issues arise when boundaries are blurred and this, inevitably, has an effect on team/club performance, morale, and conduct. Coaches must always lead by example; it is part of the role.

1.3. Commitment

Sports coaches should clarify before the start of the academic year, with the club and WSU, the number of sessions and fees (if any). They should also explore with the club the expectation of the outcome of their coaching e.g. goals around promotion or development.

Sports coaches have a responsibility to declare to their club any other current coaching commitments.

Sports coaches operating in bigger clubs where there is a senior or performance coach **MUST** work with that coach, seek guidance from them, and help the implementation of the club's wider aims and expectations.

Sports coaches who become aware of a conflict between their club and their obligation to their Governing Body or other organisation employing them must make explicit the nature of the conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned, including WSU.

1.4. Co-operation

No money should change hands between the members, club or coach without prior approval and formal provisions made by WSU. All payments will be made via BACS transfer. Any breach of this will be taken very seriously by WSU.

Sports coaches should communicate and co-operate with WSU in the best interests of their club. Sports coaches must communicate and co-operate with registered medical and ancillary practitioners in the treatment and management of club member's medical and psychological problems. In the same respect, sports coaches must respect the advice and guidance of University of Worcester Sports Therapists who provide their services, during BUCS fixtures, voluntarily to the club.

Visiting or one-off coaches must be made aware of this code of conduct and its expectations. They must also provide evidence of their qualification/insurance to WSU before they coach any students. It is strongly advised to hold a valid DBS check. It is the responsibility of the committee member or coach who extended the invitation to the visiting/one-off coach to inform them of this and facilitate this happening.

Where a coach considers that acceptable conduct has been breached by a member, coaches are asked to bring this to the attention of the Students Activities Manager in an attempt to restore acceptable behaviour or, if deemed necessary by the Students Activities Manager to refer the student to the Students' Union's disciplinary process <https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/aboutwsu/documents/>.

Should coaches have concerns about any of the club members, whether its around their wellbeing or relating to finance or education, they are asked to bring this to the attention of the Student Activities Manager to signpost to further sources of support, if appropriate.

1.5. Integrity

It is the responsibility of the coach to work with the club committee to ensure that ineligible athletes do not participate in training, fixtures, events or competitions. Ineligible athletes include non-students, those students who have not paid the appropriate club membership fee and/or those not meeting the criteria or regulations of the competition organisers. There is a zero-tolerance approach in this respect.

Sports coaches must not encourage club members to violate the rules of their sport and should actively seek to discourage such action. Coaches should encourage club members to obey the spirit of the rules and regulations of sports competitions. For clubs

who participate in the BUCS programme, coaches must respect the rules BUCS have around player movement.

Sports coaches must promote the positive aspects of sport (including fair play) and embody the ethos of #TeamWorc which aims to ensure sport at Worcester is inclusive and to take a stand against all forms of violence, abuse, and discrimination. This includes homophobia, sexism, racism, and misogyny. Sports coaches must not compromise club members by advocating measures which could be deemed to constitute seeking to gain an unfair advantage. Above all, coaches must never advocate the use of prescribed drugs or other banned performance enhancing substances.

If coaches witness or hear any inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour whilst at fixtures and competitions towards any participants, they must report that to the match officials at the time for the necessary action to be taken. The coach must also inform the BUCS Sport Administrator with details of any misconduct. Victims of any such behaviour must feel supported and heard and sport still has a lot to do in this respect to increase inclusion and diversity.

Sports coaches must refrain from public criticism of fellow coaches. Differences of opinion should be dealt with on a personal basis and more serious disputes will be referred to WSU and/or to the appropriate Governing Body.

Sports coaches must treat opponents and officials with due respect both in victory and defeat and should encourage club members to do the same. Our external reputation is very important to us.

Sports coaches must accept responsibility for the conduct of club members insofar as they will undertake to discourage inappropriate behaviour, supporting inclusion and the value of diversity.

1.6. Confidentiality

All personnel working with members of WSU clubs must recognise that they may have access to confidential information about their athletes and members and appropriate confidentiality must, therefore, always be maintained.

The sports coach must comply with GDPR principles and regulations. More information on GDPR is available at <https://www.worcsu.com/yourunion/gdpr/>. Students are informed that we will share data with the University and National Governing Bodies in the privacy notice they receive when they join their club.

Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information to any person who can be judged to have a legitimate interest relating to clubs within the confines of the General Data Protection Regulation, when relevant to the following:

- (i) Evaluation of the club members within the sport for competitive selection purpose.

- (ii) Recommendations concerning the club members for professional purposes.
- (iii) Pursuit of disciplinary action involving the club members within the sport.
- (iv) Pursuit of disciplinary action by WSU involving fellow coaches in alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct.

The coach may, from time to time, receive a disclosure from an individual member of a club of a personal nature. In this scenario, the coach must seek express consent and agreement from that individual before divulging any personal or specific information to a third party.

There are rare occasions when confidentiality can be reasonably breached and are only when you genuinely suspect significant harm may come to that or any other individual or that a crime will be or has been committed. Even in these circumstances, the student must be informed that confidentiality will be breached before the breach is made.

As noted above, should coaches have concerns about any club members they should seek advice from the Student Activities Manager, even if this is initially without giving any personal information about the student, on the options available to support and help a student and on a way forward.

1.7. Abuse of Privilege

The sports coach is in a position of privilege in having close contact with club members. Coaches must not exert undue influence over their members and athletes in order to gain personal benefit or reward. Coaches may occasionally travel or reside with club members in the course of coaching or competitive practice and they must never abuse such situations for any personal gain.

1.8. Personal Standards

Coaches and personnel working with members of WSU clubs must consistently display high standards of appearance, good time-keeping, and project a favourable image of their sport, of WSU, and of coaching.

Non-attendance at a training session or fixture should be discussed with the club committee or captain at the earliest convenience and appropriate provisions put in place to cover, as required.

1.9. Safety and Risk Assessments

Coaches must place the well-being and safety of players above the development of performance. All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe working environment. Coaches must check that equipment and conditions are in accordance with usage guidelines and should pre-plan sessions; ensuring that the activities are in line with regular and approved practice within that sport and are appropriate for the experience and ability of the club members.

Coaches should familiarise themselves with the Accidents and Injuries Guidelines and follow these procedures in the event of an accident or injury.

https://www.worcsu.com/sports_activities/hub/healthandsafety/

Club members should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety. Sports coaches will follow the advice and guidance provided by either University of Worcester or external, technical experts; especially in the case of those sports that WSU have identified as high-risk. Coaches will act as competent persons in respect of advising clubs on their annual assessment of risk and ensure that adequate hazard control is included in these assessments. Guidance should be taken from the National Governing Body Code of Practice (where applicable).

The coach is not to do anything that a student can do themselves. Physical contact is only to be used between a coach and a student when permitted and only in line with the nature of the sport.

1.10. Travel for Competition

Coaches are permitted to travel via Students' Union prebooked transport with Astons coaches with the club team for competition. The coach's name, however, must be clearly included on the Team Sheet returned to the Student Sport Administrator to ensure coach sizes are appropriate and to know who is travelling on the coach. Alternatively, coaches will make their own arrangements for travel to fixtures.

If competition requires overnight accommodation this will be booked by WSU. Coaches will normally pay for their own accommodation and will be given instructions by the SU on how to do this. If there is an agreement that the club will pay accommodation and / travel costs for any coach, the SU must be notified in advance of any booking taking place.

If WSU has any concerns regarding a proposed arrangement to pay such costs from the club funds, including affordability or appropriateness of cost, they will discuss these with the club committee. WSU reserves the right not to approve the club paying for such costs associated with coaches attending events.

2. Competence and self-awareness/reflection

Sports coaches have a responsibility to themselves and club members to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities, and to know when their personal resources are depleted as to make it necessary for them to seek help and/or to withdraw from coaching, whether temporarily or permanently.

Sports coaches should welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues and be able to account to the club, the SU, Sport, Governing Bodies and colleagues for their actions.

2.1. Issues of Competence

In the event of a club being dissatisfied with the performance or conduct of a Coach, the matter should be raised by the relevant personnel within WSU with the coach concerned. If the dissatisfaction continues WSU reserves the right to terminate the agreement with the coach.

In the event of the coach being dissatisfied with the performance or conduct of the sports club, the matter should be raised by the coach with the relevant sports personnel within WSU.

If there is a persistent breach of any part of this individual agreement, WSU will notify the coach in writing. The parties will then attempt to resolve the issue to their mutual satisfaction. If the issue cannot be resolved, WSU may terminate the agreement of the coach, giving one month's notice, except in the event of gross misconduct and/or incompetence on the part of the coach, in which case WSU may terminate this agreement immediately. The sports club will hold no liability in this matter.

3. Termination

Either party (the Students' Union or the coach) may terminate the coaching arrangements as follows;

- a. Immediately upon a breach of the signed code of conducts.
- b. A months' notice in writing by either party outlining the reasons why.

End.