

Schedule 5. Students' Association Code of Conduct

The Code defines the standards of conduct required of representatives of CitySA – i.e., student volunteers, trustees, executive officers, non-executive officers, etc. It is expected that all representatives of CitySA adhere to the Code of Conduct, both online and offline, to always ensure mutual respect and safety whilst acting within their role on behalf of CitySA or attending Union events, activities, or premises.

Why do we have a code of conduct?

Within the College and, in some cases, out with the College representatives may meet difficult situations in the course of their duties and this Code is designed to enable them to know what is expected of representatives. Understanding these expectations will support representatives in their role(s).

It is a representatives' responsibility to make themselves aware of the standards set out in this Code and to always apply these standards. Whenever there is any doubt, they should seek advice from the Students' Association Coordinator.

What is the Code of Conduct based on?

The following values are identified in our Strategic Plan 2023-2028 as the core values of the Students' Association. The conduct of paid and voluntary representatives of the Students' Association is central to the success and reputation of the SA. It is therefore important that representatives follow these values.

- Influence
- Sustainability
- Impact
- Inclusion
- Student-led

What does the Students' Association expect of representatives?

In carrying out the work of the Association, you must always:

- Behave in a proper and responsible manner, including the respect of individuals privacy, space, and possessions.
- Be aware of, abide by and champion equal opportunities for all.
- Be an ambassador for the SA when acting in an official capacity and always portray a positive image of the services and activities on offer when acting in that role.
- Carry out lawful and reasonable instructions, and observe any operational regulations, standing orders or established procedures of the Association.
- Be courteous, respectful and helpful to students and employees of the College, clients and members of the public.
- Ensure that all College resources and materials are used efficiently and only used for college purposes unless specifically agreed otherwise.
- Maintain professional standards, at whatever level, of conduct and behaviour reasonably expected of those in an influencing or leadership position.
- Ensure personal or professional differences are dealt with in an appropriate manner that considers the impact of others in the area.

In carrying out work of the Association you must refrain from:

- Rudeness, insubordination, offensive or abusive conduct, or conduct likely to cause distress or be perceived as disrespectful, harassment or bullying of colleagues or peers.
- Being under the influence of drink or drugs during college hours so that performance is detrimentally affected.
- Committing criminal activity, whether during or outside working hours, which could endanger anyone's safety or diminish the College's confidence in your suitability.

These rules supplement and do not replace the disciplinary rules set out in the College's Disciplinary Procedures.

How do I use my official position responsibly?

The role of a student representative is a privilege and a responsibility, and we expect our representatives to use their positions fairly to promote positive change for students.

During your role you must not:

- Abuse your authority in relation to a colleague, student or member of the public.
- Breach the College's financial regulations and financial procedures including those in relation to petty cash, collection and handling of monies, keeping of accounts and authorisation of expenditure.
- Accept gifts, gratuities or hospitality from individuals or groups who have or may seek to have dealings with the College or its Students' Association. Where you feel that you cannot refuse a gift and/or it is minor in nature (less than £20), you should report the gift to the Students' Association Coordinator for further guidance.
- As extension of the above point, no representatives should offer gifts, gratuities or hospitality in way that could be seen to influence dealings with the college or its Student's Association.
- Place yourself under a financial or monetary obligation to any person where this might affect, or be thought to affect, the proper performance of one's duties.
- Breach the College's rules covering relationships between staff and students as set out in the Code of Practice covering such relationships.
- Have any type of inappropriate relationship with a student under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult (even if the relationship is mutual).

What happens if a representative breaches the code?

This will depend on the nature of the representative role and the severity of the breach. In all instances though an investigation will be completed by the Students' Association Coordinator to better understand the challenge and agree an appropriate action.

Outcomes may be subject to disciplinary action in line with the relevant College Code of Conduct(s). Some misconduct will be treated as gross misconduct and in such cases dismissal/expulsion is the normal form of disciplinary sanction. Other actions not listed may be misconduct and result in disciplinary action being taken.

Ignorance of this Code will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance.

As part of the investigation process there is an opportunity for individuals to make an appeal on the action taken.

How can someone report a breach of the code?

Individuals have options on how they can report a breach of the code:

- Email their complaint to citysa@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk
- Contact the Students' Association Coordinator directly
- Email the college complaints team at complaint@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk
- Use the college Report and Support service (if the Students' Association is named as part of the report the college will investigate).

Can I communicate with the media/press whilst in post?

The consent of the College (through the Principal or nominated deputy) is required before speaking to the media about any aspect of the Student Association's affairs. If you wish to write an article or seek publication of an article in the media on any aspect of the College's affairs you must obtain permission in advance.

If you are contacted by the media, you should refer the matter to the Students' Association Coordinator who will discuss with you and decide on the appropriate response which may or may not include your involvement.

As an individual, you are entitled to express your views provided you do not make use of any private information gained through your role with the College. You should not criticise the College either through the media or at a public meeting, or in any written communication with members of the public. This does not stop you from challenging and questioning the decisions of the college in these spaces in a productive and solutions focused way, providing it is the position of the SA to do so.

Am I still allowed to challenge ideas and decisions?

You remain free to question and test the views of others and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions on matters connected with the Students' Association. This Code is not intended to impinge on that freedom, but rather to ensure that it is reasonably exercised in a manner not detrimental to the College, its clients, its staff or its students.

How do I declare a conflict of interest?

If you (either directly or through a family member including family links through a partner) become aware of a potential conflict of interest between your role within the Students' Association and any dealings you may have with students, staff, clients, suppliers of goods or services, contractors, etc., you must declare the fact to the Students' Association Coordinator in the first instance.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether a declaration needs to be made, err on the side of caution and refer the matter to Head of Student Information & Funding.

Decisions about how to handle an actual or potential conflict of interest will be made by an appropriate member of the College's Senior Management Team.

How does this relate to College Codes of Conduct?

Representatives of CitySA are by nature already members of the College and therefore should already adhere to relevant College Codes of Conduct (eg staff and student versions). Copies of these will be found on the relevant college intranet portal. For ease the College Values are noted below:

- The individual
- Equality, diversity and inclusiveness
- Integrity, honesty and transparency
- Excellence and achievement
- Partnership
- Innovation and enterprise