

Code of Conduct

1. THE EXPECTATIONS OF OUR MEMBERS

- 1.1. The association expects a certain behaviour and attitude from all of its members, which exceeds basic respect.
- 1.2. The association and its members are expected to create an open environment where everybody feels free to share their opinions and point of view.
- 1.3. The association and its members are expected to communicate in a respectful manner, both in person and online. This respectful communication is qualified in both tone of voice, use of words and style.
- 1.4. The association and its members are expected to be involved with one another.
- 1.5. The association and its members are expected to handle university and association owned property with care.

2. DISCRIMINATION

- 2.1. Any discrimination, as defined in the following, against members of the association is regarded as unacceptable behaviour.
- 2.2. Discrimination within or outside the association happens when students are treated differently or poorly based on, including but not limited to: their origin, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, age, disability or chronic condition, political affinity, employment status, marital status, nationality, religion or philosophy of life.
- 2.3. Any member that is discriminated against, or knows that another member has expressed discriminatory behaviour that has caused harm, or has been discriminated against, has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons, and/or schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.
- 2.4. Discrimination can, depending on the severity, be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or expulsion from the association. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 2.5. Discrimination by a Board member results in a (written) reprimand first, and in the case of repeated offense, can result in the firing of the Board member and appropriate punishment.

3. BULLYING

- 3.1. Any bullying, as defined in the following, against members of the association, is regarded as unacceptable behaviour.
- 3.2. Bullying is unwanted, recurring aggressiveness or behaviour aimed at, or resulting in, victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening an individual or group of individuals; that causes psychological and/or physical harm. Bullying often involves a misuse or abuse of power/authority (whether real or perceived), where the target(s) can experience difficulties in defending themselves.
- 3.3. Different types of bullying:
 - 3.3.1. Physical: using physical force or aggression against another person (e.g. shoving, hitting, invasion of personal space);
 - 3.3.2. Verbal: using words to verbally attack someone (e.g. name calling, teasing, insulting or offensive remarks, shouting, yelling, angry outbursts);
 - 3.3.3. Social/relational: trying to hurt someone through excluding them, spreading rumours or ignoring them (e.g. gossiping, playing harsh jokes);
 - 3.3.4. Cyberbullying: using electronic media to threaten, embarrass, intimidate, or exclude someone, or to damage their reputation (e.g. sending threatening text messages, publishing demeaning posts/photos of/about an individual);
 - 3.3.5. Bullying in a professional setting: isolating and undermining one's position/authority or purposefully making one's performance of work difficult or unbearable (e.g. going around fellow students to avoid communicating with an individual; purposefully giving unmanageable workloads and impossible deadlines; arbitrarily changing tasks; using threats, intimidation and pressure to influence the way an individual performs their job).
- 3.4. Any member that has experienced bullying, or knows another member that has experienced bullying, or knows that another member has committed bullying, has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons, and/or schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.
- 3.5. Bullying can, depending on the severity, be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or a cancellation of the membership. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 3.6. Bullying by a Board member results in a (written) reprimand first, and in the case of repeated offense, can result in the firing of the Board member and appropriate punishment.

4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

- 4.1. Any act of sexual harassment, as defined in the following, against members of the association, other students or staff-members of the VU is regarded as unacceptable behaviour.
- 4.2. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual comments, gestures and acts that are of a sexual nature and that the affected considers an unwanted experience. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:
 - 4.2.1. Unwelcome sexual advances;
 - 4.2.2. Unwelcome requests for sexual favours;
 - 4.2.3. Unwelcome efforts or pressure to develop a romantic or sexual relationship whether with oneself or third parties;
 - 4.2.4. Unwelcome commentary about an individual's body or sexual activities;
 - 4.2.5. Threatening to engage in the commission of an unwelcome sexual act with another person;
 - 4.2.6. Invasion of personal privacy;
 - 4.2.7. Unwelcome physical closeness or touching;
 - 4.2.8. Unwelcome jokes or teasing of a sexual nature or based upon gender, perceived gender, or sex stereotypes;
 - 4.2.9. Other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature.
- 4.3. Sexual violence is defined as any behaviour or act of a sexual nature, or perceived to be of a sexual nature, which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding of all persons involved. Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to:
 - 4.3.1. Rape;
 - 4.3.2. Sexual assault;
 - 4.3.3. Sexual activity without consent.
- 4.4. Any member that has experienced sexual harassment and/or violence, or knows another member that has been affected by sexual harassment and/or violence, or knows that another member has committed sexual harassment and/or violence, has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons, and/or schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.
- 4.5. Sexual harassment can, depending on the severity, be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or expulsion from the association. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 4.6. Sexual violence will be punished with cancellation of the membership.
- 4.7. Sexual harassment by a Board member results in a (written) reprimand first, and in the case of repeated offense, will result in the firing of the Board member and appropriate punishment.
- 4.8. Sexual violence by a Board member results in the firing of the Board member and expulsion from the study association.

5. AGGRESSION AND ABUSE

- 5.1. Any act of aggression and abuse, as defined in the following, against members of the association or other students or staff-members of VU is forbidden.
- 5.2. Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. Abuse can include, but is not limited to:
 - 5.2.1. Verbal aggression: e.g. swearing, shouting or using aggressive language;
 - 5.2.2. Physical aggression: e.g. kicking, pushing, hitting, spitting, biting, vandalism;
 - 5.2.3. Psychological aggression: e.g. verbal or written threats, intimidation, blackmail, humiliation.
- 5.3. Any member that has experienced aggression and/or abuse, or knows that another member has committed aggression and/or abuse or has experienced aggression and/or abuse, has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons, and schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.
- 5.4. Aggression and abuse can, depending on the severity, be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or expulsion from the association. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 5.5. Aggression and abuse by a Board member results in a (written) reprimand first, and in the case of repeated offense, can result in the firing of the Board member and appropriate punishment.

6. ALARMING BEHAVIOUR

- 6.1. In the case of alarming behaviour, as defined in the following, the association is allowed to take measures accordingly.
- 6.2. Alarming behaviour is defined as a range of behaviour which might not violate the Code of Conduct, but is perceived by other members as actionable. Alarming behaviour can be, but is not limited to, behaviour that is harmful to the member that exhibits the behaviour, other members, or the association itself, and warrants concern for their safety or wellbeing.
- 6.3. Any member that notices alarming behaviour has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons and/or schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.
- 6.4. Upon being notified of or noticing alarming behaviour, the Safe Persons will invite the member(s) in question in for a talk. The purpose of this talk is to prevent a future violation of the Code of Conduct or other harm through mediation and de-escalation.

7. DRUG ABUSE AND POSSESSION OF DRUGS

- 7.1. Any drug abuse or possession of drugs at the VU, as defined in the following, is regarded as unacceptable behaviour.
- 7.2. Drug abuse is defined as use of both legal and illegal drugs, including alcohol, which could create harmful consequences for the person concerned or their environment, an unsafe setting or disturbance of good order. In accordance with the VU policy on drugs, possession of any drugs is prohibited. Selling or buying drugs at the VU also falls under this.
- 7.3. Any member that notices drug abuse or possession of drugs has the right to file a formal complaint with the Safe Persons or inform the Board.
- 7.4. In the case of possession of drugs, depending on the severity and frequency of violation, the member can be punished with a (written) reprimand or a suspension.
- 7.5. In the case of drug abuse outside the VU, the Safe Persons can invite the member in for a talk.
- 7.6. Drug abuse at the VU can, depending on the severity be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or expulsion from the association. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 7.7. In the case of drug abuse by a Board member, the Board member can be fired consequently from their position, and, depending on the severity, can be punished with an additional suspension or cancellation of the membership, especially if the drug abuse happened while performing or carrying out their Board-related duties.

8. FRAUD AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 8.1. Any fraud or violation of property rights of Icarus, as defined in the following, is regarded as unacceptable behaviour.
- 8.2. Fraud is defined as: the intentional misrepresentation of material facts, either in spoken word or written, with the goal to obtain economical advantage, which hurts the association, and which is unlawful.
- 8.3. Violation of property rights is defined as:
 - 8.3.1. Stealing of any property that belongs to the association;
 - 8.3.2. Damaging of any property that belongs to the association;
 - 8.3.3. Refusal of or neglect in the payment of invoices;
 - 8.3.4. Any other behaviour that hurts the association's property or economic rights and is unlawful.
- 8.4. Any member that knows that another member has committed fraud or has behaved in violation of the association's property rights, has the right to make a formal complaint with the Safe Persons and/or schedule an appointment with the Safe Persons.

- 8.5. Fraud can be punished with, depending on the severity, suspension or cancellation of the membership, and an additional fine that covers the damages, can be issued.
- 8.6. Violation of property rights can, depending on the severity, be punished with a (written) reprimand, a suspension, or a cancellation of the membership, and an additional fine, that covers the damages, can be issued.
- 8.7. In the case of refusal or neglect in the payment of invoices, an interest rate of 10% can apply for every month, starting three months from the issuing of the invoice. The interest rate will be in place until the debt is paid or the invoice amount is doubled.
- 8.8. The maximum amount that the Board can collect from a member is either EUR250 or the invoiced amount doubled through interest rates.
- 8.9. In the case of financial issues that result in an inability to pay the bill, the member in question can approach the Board to discuss their options, which includes the possibility of arranging a payment plan.
- 8.10. In the case of ex-members, the bill will still be issued, and in the case of refusal and neglect of payment, clause 8.7-8.9 will apply and legal action can be taken.
- 8.11. Fraud by a Board member will result in firing of the Board member, and additionally, will be handled in the same way as a regular member.
- 8.12. Violation of property rights by a Board member, can, depending on the severity, be punished with suspension or firing of the Board member, and additionally, will be handled in the same way as a regular member.

9. OTHER BEHAVIOUR THAT HURTS THE ASSOCIATION

- 9.1. In the case where a member exhibits other behaviour that hurts the association, as defined in the following, the Board and Safe Persons can take necessary measures, which can include reprimands outlined in point 12.
- 9.2. Other behaviour that hurts the association is that which is not defined or does not fall under a section of this Code of Conduct, but still poses a threat to the reputation, safety or health of the association or its members.

10. CHILD PROTECTION

- 10.1. A child is an individual under the age of 18 and an adult is an individual over the age of 18, regardless of their role in the association.
- 10.2. All members of Icarus, especially elected representatives, should recognise their role in ensuring the welfare of children, as well as their responsibility if they suspect a case of child abuse.
- 10.3. Icarus respects national law which limits the use of alcohol and tobacco to persons 18 and older. Accordingly, alcohol sale and consumption at Icarus are prohibited to children.
- 10.4. Parental consent is required for the child's participation in Icarus external events, as well as any charges that might occur.

- 10.5. Adults, regardless of their role in the association, must avoid placing themselves in compromising or vulnerable positions when meeting with children. Furthermore, adults must report the circumstance of any situation which might be subject to misinterpretation to the Safe Person as soon as possible.

11. SAFE PERSONS

- 11.1. A Safe Person is an elected member of the study association who is available for questions, concerns, and reports of harmful behaviour from members of the study association, supports the Board in matters of safety and welfare measures, and provides support in onboarding of the Safe Persons in the coming academic term.
- 11.2. The procedure of the Complaint System in use by the Safe Persons is outlined in Appendix I.
- 11.3. The Safe Person position is independent from the Board as to ensure impartiality and signal neutrality to members who wish to get in touch.
- 11.4. Responsibilities of the Safe Persons include, but are not limited to:
 - 11.4.1. Acting as an information and resource point of the study association, to which both members and the Board can turn to with questions on the existing Icarus welfare and safety system;
 - 11.4.2. Being approached by members of the study association about incidents or harmful behaviour (bullying, harassment, abuse, violence) they experienced or witnessed either in Icarus or a wider university context;
 - 11.4.3. Assisting the Board in implementing welfare and safety policies (Code of Conduct, further welfare and safety documents);
 - 11.4.4. Remaining in contact with large-scale university welfare mechanisms;
 - 11.4.5. Organising events and trainings aimed at improving welfare knowledge in the study association;
 - 11.4.6. Helping onboard Safe Persons in the coming academic year;
- 11.5. Safe Persons are selected for a one year mandate with the possibility of being elected for multiple terms.
- 11.6. When electing a Safe Person, the following criteria should be considered:
 - 11.6.1. High level of empathy and sensitivity;
 - 11.6.2. Experience in dealing with intense, stressful or challenging situations;
 - 11.6.3. Good track record of professionalism and respect for policies active inside Icarus and the VU.
- 11.7. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, a Safe Person cannot be an active member of the Board or any internal structure in Icarus. Ideally, a Safe Person is an older Icarus member who does not have close ties to the individuals on the Board.

12. PUNISHMENT AND REPRIMAND PROCESS

- 12.1. The Board should contact the Safe Persons when a breach in the Code of Conduct has taken place.
- 12.2. If the Board is approached concerning a breach of the Code of Conduct, it will refer the individual to the Safe Persons. The Board can be directly involved with the procedure if necessary; depending on the wishes of the victim and on the severity of the case.
- 12.3. The Safe Persons will collaborate with the Board to select the appropriate punishment, as outlined in the procedure to be found in Appendix 1. The Board's authority on the decision is final. Individuals involved in the case can appeal by going to the higher authorities of the VU and/or initiating a procedure to add an agenda point at an ALV meeting.
- 12.4. The Board has the full responsibility to enact punishments against breaches in the Code of Conduct.
- 12.5. Breaches in the Code of Conduct can be punished with a (written) reprimand, temporary suspension, or a cancellation of the membership. Suspension and expulsion of members will be used as punishment in case of repeated offense or especially abhorrent violations against the Code of Conduct.
- 12.6. The Board has the authority to use suspension and expulsion of a member as a punishment depending on the severity of the case. In case of fraud or property damage the Board has the authority to levy fines appropriate to the damages.

13. THE APPLICABILITY OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- 13.1. The Code of Conduct applies to all members of Icarus. Agreeing to become a member of Icarus automatically means agreeing to the contents of the Code of Conduct.
- 13.2. The Code of Conduct applies to everyone present in the social room, or at any event that is organized by Icarus. Acting in violation with the Code of Conduct can result in a (temporary) ban from the social room and/or attendance at Icarus events, and refusal of membership.
- 13.3. The Code of Conduct applies to non-members who are actively engaged with the association on a regular basis; e.g. being present at the social room, attending Icarus events. Acting in violation with the Code of Conduct can result in (temporarily) banning them from the social room and/or attendance at Icarus events, refusal of membership, and other punishments that may be applicable, such as a written reprimand or a fine.

Appendix 1

Study association Icarus is committed to being a safe and welcoming space that allows every member to thrive. This Complaint System complements the Code of Conduct and other welfare policies already in place, elaborating upon the way in which reporting and complaints are handled by the Safe Persons and the Board.

Key terms:

- **Reporting:** bringing one's experience (witnessed or experienced directly) to the attention of the Safe Persons in an informal manner. Reporting can be done to seek intervention of the Safe Person or the Board on behalf of the victim to have the harmful behaviour discontinue. It can also serve to ask about a possible course of action, possible applicable sanctions or to ensure the Safe Persons are aware of potential need for action. Reporting does not oblige the victim to submit a formal complaint.
- **Filing a complaint:** process of submitting a formal complaint which can result in sanctions for the perpetrator within the study association context. Only a person experiencing harmful behaviour can file a complaint.

Overview of the process

1. Reporting

There are several ways in which an individual who has experienced harmful behaviour can report, depending on what they feel most comfortable with:

- Approach one of the acting Safe Persons of the study association;
- Reach out to a Board member who can organise a meeting with a Safe Person;
- Send a confidential email to safe.vu.icarus@gmail.com;
- Fill in a [confidential report](#) form by the Safe Persons.

When reporting, individuals are free to share as much or as little detail about their experience and people involved as they are comfortable with. After an individual has shared their situation, Safe Persons will explain the possible courses of action, direct them to university resources or national support resources if needed, and if the individual wishes, help them file a complaint which can result in adequate sanctions for the perpetrator.

2. Filing a complaint

The Complaint Process begins when an individual submits a filled in Complaint Form to the Safe Persons. Since the Complaint Form requires a full and detailed account of the situation that took place, it is advised that Safe Persons are consulted as they can provide help in filling in the form. The Complaint Form can be filled in *only* by the victim.

After the Complaint Form is submitted to the Safe Persons, they will evaluate it and form an opinion about the necessary steps. The Safe Persons organise a meeting with the alleged perpetrator in order to form an opinion. With the consent of the victim, the Safe Persons may decide to consult third parties as well. The Safe Persons will remain in contact with the victim throughout the process. After an opinion has been formed, the Safe Persons anonymise the Form and submit it to the Board for review. The Board then consults with the

Safe Persons about the proposal for possible repercussions; the final verdict is made by the Board only.