

Covid-19 and student conduct

The University takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all its students, staff and visitors seriously. In light of Covid19, we are expecting all members of the University community to follow social distancing and safety recommendations and Government legal requirements.

We recognise that it is not part of normal University life to be socially distant from each other, but everyone should do this to ensure the health and safety of not just our University community but also our wider community.

The Student Code of Conduct¹ has been revised for the Academic Year 20/21, and this addendum reflects the University's approach in light of Covid-19. It provides information on how the University may respond when a student does not follow the University's local social distancing and Covid safety recommendations or Government legal requirements.

We expect students will respect and follow what is being asked of them and any instances where this is not happening is likely to be an oversight on an individual's behalf. In most instances, a simple reminder of expectations should be all that is necessary.

However, a breach of the Code of Conduct could result where a student (not an exhaustive list):

- is verbally aggressive or abusive when they are reminded about what is expected
- refuses to follow Government legal requirements
- intentionally gathers in large groups against guidance
- deliberately arranges a large social gathering against guidance
- undermines University social distancing and safety guidelines on social media.

Then the matter will be dealt with formally as a matter of misconduct as per section 18 of the Student Code of Conduct.

Your role in making this a safe and healthy university community

As a university community we are not expected to 'police' this, but we are expecting our staff and students to be responsible for their own wellbeing, as well as others within our University community. If you witness any instances of expectations not being met, you should respectfully remind the relevant individual of social distancing and safety recommendations and/or Government legal requirements.

If you feel that the request is not being acted on then you can choose to report the incident via the University's 'Speak Up' online reporting tool², providing the name of the student you wish to report.

The formal conduct process

More formal action under Section 18 of the Code of Conduct may be required where a student:

- is verbally aggressive or abusive when they are reminded about what is expected
- refuses to follow Government legal requirements
- undermines University social distancing guidelines on social media
- deliberately arranges a large social gathering against guidance
- or any other instance that could be classed as misconduct in relation to Covid-19.

Acts such these could be classified as acts of misconduct under section 16, namely:

¹ <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/student-conduct>

² <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/student-services/speak-up>

- a) Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or language; through any medium, including group chat and social media
- e) Failure to respond to requests to moderate behaviour
- f) Disruption of, or improper interference with, the academic, administrative, sporting, social or other activities of the University
- h) Action likely to cause injury or impair safety on University premises (including University managed halls of residence)
- k) Behaviour which brings the University into disrepute
- l) Antisocial or disorderly conduct which causes distress to others; regardless of where this takes place
- m) Failure to comply with a previously imposed penalty or precautionary action(s)
- n) A breach of any University code, rule or regulation that may be considered as misconduct
- p) Actions that might be treated as a criminal offence
- q) Any other action that could reasonably be classed as misconduct.

If an allegation of misconduct is upheld under the University's code of then this could resort in one or more of the following penalties being imposed:

- A written warning
- A fine of £50 (to be authorised by the Student Conduct Office)
- Suspension of study
- Withdrawal of credits (maximum 50 credits)
- Exclusion from study
- Permanent expulsion
- Any other proportionate penalty for a major offence.

Who to contact

Please contact the Student Conduct Office for any enquiries relating Covid-19 misconduct or any other conduct matters studentconduct@plymouth.ac.uk