

Student Union

SAFER SPACES STATEMENT

The Safer Spaces Statement has been written to take a positive, proactive, preventative step towards stopping sexual assault, sexual harassment and violence in all its forms. The SU is committed to creating a space that reflects the ideals of autonomous spaces that are supportive, respectful and free of harassment. As people who try to bring about change in the world, we recognize that our own personal behaviour needs to reflect this change.

The Student Union fights barriers to education, empowers students to shape both a quality learning experience and the world around them. We want all people accessing the Student Union to feel comfortable and free from the threat of violence, so we must work to make each other comfortable. That means having awareness around our individual actions and words, realising the impact we can have on others and having ownership over these actions.

Everyone accessing, working or dropping in to the SU is asked to take responsibility for their behaviour at all times, and also to help make the space a comfortable, safe(r) space for everyone attending.

PLEASE HAVE A READ THROUGH THESE POINTS AND CONSIDER THEM IN RELATION TO YOURSELF:

*Don't presume you know someone's gender, ethnicity, sexuality, beliefs etc.

*You need to take responsibility for any negative attitudes/phobias/etc that you might have eg.

sexism, racism, age-ism, able-ism, homophobia, fat-phobia, queer-phobia, transgender-phobia etc. You need to understand that if you display these prejudices at the SU, it will not be tolerated.

*You may have specific contexts in which you use derogatory/disrespectful language where you consider it to be ok. This context is not the SU. You don't know who will hear you, and what reaction they will have, and you will be expected to bear full responsibility for it.

*Pay attention to people's body language. Look for things like: someone constantly turning away from you; avoiding eye contact; making excuses as to why they need to be away from you; not responding to your physical advances. Any of these can be possible signs that someone is telling you to back off/leave them alone – so pay attention and use good judgement and if in doubt ASK.

*Pay attention to boundaries. Different people have different boundaries when it comes to personal space and physical contact. Most of us want different things at different times, or different things from different people. Please do not make assumptions about other people's comfort or desires. Get verbal consent before touching people in a way that may be considered intimate

*Violence is not tolerated at the SU - sexual assault, sexual harassment, threats, harassment, physical violence, bullying etc. Anyone engaging in this behaviour can be thrown out of the SU. Security may be called.

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE

If you experience any behaviour that crosses your boundaries or makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you have a problem/issue with someone else, or if you feel unsafe - please come to the Office Manager (Tre Whan) in room 2 of the SU. Tre can talk with you about what you want to do and give you assistance, help you sort things out, act on your behalf etc.

WORKING PREVENTATIVELY

We want to work preventatively in terms of "safer spaces" – by having a "safer spaces statement".

We want everyone who uses the SU to be aware of the Safer Spaces Statement - information will be on the website, on SU flyers, and hopefully it will come up in discussions. We hope that the very existence of this information will work preventatively and help create a positive environment.

When writing "safer spaces guidelines", it is often difficult to be exact and explicit about what IS or IS NOT ACCEPTABLE behaviour. If you require further information/clarification, again, please feel free to open a discussion within the SU.