

UCD Athletic Union Council
Code of Ethics & Conduct
for Sports Coaches

UCD Athletic Union Council

Code of Ethics & Conduct for Sports Coaches

University College Dublin Athletic Union Council (AUC) is committed to the promotion of an environment for participation, play and performance which upholds the dignity and respect of the individual and which supports every individual's right to participate, play and perform in an environment which is free from any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying, and where improvements in performance are facilitated through a programme of safe, guided practice and measured performance & / or competition.

The AUC recognises that the role of the coach within sport is a very important one. Sports coaches are expected to conform to ethical standards in a number of areas: respect and dignity, relationships, commitment, co-operation, integrity, advertising, confidentiality, abuse of privilege, safety and competence. To be part of the coaching team in UCD it is a requirement that all potential coaches agree to this Code of Ethics and Conduct by signing the attached form and returning it to the UCD Sports Office. All coaches will also be required to read and implement the "Keeping Children Safe Policy for UCD Sport" a copy of which is available from www.ucd.ie/sport/clubs/clubforms and to hold a valid Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1 certificate.

Furthermore, all coaches shall be subject to Garda Vetting and will be required to complete a Garda Vetting form and return it to the UCD Sports Office. Coaches will then be required to successfully complete the on-line vetting process.

The aforementioned must all be complete before commencing work with a UCD club. A full review of coaching records for each club will be conducted by the AUC in early October each year, any club coach who is found not to be compliant with the above requirements, will be notified by the AUC that they are not permitted to coach from that date until all matters are remedied.

For the purposes of this code, the coach is defined as any person who is responsible for the development of an individual or group of individuals within a specific sport and who has been formally appointed by the Executive Committee of the relevant Sports Club or an authorized representative of that Sports Club. As well as the sporting development, the coach is also tasked with the all-round development of the player / participant, or group of players / participants, within the sporting context.

Consequently, in addition to the respective National Governing Body's Code of Conduct, a coach must meet the following requirements in regard to their conduct during any activity held or sanctioned by an affiliated AUC Club and in their role as a coach appointed by that club. Failure to meet the requirement of this code may result in termination of a coach's role with an affiliated AUC Club. In the first instance this termination will usually be by the affiliated club. However, a coach's role with an affiliated club may be terminated by the AUC, where it believes the requirements of the Code are not being fulfilled by the coach. Where the coaching appointment is terminated by the club, the coach can appeal this decision to the AUC. Where the termination is by the AUC, the coach can appeal this decision to the Chair of the Student Activities committee.

Dignity and Respect

- Coaches must respect the rights, dignity and worth of each person in their right to self-determination. Specifically, coaches must ensure to treat everyone equitably and sensitively within the context of their activity and ability, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs or socio-economic status.
- Coaches should encourage players / participants to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth regardless of their level of play.
- Coaches should encourage players / participants to respect their opponents and their spectators.
- Coaches must ensure their actions, words or gestures do not breach the protected areas covered under Employment Equality Act 1998-2015 and/or Equal Status Act 2000-2018 (as amended or replaced)¹.
- Anyone working with any member of the UCD community will also need to be cognisant of UCD's Dignity and Respect Policy which is available from: www.ucd.ie/equality/policies/Dignity and Respect

¹ Protected areas covered under the Equality Acts are: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller Community.

Relationships and Boundaries

- Coaches must be concerned primarily with the well-being, safety, protection and future of the individual player / participant. There must be a balance between the development of performance and the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the individual.
- Encourage and facilitate players / participants independence and responsibility for their own behaviour, performance, decisions and actions.
- Involve players / participants in all decisions that affect them.
- Do not tolerate acts of aggression.
- Provide feedback to players / participants in a manner sensitive to their needs. Avoid overly negative feedback.
- Ensure any physical contact with players / participants is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the players / participants skill development. Ensure that no action could be misconstrued and that any National Governing Body guidelines on this matter are followed.
- Players/ participants should be made aware of the coach's qualifications and experience and must be given the opportunity to consent to or decline proposals for training, performance or competition.
- Avoid situations with your players / participants that could be construed as compromising.
- Be conscious of the fact that as the coach of a UCD club, you are representing the respective UCD club, the UCD Athletic Union Council and the University at all times. Language, gestures and interactions that occur before, during and after a sporting event will not only have an impact on the player / participant but also on spectators and those attending the event. Negative displays will not only undermine the individual it can also have a negative affect on the reputation of UCD. Consequently, coaches must consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

Commitment

- Coaches should clarify in advance with the UCD club the number of sessions, fees (if any) and method of payment. They should explore with the players / participants and the Club the expectation of the outcome of coaching. The AUC requires that all coaches sign a written contract, whether paid or not for their service.
- Declare to the players / participants and / or club any other coaching commitments. They should also find out if any prospective player / participant is receiving instruction from another coach. If so the, the coach should be contacted to discuss the situation.
- Coaches who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their players / participants and their obligation to other organisations employing them, or availing of their service, must make explicit to all parties the nature of the conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved.

Co-operation

- Recognise players' / participants' rights to consult with other coaches and advisers. Co-operate fully with other specialists for example, sports scientists, doctors and physiotherapists).

Integrity

- Actively discourage the use of performance enhancing drugs, and the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances.
- Do not exploit any coaching relationship to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interest of your players / participants.
- Accept and respect the role of officials in ensuring that competitions are conducted fairly and according to established rules.
- Know and abide by rules, regulations and standards, and encourage players / participants to do likewise. Accept both the letter and spirit of the rules.
- Ensure that activities, training and competition programmes advocated and directed are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual player / participant.
- Be honest and ensure that qualifications are not misrepresented.

Confidentiality

- Coaches and players / participants must reach agreement about what is to be regarded as confidential information's (i.e. not divulged to a third party without the express approval of the player / participant).
- Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information about an athlete to person who can be judged to have a right to know. For example, evaluation for competitive selection purposes, recommendations for employment, legal and medical requirements for disclosure, in pursuit of action to protect children from abuse, in pursuit of disciplinary action by a sports organisation or club against one of its members.
- Coaches have access to, or are required to process, personal data as part of their role as a coach, shall process the personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, UCD's Data Protection Policy and any guidance issued by the Data Protection Commissioner or the UCD Data Protection Officer from time to time.

Abuse of Privilege

- The coach is privileged to have regular contact with athletes and occasionally to travel and reside with players / participants in the course of coaching and competitive practice. A coach must not attempt to exert undue influence over the athlete in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Note: the intention of the coach will not be the determinate as to whether undue influence or pressure has been extended on a player / participant. The impact of the actions of the coach on the player / participant will determine whether the behaviour was acceptable. In situation where teams are travelling it may be a requirement that coaches of both genders travel with the team.
- Coaches must display high personal standards and project a favourable image of their sport and of coaching to players / participants, their parents / families, other coaches, officials, spectators, the media and the public.
- Coaches should never smoke while coaching.
- Coaches should not drink alcohol before coaching if it could affect their competence to coach, compromise the safety of participants / players or obviously indicate they had been drinking.
- In all situations the relationship of the coach player / participant must be maintained regardless of the environment. Coaches must maintain their professionalism even when attending events associated with the team.
- Coaches will have access to contact information and must only use this to contact the player / participant with information relating to their training and competition needs.

Safety

Within the limits of their control, coaches have a responsibility to ensure as far as possible the safety of the players / participants with whom they work. Coaches should read and adhere to the respective club safety statement.

- All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe working environment.
- The activity undertaken should be suitable for the age, physical and emotional maturity, experience and ability of the performers.
- Coaches have a duty to protect all members from harm and abuse.
- The performers should have been systematically prepared for the activity and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.
- Coaches should arrange adequate insurance to cover all aspects of their coaching practice.
- Coaches should be aware that they are responsible for all players / participants in their care during any club organised event. The coach's responsibility only ends when the full team have returned to the point of departure for team events. In an instance where one of the athletes decides to make alternative arrangements the coach must receive verbal confirmation of same from the athlete.
- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player / participant above everything, including winning.
- Confine practice to those elements of sport in which they have been adequately trained /educated.
- Ensure that all coaching is delivered in accordance with the respective clubs' health & safety statement and the approved practice for that activity as defined by the respective sport's governing body.

Advertising

- Advertising by coaches in respect of qualifications, training and /or services must be accurate and professionally restrained. Coaches must be able to present evidence of current qualifications upon request. Evidence should also be available to support any claim associated with the promotion of their service.
- Coaches must not display any affiliation with an organisation in a manner that falsely implies sponsorship or accreditation by that organisation

Competence

- Coaches shall confine themselves to practice in those elements of sport for which their training and competence is recognised by appropriate governing body. Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through formal coach education courses, independent research and the accumulation of relevant verifiable experience.
- Recognise and accept when to refer players / participants to other coaches or agencies.
- Regularly seek ways of increasing their personal and professional development.
- Welcome evaluation of their work by colleagues and be able to account to players / participants, the club, National Governing Bodies and colleagues for what they do and why.
- Maintain own effectiveness, resilience and abilities. Recognise when their own personal resources are so depleted that help is needed.

Breaches of the Code

- Coaches who fail to abide by the Code of Ethics & Conduct for Sports Coaches may face disciplinary action which will be dealt in accordance with the AUC Disciplinary Procedures. Penalties may include possible suspension or exclusion from the coaching position.
- Ignorance of the content of the UCD Sport, UCD Sport and Fitness and UCD Student Centre Child Safeguarding Statement, the AUC's Code of Ethics and Conduct for Sports Coaches, the AUC's Club Code of Conduct, the UCD AUC Club Operations Manual and the Clubs Constitution will not be considered a reasonable excuse.



Acceptance of the University College Dublin/ UCD Athletic Union Council Code of Conduct for Sports Coaches

I have read the University College Dublin/ UCD Athletic Union Council Coaching Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its contents.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Position: _____

Club: _____ Date Received: _____

This form must be retained by the UCD Sports Office.