

# **OXFORD UNIVERSITY ROWING ASSOCIATION**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Oxford University Rowing Association (OURA) was created to provide an integrated, fair and cooperative operating and funding structure for the benefit of all rowing athletes competing on behalf of the University of Oxford.

This OURA Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the related policies and codes of conduct produced by Oxford University, in particular its Harassment Policy, and also the British Rowing Code of Ethics and Behaviours.

This document applies to student athletes, coaches, OURA staff, club committee members and other people engaged by the clubs for specific roles (e.g. physiotherapists).

In addition to the outlined expectations in this document, all individuals should be knowledgeable of, and abide by the list of Oxford University and British Rowing policies found in **Appendix A**.

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#### **1 EXPECTATIONS**

At all times, Oxford University and the OURA expect excellent behaviour and self-conduct from any athletes, coaches, OURA staff, volunteer club committee members and other people engaged by the clubs, in order to reaffirm Oxford University's commitment to respect the right to dignity and wellbeing of everyone associated with the clubs.

Sports clubs are registered to the University through the Sports Federation and all students who are members of any sporting club are required to adhere to the standards laid out in the Student Competitor's Code of Conduct and the Charter for Action, as incorporated into this document and revised from time to time.

Rowing for Oxford and racing against Cambridge University in the Boat Race is a highly demanding sport that necessitates significant technical skill, physical endurance and mental toughness of each competitor. The training programme requires many hours spent in the gym and rowing on the water to reach the standard necessary to row at this level. Furthermore, Boat Race athletes must be able to manage the pressures of training and competing in the Boat Race whilst also maintaining their studies at Oxford. Rowing at Boat Race level is both highly challenging and highly rewarding.

There is a selection process that takes place in each of the clubs early in the season in order to select a limited number of the best rowers and coxswains in order to focus on preparing those individuals and crews to compete against Cambridge in the Boat Race.

## **1.1 RESPECT**

All athletes, coaches and volunteers are obliged to treat athletes, coaches, officials, supporters and other participants in a respectful way. Athletes, coaches or supporters should not behave in a way that could be deemed offensive to others and should appreciate that different individuals have different levels of tolerance in regard to playful and boisterous behaviour.

- 1.1.1 We believe that sport is about fairness and equality, respect and dignity. Sport teaches individuals how to strive and succeed, how to cope with success and disappointment, and brings people together with a common goal.
- 1.1.2 We are committed to making these values a reality for men and women of different ethnicities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.
- 1.1.3 We will make Boat Race rowing a welcome place for those participating in this high-level sport, and for those attending, working or volunteering at Boat Race rowing events organised by the clubs.

## **1.2 RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS**

All individuals participating in Boat Race rowing have the right:

- 1.2.1 to be treated in accordance with British Rowing Codes, Regulations, Rules and Policies;
- 1.2.2 to enjoy safe participation in rowing without fear or harassment;
- 1.2.3 to be respected and treated as individuals at all times;
- 1.2.4 to receive support for their individual needs relative to training and competing in the Boat Race, but not at the expense of meeting another individual's needs;
- 1.2.5 to be communicated with in a manner which reflects respect;
- 1.2.6 to enjoy an environment free of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity;
- 1.2.7 to challenge discrimination in whatever form it takes;
- 1.2.8 to enjoy an environment free of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and any behaviour that could be construed as abuse;
- 1.2.9 to make a complaint, and to be heard and have their complaint acted upon, in accordance with the OURA Disciplinary Policy.

## **1.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALL CLUB PARTICIPANTS AND COMPETITORS**

All individuals must understand that their own competitive aspirations or those of other members of the rowing community do not ever justify failure to promote and follow Oxford University and British Rowing Codes of Conduct, Regulations, Rules and Policies.

All individuals *should*:

- 1.3.1 adhere to the letter and the spirit of Oxford University, British Rowing Codes, Regulations, Rules and Policies, and those of their own club, an event or relevant organisation;
- 1.3.2 be aware of and follow the policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all individuals in rowing;
- 1.3.3 follow the directions of coaches, umpires and officials of a club, event or relevant organisation;
- 1.3.4 act in a sportsmanlike way during training and competition;
- 1.3.5 not act in any way that would result in an actual or potential conflict of interest.

All individuals *must*:

- 1.3.6 comply with the British Rowing Anti-Doping and Integrity Policies;
- 1.3.7 not allow any form of behaviour that might violate British Rowing Anti-Doping and Integrity Policies to go unchallenged but report such behaviour to the Executive Committee via the OURA

- Disputes or Complaints procedure;
- 1.3.8 not engage in acts of verbal or physical abuse;
- 1.3.9 respect the rights, dignity and worth of other participants, and not discriminate;
- 1.3.10 not allow any form of discrimination or victimisation to go unchallenged but report such behaviour to the Executive Committee via the OURA Disputes or Complaints procedure;
- 1.3.11 not engage in bullying;
- 1.3.12 avoid intimate relationships between club members where one member has a position of authority or influence over another;
- 1.3.13 not carry out any acts for the purpose of cheating or the manipulation of competition.

#### **1.4 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ROWING COACHES AND OTHER STAFF EMPLOYED OR ENGAGED BY OURA**

Anyone with a position of authority should lead by example in the workplace. Everyone should conduct themselves with a high degree of honesty, integrity, and competence.

Coaches, both paid and volunteer, must also be familiar with and abide by the [UK Coaching Code of Practice](#).

Coaches and Volunteers *should*:

- 1.4.1 create an environment of inclusivity, excellence and high performance sport;
- 1.4.2 be aware of the physical and emotional needs of all participants, and ensure that training loads and intensities are appropriate, referring to British Rowing 'How Much and How Often' and 'Rower Development' for [guidance](#);
- 1.4.3 be aware of and follow the policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all participants in rowing;
- 1.4.4 support the well-being of participants in and out of rowing;
- 1.4.5 be appropriately discreet in any conversations about participants, coaches or any other individuals;
- 1.4.6 display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in rowing, accepting responsibility for their actions;
- 1.4.7 make a commitment to providing a high-quality service to participants;
- 1.4.8 maintain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of developments within rowing relevant to their role and have a commitment to ongoing continuing professional development to ensure safe practice;
- 1.4.9 work respectfully with other organisations, ensuring that required levels of communication, collaboration and permissions are observed;
- 1.4.10 within the OURA, promote good practice in others and challenge any poor practice they observe;
- 1.4.11 where appropriate, hold relevant insurance and current British Rowing membership.

Coaches and Volunteers *must*:

- 1.4.12 not behave or conduct themselves in any manner which could bring Oxford University or the sport of Rowing, British Rowing or its affiliated clubs and competitions into disrepute;
- 1.4.13 condemn cheating, manipulation of competition and the use of prohibited substances or methods, and take responsibility for providing guidance and education to participants on these issues;
- 1.4.14 conduct an appropriate risk assessment before undertaking any rowing related activities, ensuring the environment is as safe as possible and referring to British Rowing RowSafe for guidance;
- 1.4.15 take action to report concerns (via the Executive Committee of the appropriate club) they may have about behaviour towards any OURA member at risk in accordance with Oxford University and British Rowing policies and guidelines;
- 1.4.16 observe appropriate personal boundaries and relationships with their participants;

- 1.4.17 not behave in a manner that could be seen as abuse of any kind;
- 1.4.18 comply with the British Rowing Anti-Doping and Integrity Policies;
- 1.4.19 not allow any form of behaviour that might violate the British Rowing Anti-Doping and Integrity Policies to go unchallenged;
- 1.4.20 avoid sexual intimacy with any participants, for the duration of any coaching relationship;
- 1.4.21 not assume responsibility for any role which they are not qualified or prepared for, or mislead others as to the level of their qualification or competence;
- 1.4.22 maintain confidentiality and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, which is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## **2 ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

Bullying is a form of harassment and may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. For example: physical assault, social bullying such as teasing, threatening behaviour, name calling or cyberbullying.

Harassment includes unwanted behaviour or actions by an individual or a group which violate another person's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

For definitions of harassment, victimisation, and bullying, see the University's [guidelines](#).

Bullying or harassment of any kind is not tolerated in the OURA. We take a proactive approach to prevent bullying and harassment of anyone from occurring and will respond to all concerns and disclosures of bullying and/or harassment.

It is important to note that coaches, volunteers and others involved with the clubs can also be victims of bullying both by students and others involved with the clubs. This policy applies equally to them as it does to members of the clubs.

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a rower or club member's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to rowers or club members in the course of their training, will not amount to bullying on their own.

We strongly encourage all club members, employees or any other individuals involved with the club to report incidents of bullying/harassment to the Coach, Senior Member, President or other members of the Executive Committee to enable us to address it.

If the matter is not initially resolved or if you feel that it is inappropriate to report it to any of the club officials (for example, due to severity or imminent danger, or if the person bullying is themselves a club official) you are strongly encouraged to report the incident(s) to any of the following:

Welfare Officer at your college or OU Sports Federation ([sportsfed@sport.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sportsfed@sport.ox.ac.uk), 01865 611491);

Harassment Advisory Service ([harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk)); or

Director of Student Welfare and Support Services ([swss@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:swss@admin.ox.ac.uk)).

In addition to resources inside the University, incidents can also be reported to the Police or discussed with the National Bullying Helpline (<https://www.bullying.co.uk/> or phone 0300 323 0169 or 0845 22 55 787).

If you have experienced a traumatic event or are struggling with mental-health or wellbeing, please see **Appendix A** for further Welfare Resources available within the University.

### **3 FINANCE, DONATIONS AND GIFTS**

Each rowing club within the OURA is funded through a combination of grants, sponsorship income, donations and membership subscriptions. A hardship fund is available on application for any athlete who would otherwise suffer financial difficulties while trialling for one of the rowing clubs. Athletes are also expected to participate in fundraising activities for their club throughout the year.

In the interests of their members, and in order to better achieve their aims, the clubs welcome donations from a wide range of sources; however, each club's representatives must act, and be seen to act, at all times in a manner that is fair, impartial and without favouritism or bias.

The clubs recognise that some donations may be sensitive, whether because of the nature of the source, the conditions attached to the donation, or the possibility of influence—real or perceived—on the activities of the club. In general, such cases should be discussed amongst the Chair, the Senior Member, and the Senior Treasurer of the club in receipt of the donation, who may involve other members of the Executive Committee if they think it appropriate. They may ask the Executive Committee to approve or reject the donation; however, in some cases, for example for reasons of confidentiality, they may approve or reject a donation without wider consultation.

Any member of a club who is approached about a donation should, in any event, refer the matter to the Senior Treasurer and/or to the Chair or Senior Member, and these office holders should engage in appropriate consultation with the University Development Office, particularly in the case of donations from alumni.

Donations may be accepted from current or past triallists or their friends and families; however, in the case of current or recent triallists, the Chair, Senior Member, and Senior Treasurer should approve or reject the donation themselves and it should not be revealed to other members of the club, whether coaching or support staff or other members of the squad. In the event that other people are aware of the donation, the Chair, Senior Member, and Senior Treasurer must decide whether the donation can properly be received without risk of influence or bias.

Gifts and hospitality may only be accepted by a club's representatives when:

- the offer has been made for a proper purpose;
- acceptance is consistent with the purposes of the club;
- there are no 'strings' attached to donations that require anyone in the clubs to meet particular expectations of a donor (e.g. regular visits to a donor or fundraiser's house);
- it is appropriate and its value reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances;
- acceptance accords with all applicable club and University policies and governmental legislation.

Notwithstanding the above, the coaching team may not accept any gift and/or benefit in kind worth more than £50 from any member of a club, supplier or prospective supplier of a club without the prior written consent of the Senior Member (or their delegate on the respective Executive Committee) of the club receiving the donation.

### **4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The use of specified drugs is illegal within the UK. The presence of drugs within the University community is detrimental to the welfare of its members generally and will not be tolerated. The consumption of alcohol, whilst tolerated by the OURA, must be done with a responsible attitude. The consumption of alcohol in excess can lead to anti-social behaviour and in some extreme and well documented cases, death.

There may be no forced consumption of alcohol or any other forced activity, and individuals must always be aware they can opt out at any point. Whilst it is recognised that social functions may form part of a rowing club's activities, there should, under no circumstance, be any pressure placed on students to take part or pass any form of initiation as part of their membership of the club. All students should be able to participate in social activities in an atmosphere free from discrimination or fear.

## **5 ANTI-DOPING POLICY STATEMENT**

Everyone has a duty to protect clean sport. OURA agrees with the British Rowing and UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) position that cheating, including doping, in sport is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport, undermining the otherwise positive impact of sport on society.

If an athlete tests positive for a substance set out in the list of prohibited substances issued by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), then that athlete will not take part in The Boat Race or the Reserve Race, or represent the club and University in any other race or fixture until permitted to compete within the sport by the rules of British Rowing.

All athletes individually commit to abiding by UK Anti-Doping Rules as part of their statement of eligibility to compete in the event.

Under the terms of the WADA Code 2021:

All Openweight Blue Boat athletes for OUBC and OUWBC are considered 'National-Level Athletes';

All other athletes are considered 'Recreational Athletes'.

OURA requires that:

- 5.1 All athletes are members of British Rowing, which means they are subject to random testing at any time;
- 5.2 The clubs carry out clean sport education for their athletes on an annual basis.

Staff and volunteers will not condone, assist or in any way support doping behaviour.

## **6 TRANSGENDER POLICY [currently being developed by Boat Race Company Limited (BRCL) in conjunction with British Rowing and UK Sport]**

to follow

## **7 MISCONDUCT**

All athletes and OURA club employees, Executive Committee members and others providing services to the clubs are expected to comply with this Code of Conduct.

All athletes are expected to act as responsible members of the University's community, including treating other members of the University and the public with courtesy and respect. Athletes have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a professional and sportsmanlike way during training, competition, or when representing the club, as a competitor or spectator.

Actions deemed as a breach of conduct are as follows:

- 7.1 Engaging in acts of verbal or physical abuse including; offensive behaviour or language, harassment, fighting, physical or sexual assault, violence, threatening behaviour or deliberate and serious damage to people or property;
- 7.2 Gross insubordination, including failure to comply with reasonable instructions/requests including serious breaches in rules relating to health and safety;
- 7.3 Engagement in activities that lead to the printing or publishing of material, the use of social media, or disclosure of confidential information that disrupt the University or club's activities or will bring the University, any one or more of the clubs, or an individual into disrepute, without prejudice to an individual's fundamental right of freedom of expression within the law.

## **8 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Any instances of non-compliance with the Code of Conduct will be raised with the individuals concerned in accordance with the OURA Disciplinary Policy. All staff and volunteers must be aware that the disciplinary outcomes of the OURA Disciplinary Policy may impact on their continued engagement with the club.

All athletes must be aware that if any complaint regarding student behaviour is submitted through the clubs Disputes or Complaints procedure [please refer to the OURA Disciplinary Policy], the disciplinary outcomes may include:

- 8.1 Individual suspension or removal/dismissal from rowing events, including the Boat Race
- 8.2 Temporary or permanent loss of membership for student members

## Appendix A – policies and further guidance

Further guidance and documentation can be found via the links below to

| British Rowing                                        | Oxford University                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Club Safety</a>                           | <a href="#">Health and Safety at Oxford</a>                    |
| <a href="#">RowSafe</a>                               | <a href="#">Welfare and Wellbeing</a>                          |
| <a href="#">Safeguarding and Welfare</a>              | <a href="#">Harassment Procedure flowchart for Students</a>    |
| <a href="#">Clean Sport</a>                           | <a href="#">Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service</a> |
| <a href="#">Rower Development</a>                     | <a href="#">Sports Federation Club Support Resources</a>       |
| <a href="#">Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures</a> |                                                                |

Useful contacts if you have experienced a traumatic event or are struggling with mental health or wellbeing:

|                                                          |              |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Counselling and Mental Health                            | 01865 270300 | <a href="mailto:counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk">counselling@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>         |
| Sexual Harassment & Violence Support Service             | 01865 289815 | <a href="mailto:supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk">supportservice@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>   |
| Independent Sexual Violence Adviser                      | 01865 725311 | <a href="mailto:OxfordUniISVA@osarcc.org.uk">OxfordUniISVA@osarcc.org.uk</a>       |
| Harassment and Conflict Line                             | 01865 270760 | <a href="mailto:harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk">harassment.line@admin.ox.ac.uk</a> |
| Student Resolution Service                               |              | <a href="mailto:mediation@admin.ox.ac.uk">mediation@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>             |
| If you are accused of harassment and wish to seek advice |              | <a href="mailto:caseadvice@admin.ox.ac.uk">caseadvice@admin.ox.ac.uk</a>           |

The above resources are not meant to be used in emergency. If a life-threatening situation exists, dial 999 immediately. If unsure, dial 111 to access the NHS urgent mental and physical health advice service.

To contact Police, Ambulance, or Fire for non-emergencies, dial 101. The University of Oxford's Welfare and Wellbeing Offices are open 09:00-17:00, Monday-Friday at 3 Worcester Street, Oxford, OX1 2BX.

### **Supporting those who have experienced trauma (from UK-registered mental health charity, Mind):**

*It is challenging when someone you care about is struggling with the effects of a traumatic experience. There are lots of things you can do help your teammates and those around you while protecting your own wellbeing.*

- *Listen to them: Give them time, let them talk at their own pace, and validate that what they're feeling is fair;*
- *Learn their triggers: Understanding triggers can help to avoid those situations and be prepared for reactions such as flashbacks;*
- *Try not to judge: It is important not to blame them or put pressure on them to get better without time and the support they need;*
- *Don't take over: Try to encourage and support them to make their own choices;*
- *Respect their privacy: Don't share details of what they've gone through unless you have permission;*
- *Help them find support: If they want you to, you could help them find further support;*
- *Look after your own mental health: Supporting someone can take a toll on your wellbeing, often called secondary trauma. Be mindful of your own health and seek advice from a GP if necessary.*