



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Students' Union

St Mary's University Initiation Policy

St Mary's University believes the practice of initiations is a dangerous and degrading exercise that jeopardises the safety of members and reflects negatively on the public image of students. St Mary's University is also painfully aware that unforeseen circumstances resulting from such activities can cause anguish that may affect students and their families bit personally and academically. It is also a requirement of the British Universities Colleges Sport (BUCS) that all Universities must have an initiation policy in order to compete in the BUCS competitions.

Definitions:

An 'Induction' is defined as:

An event where new members are introduced to the rules, hierarchy and other members of the club/society they have joined. Inductions often take the form of a social event, based on the university campus.

Inductions are allowed at St Mary's University.

An 'Initiation Ceremony' is defined as:

An event in which members (often new members) of a club are expected to perform a task or tasks, as a means to gain credibility, status or entry in to the club. This may be achieved by peer pressure (although not explicitly) and may compromise a person's inherent dignity by forcing or requiring an individual to partake in activities such as: drinking alcohol, eating mixtures of various foodstuffs, nudity and any other behaviour that may be deemed humiliating. This also extends to online initiation activities on social networking sites or blogs, etc. Individuals should not be pressured into divulging personal information, be subject to comments, photos or images that demean or compromise the dignity of individuals or groups.

'Initiation Ceremonies' are not allowed at St Mary's University on or off site.

Code of Conduct

All students involved in club/society social events or induction evenings for new and returning members, MUST follow this code of conduct. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action.

1. As a representative of the club/society you have a 'duty of care' to all your club/society members.
2. Under NO circumstances can the membership of a club /society be awarded upon the completion of task(s) as defined in the explanation of initiation ceremonies above.

3. All activity group members must recognise and adhere to equal opportunities. It is an individual's choice whether or not they attend any social event. Non-attendance should not be a barrier within the activity.
4. Students should not feel coerced, pressured or forced into taking part in any games, ceremonies or activities (including online activities), unless they so choose. Peer pressure is not acceptable.
5. All students should be made aware at the beginning of all social/induction evenings that at no time is the consumption of drink (alcoholic or not) or foodstuffs mandatory.
6. All members of sports clubs or societies must show respect towards members of the public and other members of the University at all times.
7. Under NO circumstance should a club/society undertake an 'initiation ceremony'. Any member of a club/society found to be arranging or involved in an 'initiation ceremony' will face disciplinary action which may result in the student being excluded from university.

Any breach of this policy will result in one or more of the following:

- Club/Society receives a fine (up to £250)/ account frozen
- Community service for club member(s)
- Athletic Union grant club withdrawn
- Member(s), team(s) or club removed from specific match, matches or removed from all competitions
- Withdrawal of facilities for training and/or competition
- Suspension or complete closure of the club
- Member(s) referred to UC's student disciplinary procedure
- Referral to the police

If any incidents occur at the end the academic year, the sanctions may be levied for the following year. As an SMSU member you must understand that you have a responsibility to report to the SMSU any activities which break this code.

Document Record

Document title:	St Mary's University Initiations Policy
Version	3
Department responsible	Jointly between the University and the Students' Union
Authors	AU President, Sports Officer, the Director of Sport, and the Director of Student Services.
Document date	23 October 2012
Date last amended	23 October 2012
Effective from	
Review date	1 September 2015
Impact Assessment Date	TBC
History (where discussed / who circulated to / committees considered	<p>Draft initially circulated to the SU President, the Director of Sport, the Director of Student Services, the Deputy Principal, and the Vice-Principal for comment.</p> <p>To be considered by the following: the Student Experience Committee, Health and Safety Committee, the Sports Alliance Group, the HR Legal and Compliance Sub Committee, The Academic Board.</p>