



A GUIDE FOR COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS

Raising concerns in your society

You can always come and talk to us.

If something is worrying you, our Societies team and Advice & Support team are here to help. You do not need a complete account, evidence, or a formal complaint before getting in touch.

This guide explains when to contact DUSA, when the University's Safeguarding team should be involved, and what to do if someone tells your society about a concern.

DUSA can help with the running of societies and matters within our rules. Our powers are limited, so serious harm and complex welfare concerns often need the University's support. We can help you reach the right people and keep supporting you.

Where to start

Society or committee concerns

societies@dusa.co.uk

Advice and personal support

advice@dusa.co.uk

Serious welfare or safeguarding concerns

safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk · uod.ac.uk/cause-for-concern

Immediate danger

Call 999. At a DUSA venue, alert staff. Campus Security can also assist on 01382 384141.

You can contact DUSA or the University directly. You do not need your committee's permission, including when your concern involves a committee member.

01 When to come to DUSA

Please speak to us early about a problem affecting your society. You can ask for advice before deciding whether to make a formal complaint.

A society Wellbeing Officer can help someone find support. They should not investigate serious allegations or decide whether they are true or not.

Society and committee concerns

- Problems with how the committee works, persistent disagreements, or unclear responsibilities.
- Concerns about a committee member carrying out their role, including any request for removal.
- Disputed elections, meetings, decisions, membership arrangements, or use of the society constitution.
- Exclusion from society participation, bullying, discrimination, intimidation, or retaliation.
- Missing money, unexplained spending, financial records, or access to society accounts.
- Unsafe activities, pressure to drink, humiliating challenges, initiation practices, or concerns about an event.
- Problems with DUSA bookings, facilities, event arrangements, or the support your society receives.

Serious concerns that also need specialist help

Tell us if there is a risk within society activities, even where the University or police are dealing with the underlying allegation. For example, there may be an upcoming event, organising responsibility, or continuing contact that needs consideration. Do not wait for a completed investigation before raising a safety concern.

If the issue involves sexual misconduct, repeated unwanted contact, violence, abuse or serious distress, use the University reporting route as well, with appropriate discussion of the affected person's wishes. DUSA can help with that conversation. Emergency danger always needs emergency help first.

Things you may be able to resolve informally

A misunderstanding about an ordinary task or a difference over event planning may be resolved through a calm conversation, clear responsibilities, or help from DUSA. Nobody should be pressured into mediation or a face-to-face meeting.

If you are not sure

Contact us. We will help work out whether the issue is a society matter, a personal support need, a safeguarding concern, or a complaint that another organisation should handle. Referring you to another service does not mean we think your concern is unimportant.

02 When the University should be involved

The University's Safeguarding team is the specialist route for safety and welfare concerns involving its community. The reporting route also covers serious welfare matters; you do not need to decide whether someone meets a technical safeguarding definition before asking for advice.

Examples of concerns to raise

- Sexual assault, sexual harassment, repeated unwanted sexual advances, or concerns around consent.
- Stalking, threats, coercive or controlling behaviour, domestic abuse, or physical violence.
- Bullying, discrimination, or hate-related harm.
- Concerns about exploitation or other forms of abuse.
- Serious or escalating welfare difficulties where someone may need coordinated help, or there is a risk of harm to themselves or others.

The team can assess the concern, help identify support, and decide whether another University process should be involved. Reporting to safeguarding is not the same as making a police report or obtaining a disciplinary finding. The University decides what action is available under its procedures.

Not every difficulty requires safeguarding

As outlined in section 01, ordinary disagreements, routine society administration, and everyday personal difficulties can usually start with the Societies team or Advice & Support. If the impact becomes serious, the situation is complex or you are worried about safety, ask for specialist advice.

How to report

Use uod.ac.uk/cause-for-concern or contact safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk for advice. You can report a concern about yourself, help someone report with their agreement, or seek guidance about a concern you have witnessed. If the form does not work for you, ask DUSA or the University team for help.

Safeguarding is not an emergency response service. If someone faces immediate danger, call **999** and alert the responsible venue team or Campus Security.

03 How to respond to a concern

A concern could be a missed task, a disagreement about an event, an election query, or something more serious. You do not need to treat every conversation as a formal complaint. Start by understanding the problem and what would help.

- 1. Listen and clarify.** Give the person time to explain. Ask what has happened, who is involved, and what they would like to happen next. For an ordinary society issue, check the relevant messages, agreed responsibilities, or meeting records rather than relying on assumptions. If what you're hearing is concerning, stop asking for detail and go to the serious harm guidance below.
- 2. Check whether anything needs urgent attention.** Most concerns can be discussed calmly and followed up. If someone is unsafe, an activity is dangerous, or an event is about to take place, address that urgency first. Call 999 for immediate danger or a serious emergency and alert venue staff where appropriate.
- 3. Agree who should handle it.** The committee may be able to resolve a routine organisational problem. Ask DUSA for help if the issue is disputed, remains unresolved, involves a conflict of interest, or may require formal action. Serious welfare or safeguarding concerns need the University route described in section 02.
- 4. Agree a practical next step.** Explain what you can do, who will do it, and when you will get back to them. This might be checking a booking, clarifying a responsibility, correcting an error, arranging a discussion, or seeking advice. Do not promise an outcome.
- 5. Keep a proportionate record and follow up.** For a simple issue, a brief note of the problem and agreed action may be enough. Keep personal or sensitive information private and share it only with people who need it. Check whether the action has resolved the concern; if it has not, ask DUSA for help.

If the concern is about someone on the committee

Ask someone who is not involved and who can remain impartial to handle the conversation, or contact DUSA directly. Nobody needs permission from the President or committee to ask DUSA or the University for advice. Give people a fair opportunity to explain an ordinary disagreement without expecting them to confront someone.

If the concern involves serious harm

Listen, check immediate safety, and help the person reach DUSA Advice & Support or University safeguarding. Ask about their wishes and what information they agree can be shared. Do not investigate the allegation yourself or promise secrecy. If serious risk may require sharing despite their wishes, seek professional advice urgently; emergency help must not wait.

People can ask for support without making a formal complaint. If they want to remain anonymous, or you are raising a concern on someone else's behalf, ask DUSA or the University how to do this sensitively before circulating details.

If the concern took place off campus

You can still ask for help. Serious harm does not become less important because it happened away from campus. Tell DUSA if the incident was linked to a society activity or committee role; the actual connection matters. A private social situation may primarily need University or external support, while an official society event can also raise responsibilities for DUSA.

04 What your committee can deal with

Committees are expected to manage the everyday running of their society. You can resolve ordinary problems within your constitution and responsibilities, and DUSA is available whenever you want advice or help.

Everyday problems you can usually work through

For example, you can clarify who is completing a task, correct inaccurate event information, sort out a communication problem, or discuss a disagreement about plans. Check what was agreed, speak respectfully to the people involved, and decide on a practical solution within the committee's authority.

For a working disagreement, a voluntary conversation or written action plan may help. Agree responsibilities and a review date. Keep the discussion focused on the issue and allow everyone involved to explain their position. If it does not improve, bring it to DUSA rather than letting it become a continuing disagreement.

When to ask DUSA to help or confirm the process

Contact the Societies team if there is a disputed election or constitutional decision, a concern about society money, persistent unfair treatment, a conflict of interest, or a problem the committee cannot resolve fairly. Ask DUSA about the correct process before attempting disciplinary removal, suspension, or a membership ban.

You can bring a concern to us before you have all the information. Share the relevant records you already hold and explain what is uncertain. DUSA can help establish what needs checking and who should make any formal decisions.

When specialist help is needed

Allegations of sexual misconduct, abuse, stalking, violence, or other serious harm should follow the University safeguarding route in section 02. Your committee should help people reach support, preserve information already received and raise any immediate society safety concern with DUSA. Do not run your own investigation into serious allegations or organise a committee vote on whether they are true or not.

What DUSA can do

DUSA can advise, help with practical resolution, check society governance, and use the powers available under its rules. Depending on the matter, an authorised person or body may consider a committee-role decision, conduct proceedings, or action relating to society affiliation or DUSA activities. Formal decisions must follow the applicable process.

DUSA cannot decide criminal guilt, suspend someone from their University studies, or direct University accommodation arrangements. A complaint does not automatically result in removal or a ban, and a committee-role decision does not automatically end society membership.

If an event creates an immediate concern

Tell DUSA the date and the specific problem so that arrangements can be considered in time. During the event, contact staff on duty or the responsible venue person and stop an immediate unsafe activity while help is obtained. Any restriction on an individual still needs the appropriate authority and review.

Whatever the concern, do not pressure someone to withdraw it or treat them unfairly for raising it. Explain your decision, keep personal information private, and ask for help when the issue is beyond the committee's role.

05 What happens after you contact DUSA

1. **We listen and check safety.** We may ask a small number of questions to understand the concern, the society connection, and the urgency of the situation.
2. **We explain the route.** This may be practical advice, an informal discussion, a society process, a University referral, or another service. Some cases need more than one route.
3. **We explain information sharing.** We will discuss who needs to know and the limits of confidentiality. If a formal process proceeds, the reported person normally needs a fair opportunity to answer the allegations.
4. **The appropriate people consider the matter.** This may involve asking for specific evidence and hearing from those involved. Referral does not guarantee a particular investigation or outcome.
5. **We explain the next steps.** You should know your contact and when to expect an update. Some details about another person may remain confidential. Ask if you do not understand the process.

Support for everyone involved

DUSA Advice & Support offers free, confidential advice independent of the University. You can contact the team whether you are reporting a concern, responding to one or supporting a friend. A different adviser or service may be arranged to avoid conflicts. Support is not a judgment about whose account is correct.

If you disagree with a decision

Ask for the decision in writing and check the review or appeal instructions straight away. Different procedures have different deadlines. If the letter is unclear, ask DUSA promptly rather than waiting. If your concern is about how DUSA has handled the matter or the service you received, contact **complaints@dusa.co.uk**. You do not have to raise a complaint with the person you are complaining about.

Information to include in your first message

- Your name and safe contact details, unless you are asking about anonymous options.
- The society and a short description of the concern, with approximate dates and places.
- Whether the account is yours, something you witnessed, or something you were told.
- Any immediate risk, continuing contact, or upcoming event.
- What help you would like and any concerns about sharing information.

You do not need all of this to ask for help. Start with what you can tell us. Ask how to send sensitive evidence securely instead of copying it to a group. We still aim to respond to initial enquiries within 3 working days.

06 What happens during a society-level process

If a concern within DUSA's remit leads to a society-level investigation or formal process, we will explain the procedure and who will consider it. Safeguarding concerns follow the University route in section 02; the Societies team does not investigate those allegations.

- 1. We hear from everyone involved.** We may invite the people involved to speak with us so that everyone has a fair opportunity to share their account. Anyone whose conduct is being considered will have an opportunity to understand and respond to the concerns. Coming forward does not mean a decision has already been made nor does it guarantee a particular outcome.
- 2. We work out the next steps.** Depending on the concern, this could involve gathering relevant information, considering the society's responsibilities, or referring the matter to another University team, such as Safeguarding. Any formal decision must follow the applicable rules and be made by the appropriate person or body.
- 3. We keep you updated.** The time this takes will depend on the nature and complexity of the case. Some matters may be resolved relatively quickly; others could take weeks or months. We will explain the process, any applicable timescales and delays, and provide updates about your own concern where we can. We will protect confidentiality and may not be able to share information about another person or the outcome.

07 Contacts and useful information

DUSA Societies team

societies@dusa.co.uk

Society problems, committee guidance, reporting and help finding the right route.

DUSA Advice & Support

advice@dusa.co.uk

Personal support, understanding options and help with reporting or responding.

University Safeguarding

safeguarding@dundee.ac.uk

uod.ac.uk/cause-for-concern

Welfare and safeguarding advice and reporting.

Emergency services

999

Immediate danger or a serious emergency. Ask for the service needed.

University Campus Security

01382 384141 for emergency assistance

01382 385850 for non-emergency assistance

Available 24 hours a day.

Complaints about DUSA

complaints@dusa.co.uk

Concerns about DUSA services or how a matter has been handled.

Useful links

[DUSA Advice & Support](#)

[DUSA Advice & Support confidentiality and service terms](#)

[University guidance on raising a safeguarding or serious welfare concern](#)

[University information about anonymous reports](#)

[DUSA governance documents and Bye-Laws](#)

[University Student Discipline Procedure](#)

Keep this guide available

Make sure committee members know these routes and members can find them easily. At events, identify who can get help and how to contact venue staff. When your committee changes, hand over reporting arrangements without circulating confidential details of individual cases.

You are welcome to talk to us. If DUSA is not the right organisation to investigate, we will explain why and help you understand where to go next. Our Societies team and Advice & Support remain available.