

Ethical guidelines for Student Democracy at NMBU

Approved at Student Parliament 5, 09.10.2023

All work, decisions and practices associated with the Student Democracy at the Norwegian University of Environmental and Life Sciences (SD-NMBU) must be carried out with honesty, trust, and respect as a basis. This document summarizes the organization's ethical practices, as well as guidelines to comply with them. The guidelines are divided into eight main categories. The final section of the document discusses progression in the event of a policy violation.

The guidelines apply to the student representatives and involved students at all levels within SD-NMBU, as well as participating and visiting persons at all activities held by the organization.

SD-NMBU's ethical guidelines are based on the organization's Principle Program, regulations and other governing political and organizational documents and guidelines adopted by the Student Parliament at NMBU (SP). The guidelines are also based on the ethical guidelines drawn up by the Norwegian Student Organization (NSO).

The guidelines are drawn up by the Student Parliament's Student Board (AU) and adopted by SP. AU is responsible for the annual review of the ethical guidelines, as well as the presentation of any revision proposals for SP if necessary. These must be revised every five years.

All Student Representatives and participants in the organization's events must at all times know and follow the organization's ethical guidelines, which are adopted by SP.

1. Respect for the person, integrity, and boundaries

SD-NMBU must be a safe organization where the individual's integrity and boundaries are respected at all times. Violence, sexual harassment, sexually transgressive behavior, and sexual abuse, as well as violations of and unlawful access to personal matters that are covered by the privacy policy, are not accepted. Verbal harassment is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

2. Equality and inclusion

SD-NMBU distances itself from all forms of exclusion, discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

All student representatives in SD-NMBU as well as participants in the organization's events must show respect for everyone and must experience security and cohesion in the organization's environment. Under no circumstances shall there be any form of exclusion, discrimination, harassment or bullying.

3. Representation

Student representatives that represent SD-NMBU are responsible for maintaining the trust and reputation of SD-NMBU through their conduct. Everyone who travels on behalf of SD-NMBU is obliged to follow SD-NMBU's ethical guidelines. Student representatives and participants must have a responsible relationship to alcohol at SD-NMBU's events. Pressuring the use of alcohol and other drugs must under no circumstances take place. The Student Democracy has zero tolerance for the use of illegal drugs.

4. Understanding your position

All student representatives in SD-NMBU must be aware of the power and influence they have in relation to others both inside and outside the organization, and not abuse the trust or power they have by virtue of their office or position. Student representatives must not expose themselves or others to danger when they are acting on behalf of SD-NMBU. Student representatives in SD-NMBU must be aware of the possibility that their positions may give disproportionate advantages in relation to others.

The power and trust that a high-ranking position may entail must be a factor in the assessment of the severity of any violations of ethical guidelines.

5. Debate culture

Student Parliament meetings and other events should be perceived as safe and inclusive. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a debate environment where everyone feels welcome, and disagreements are expressed in an objective manner. This will help create an inclusive and inviting environment for all participants in both formal and informal venues.

- **Suppression Techniques:** these are methods a person uses to indirectly rule over other individuals or groups. Suppression techniques can be exercised through, for example, speech, tone of voice and body language, and are not accepted in SD-NMBU.

6. Impartiality

SD-NMBU's impartiality guidelines, cf. Section §6-1 of SD-NMBU's statutes, apply to anyone who participates in the processing of a case in AU, ST, other bodies of SD-NMBU. For other bodies in NMBU or external actors where there is a student representative elected through SD-NMBU, internal statutes will also apply.

Practice regarding issues of partiality must be interpreted strictly, and if a person is deemed partial, one temporarily withdraws from the current case, cf. §3-13 of the statutes.

7. Transparency and confidentiality

SD-NMBU shall demonstrate transparency in decisions and processes.

The Student Parliament's meetings are open to everyone, as well as the routines for meetings, summoning and possible closure of meetings are regulated cf. §3-5 and §3-7 of the statutes. The meetings also follow the approved Order of Procedure and agenda for the Student Parliament. As a rule, protocols and decisions/resolutions must be available to all students.

8. Financial accountability

Accountability shall be exercised in the management of the organization, management of funds and administration of financial resources. All student representatives are obliged to familiarize themselves with the current guidelines for finance and management associated with their work area and position.

The organization's financial operations and accountability are governed by the Financial Regulations for the Student Parliament at NMBU, in accordance with the organization's statutes, the Instructions for semester fees, and the Cooperation Agreement between the Student Parliament at NMBU and the Student Welfare Union in Ås (SiÅs).

9. Policy violations

If you experience unwanted behavior directed at yourself or others, there should be a low threshold for reporting this. No one shall be punished without first being given the opportunity to explain their side of the case. Reporting is encouraged regardless of the severity of the incidents. It is the Notification Committee that receives, follows up and recommend any decisions on sanctions in reported cases. The Student Board (AU) functions as the primary Notification Committee for SD-NMBU, however if the notifier feels that the Student Board has a too close connection to the case, then the Control Committee shall function as the Notification Committee. The Notification Committee has a duty of confidentiality.

Violations of the ethical guidelines must be reported to the President of the Student Board (AU) or the Organizational Secretary of the SP. Sanctions are assessed based on the seriousness of the violation and the organization's statutes. The Notification Committee has the authority to make disciplinary decisions in the event of a violation of the ethical guidelines, with the possibility of appealing to the SP. The Control Committee shall be involved if necessary. Minor violations may be sanctioned with a warning, ban or request to resign from the position. Serious violations can be sanctioned with suspension or exclusion. In very serious cases or possible violations of the law, the student representative is suspended until the case has been fully dealt with.