CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT ORGANISATION BOARDS

By signing this Code of Conduct, the Executive Board of the University of Groningen (RUG), the Executive Board of Hanze University Groningen (Hanze) and the student organisation board confirm that they:

- Recognise the importance of a broad, diverse and responsible student life;
- Recognise their shared interest in a safe and trusted study environment for current and prospective students in the city of Groningen;
- Contribute to Groningen's position as a safe and attractive city.

This Code of Conduct relates to:
All student boards of student organisations that are entitled to receive student representative body grants from the Student Support Regulation and/or are otherwise connected to the RUG or Hanze.

- For aspects that do not fall under the direct responsibility of the responsible board of the student organisation, e.g. student association houses, branches, year clubs, etc., the student board will make every effort to draw attention to this Code of Conduct and encourage compliance with the Code.

The signatories are the Executive Boards of the RUG and Hanze and the board of the student organisation. The signatories may hold each other to account for behaviour that does not comply with what is stipulated in this Code of Conduct. In the event that a responsible board fails to comply with the Code of Conduct for Student Organisations, the Executive Boards of the RUG and the Hanze can impose sanctions on the student organisation concerned (e.g. withdrawal of board scholarships, exclusion from attendance at ceremonial meetings, etc.).

Support from the University of Groningen and Hanze:
The RUG and Hanze support student organisation boards with their duties during the board year, including by organising support each year on topics related to the Code of Conduct. The following support is on offer:

- Confidential contact person training and peer feedback;
- Workshop aimed at countering sexually transgressive behaviour/increasing social safety;
- 113 training/information focused on suicide prevention;
- The provision of information focused on handling complaints;
- Information and advice on preparing a safety plan for introduction week activities, provided by the Introductory Periods and Incidents Advisory Committee (ACII);
- Monitoring and advice from the ACII on the handling of incidents by student organisations.

Best-efforts obligation of student organisations
Student organisations are expected to implement the topics and principles mentioned in this Code of Conduct. In doing so, student organisations can use the support offered by the institutions. Student organisations are asked to indicate in their annual report how they have implemented the topics and principles mentioned in the Code of Conduct. Submitting an annual report is a condition for recognition of the student organisation and inclusion in the Student Support Regulations.

CONTENT OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Social safety

The boards of student organisations actively contribute to social safety by fostering an open culture in which the board and members can hold each other accountable and be approachable. The RUG and Hanze support this culture of accountability by offering training to the boards of student organisations.

- The responsible board of the student organisation ("the responsible board") must ensure a safe and trusted environment in which current and prospective members treat each other with respect. At a minimum, this means that the board must make policies and take measures to prevent:
    - Discrimination related to race, beliefs or social opinions, gender, sexual orientation, background, disability or illness;
    - Coercion to perform and/or submit to degrading acts;
    - Coercion/pressure to consume alcohol;
    - Abuse of power;
    - Violation of bodily integrity.
- The board has a zero-tolerance policy on drugs.
- Physical or mental violence against current or prospective members is prohibited.

2. Confidential contact person

Student organisations must appoint one or more internal confidential contact persons, who can provide accessible support in the area of social safety and wellbeing. These contact persons will offer a sympathetic ear and refer current and prospective members to appropriate support within or outside the University of Groningen and Hanze. The RUG and Hanze will provide training and peer feedback for confidential contact persons. Student organisations may also arrange external training for the confidential contact person in order to achieve the goals.

- The responsible board will appoint one or more confidential contact persons within the organisation. The existence of the confidential contact person must be clearly communicated to current and prospective members in advance with a mention on the website (at a minimum).
- Current and prospective members must be able to contact the confidential contact person at any time. Reports made to a confidential contact person must be handled in confidence.
- The confidential contact person should have direct access to the responsible board and to the student organisation's complaints committee/complaints contact person but should not be a member of the board or complaints committee.

3. Handling of complaints

The proper handling of complaints contributes to a socially safe environment and an improvement in the policies pursued. Current and prospective members can contact a complaints committee, or complaints contact person with a complaint. The complaints committee or complaints contact person must operate independently of the responsible board. Complaints must be handled according to an established procedure and/or regulations. The RUG and Hanze will provide student organisations with information on how to set up a complaints procedure. Whether a student organisation should set up a committee or appoint a contact person depends on the size and professionalism of the organisation.

Complaints committee or complaints contact person?

Student organisations with more than 200 members should set up a complaints committee and/or internal legal body. Organisations with fewer than 200 members should appoint at least one complaints contact person. Student organisations can also choose to use an external complaints committee.

- The responsible board must set up an independent complaints committee or appoint an independent complaints contact person.
- The complaints contact person or the members of the complaints committee must not be members of the responsible board, a committee or subcommittee, or branch boards, in the current academic year. The complaints committee/complaints contact person must be clearly communicated to current and prospective members in advance with a mention on the website (at a minimum).

- The responsible board must set up a complaints procedure that is accessible to all current and prospective members, without prior permission.

- Any current or prospective member may submit a complaint to the complaints committee/complaints contact person about the way in which a current or prospective member of the student organisation has behaved towards him/her or anyone else.

- The complaints committee/complaints contact person must give the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint the opportunity to be heard.

4. Incidents

It is important to learn from incidents. Reporting incidents and discussing subsequent events is part of the learning process. Boards must therefore report incidents to the Introductory Periods and Incidents Advisory Committee (ACII). The ACII monitors the handling of incidents. The purpose of this monitoring is to maintain an overview of worrying reports and developments within organisations and to assist boards in dealing with incidents. The RUG and Hanze have a joint 'Introduction Periods and Incidents Advisory Committee' which performs this task.

What is an incident?

At a minimum, an incident is a situation where emergency services are called in: ambulance, police, fire brigade or security. Incidents that suggest a lack of social safety, as mentioned under 1 (social safety), must also be reported. If in doubt about whether a situation is worth reporting, the rule is: always report it.

Note: Incidents should be reported by the responsible board, not by a confidential contact person or by the complaints committee/complaints contact person.

- If one or more incidents occur, they must be reported the Introductory Periods and Incidents Advisory Committee (ACII) by the responsible board using the web form, within one week after the incident occurred.

- If warranted by the nature of the incident, and after consulting with the relevant board, the ACII will inform the Executive Boards, spokespeople and, if necessary, the mayor.

- When incidents occur, the responsible board must ensure a critical review is performed.

- The ACII and the Executive Boards must be able to see the review and the plans based on it on request.

5. Introduction activities

Student organisations are responsible for the safe conduct of Introduction activities, which provide an initial introduction to student life, studies and the city. To ensure the safe running of introduction week, the Introductory Periods and Incidents Advisory Committee (ACII) will provide advice on the safety plans of student organisations and/or introduction week committees. All student organisations with an introduction camp, multi-day introduction, introduction activities at multiple locations and/or other introduction activities can submit their plans to the ACII for advice in advance.

- The responsible board of the student organisation must ensure that before signing up for introduction week, participants are given broad, general information about introduction week, verbally and/or in writing, including the nature, style and atmosphere of the introduction activities, so that participants know what to expect.

- Participants and organisers must be able to share information at any time about the content and nature of the introduction programme and about anything that happens during the programme. The responsible board cannot impose a confidentiality obligation.

- Introduction week must be organised in such a way that participation in activities can be combined with preparation for and participation in educational obligations.

- The responsible boards of student organisations must take note of the Safety Plan Explanatory Notes prepared by the ACII, disseminate them, and ensure compliance with them within the organisation.

This Code of Conduct is valid from the date of signing until 1 October 2027.

On behalf of the Executive Board of the University of Groningen

Name: J.M.A. Scherpen

Signature:

On behalf of the Executive Board of Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen

Name: P.H.J. Smeets

Signature: