

# Policy for reporting matters in the student union.





**Type of governing document:** Policy

**Adopted by:** The Representative Assembly, 2021-09-20

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# Policy for reporting matters in the union

## Introduction

All students have the right to become a member of a student union that represents them. This is stipulated in Chapter 4, § 12 of the Higher Education Act, which reads:

**"§ 12: All students within the operational area of a student union shall have the right to be members of the union if they meet the requirements for membership in such an association as referred to in Section 8."**

It is not possible to exclude a member from a student union. However, there is a need within an organization to contribute to a secure environment for all members, as well as to ensure safety in situations that a union member might encounter.

For this reason, the following policy has been established in order to contribute to a secure union environment. By taking arising situations seriously, Göta studentkår works preventively to create an environment in which all members should feel secure during their time in the student union.

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## Definitions

Here is a description of definitions relevant to reporting matters.

### Parties Involved

In the absence of clear terminology for the different parties involved in a reporting matter, the following definitions are provided for these parties, with reference to their subsequent designations:

- › **Part A:** The individual who has experienced a situation within the student union's operations and feels unsafe as a result.
- › **Part B:** The individual who is the subject of the report.
- › **The Union Board:** The body within Göta studentkår responsible for making decisions regarding the consequences of a report. Comprised of the union's full-time remunerated members.
- › **The Representative Assembly:** The body within Göta studentkår to which the parties can appeal decisions made by the Union Board.
- › **Representative:** The individual who represents each party in the case. Parties have the opportunity to be represented by a representative who holds the right to speak orally or in writing.
- › **Trustee Role:** Within Göta studentkår, trustee roles include, for example, being a "fadder", kick-off coordinator, committee member, subcommittee member, student representative, or section board member.

### Trustee Roles Elected by The Representative Assembly

The Union Board does not have the authority to remove a person from a trustee role appointed by The Representative Assembly. Therefore, the resignation from these roles should be managed by The Representative Assembly. If the policy violation is deemed severe, the Presidium of Göta studentkår can forbid access to the workplace until the matter is reviewed by The Representative Assembly.

Trustee roles that are to be managed by The Representative Assembly includes:

- › Member of The Representative Assembly
- › Nomination Committee
- › Election Committee
- › Operational Auditor
- › Speaker

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- › Deputy Speaker
- › Individuals with full-time remunerated positions

## Reporting Matters

If a student or an elected trustee role believes they have experienced a situation within the student union's operations where they have felt unsafe, they can raise a reporting matter with Götastudentkår.

In addition to Götastudentkår's statutes, there are several guiding documents in reporting matters, primarily:

- › Core Values
- › Alcohol and Drug Policy
- › Equal Treatment Policy

A member can be suspended from the union's activities if they violate any of Götastudentkår's governing documents or if the Union Board deems it necessary based on an assessment in an individual case. For instance, this could occur if the person in question behaves inappropriately in a negative manner that affects Götastudentkår's members or other students. In the context of student representation, another reason could be a lack of trust from Götastudentkår.

When handling a reported matter, the decision-making body has the right to decide whether the matter should be treated as an open or a closed item.

## Open matter

An open matter means that the matter is addressed at a meeting where all members, elected representatives, and staff of Götastudent Union have the right to be present during the discussion of the matter.

## Closed matter

A closed matter means that the matter is addressed at a meeting where voting members decide that only those with statutory permanent right of presence may participate during the discussion of the matter. Part A and Part B have the right to be present during specific parts of the discussion.

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## Consequences of Policy Violations

Potential consequences are assessed and determined by the Union Board based on the nature of the situation. Examples of consequences may include:

- › Reprimand from the Union Board
- › Suspension from Göta Studentkår and its associations' events for a specified period
- › Removal from current trustee roles within Göta Studentkår
- › Removal from current trustee roles within Göta Studentkår and the prohibition to seek trustee roles for a specified period
- › Extension of an existing penalty

## Approach

When handling reported matters, it is essential to respect the privacy of all parties involved. To ensure this, everyone involved in handling the matter must understand and adhere to the appropriate approach. The meeting body will decide whether each specific case will be handled as an open or closed matter.

It is therefore important to:

- › Treat all parties with respect.
- › Demonstrate understanding that the matter may be sensitive.
- › Maintain as objective a stance as possible regarding the matter.
- › Refrain from participating in handling the matter if one feels biased.
- › Avoid discussing the matter after the meeting has concluded.
- › Not spread information about the parties involved.
- › Recognize that each case is unique and handle it accordingly.

## Handling as a closed matter

When a reported matter is handled as a closed matter, meeting participants must not discuss or spread information about what was said during the meeting after its conclusion. However, Union Board members and Representative assembly members who were not present at the meeting where the reported matter was discussed have the right to know what decisions were made on the matter.

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## Submission of Cases

Cases related to reports should be sent to the Student Union Chairperson at [ordf@gota.gu.se](mailto:ordf@gota.gu.se) no later than 5 business days before a Union Board meeting. If the case contains all the required information as outlined in the policy document, the case will be discussed at the next Union Board meeting. The Presidium is responsible for including the item on the agenda for the upcoming Union Board meeting.

### Reports During the Kick-off period

During periods when many events are taking place, such as during the Kick-off, it might be necessary for the Union Board to handle reports promptly. As a result, the Union Board can decide to temporarily suspend individuals from the Kick-off activities and dissolve “fadder” contracts. The case should then be processed according to the routine at the next Union Board meeting after the Kick-off is over.

### Requirements for an Approved Case by the Union Board

The Union Board requires the following for a case to be approved:

- › The report must be submitted directly from Part A to the Student Union Chairperson.
- › A description of the incident (association, central student union event, orientation activity, student representative duty).
- › A brief description of the case and who or what it involves.
- › Whether Part A wishes to participate in the Union Board meeting, have a representative, or only receive information about the Union Board's decision afterwards.
- › Any potential consequences that Part A wishes for the case (based on the criteria in the policy document).

After a case is submitted, Part B should be contacted by the Presidium and informed about the case and the process. Part A always has the right to remain anonymous to Part B.

## During the Union Board Meeting

Assuming the submission has been correct, the case will be addressed in the upcoming Union Board meeting. The Union Board is responsible for ensuring that Part A and Part B do not need to be present at the meeting simultaneously or in close proximity.

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The sequence of events during the meeting is as follows:

- › The Presidium presents the case.
- › Part A/representative has the opportunity to speak during the meeting.
- › Part B/representative has the opportunity to speak during the meeting.
- › The Union Board discusses and makes a decision on the case based on Göta Studentkår's governing documents.
- › Part A/Part B and any delegates may choose whether they wish to participate in the union board's discussion and decision-making process.
- › During closed sessions, Part A/Part B and any delegates do not participate in the union board's discussion and decision-making process.

## Documentation

The Organizational Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that documentation related to ongoing and concluded suspension cases is available and stored on the server.

## Report to the Operational Auditor

Following the handling of a reported case, the Union Board shall provide the operational auditor of Göta studentkår with a report regarding the matter. The report shall include:

- › A summary of the case
- › The approach taken by the Union Board in handling the matter
- › The governing documents considered during the handling of the matter
- › The decisions made by the Union Board regarding the matter

The operational auditor shall deliver an opinion to the Representative Assembly if they believe that the Union Board has acted incorrectly in its handling of the matter.

## Notification of Decisions

### After a Decision by the Student Union Board

It is the responsibility of the Student Union Chairperson to inform the relevant individuals involved in the case about the decided consequences. The Student Union Chairperson should also specify which governing documents form the basis for any imposed consequences. The following individuals should be notified in the following order:

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- › All members of the Union Board (in case of absence)
- › Part B
- › Part A

## Appeal of Decisions

The decision can be appealed to the Representative Assembly and must be done within 30 days from the date the affected party has been informed of the decision. The appeal should be sent to the Union Chairperson at [ordf@gota.gu.se](mailto:ordf@gota.gu.se). The appeal will then be addressed at the next Representative Assembly meeting. During the period between the appeal and the next Representative Assembly meeting, the decision of the Union Board remains in effect.

### Requirements for a Valid Appeal

- › The appeal must be submitted within 30 days from the date the decision was communicated.
- › The appeal must be submitted directly from the affected party to the Union Chairperson.
- › The appeal must contain a justification for why the matter should be appealed.
- › The potential consequences the affected party wishes regarding the matter (based on the criteria outlined in the policy document).

The other party should be contacted by the presidium after the case has been received and informed about the matter and the appeal process. Part A always has the right to remain anonymous towards Part B. The parties should indicate whether they wish to participate in the Representative Assembly meeting, have a delegate, or only receive information about the decision afterward.

## During the Representative Assembly meeting

Assuming the submission is correct, the matter will be addressed at the upcoming Representative Assembly meeting. The Union Board is responsible for ensuring that Part A and Part B do not need to be present at the meeting or immediately following it if they so wish. The procedure during the meeting is as follows:

- › The Union Board presents the case.
- › Part A/delegate is given the opportunity to speak during the meeting.

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- › Part B/delegate is given the opportunity to speak during the meeting.
- › The Representative Assembly discusses and makes decisions on the matter based on Götastudentkår's current governing documents.
- › Part A/Part B and any delegates may choose whether they wish to participate in the Representative Assembly discussion and decision-making process.
- › During closed sessions, Part A/Part B and any delegates do not participate in the Representative Assembly's discussion and decision-making process.
- › When the Representative Assembly has made a decision on the matter, the meeting is always adjourned.

## Notification of Decision

### After the decision in the Representative Assembly

It is the responsibility of the Union Chairperson to inform relevant persons involved about the consequences determined. The Union Chairperson should also specify which governing documents form the basis for any consequences.

The following individuals should be notified in the following order:

- › All members of the Union Board (if absent)
- › The appealing party
- › The other party
- › Absent members of The Representative Assembly have the right to be informed of the decision upon their request.

## Report to the Operations Auditor

The Union Board should provide Götastudentkår's operations auditor with a report regarding the appeal of a disciplinary case. The report should include:

- › A summary of the appeal.
- › How the Representative Assembly handled the matter.
- › Which governing documents were considered in handling the matter.
- › What decision the Representative Assembly made on the matter.
- › The operations auditor should provide an opinion to the Representative Assembly if they believe the Representative Assembly has acted incorrectly in handling the matter.

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## Implementation of Decision

### Responsibility for implementing decisions in disciplinary matters

The Union Board is responsible for implementing decisions in disciplinary matters. The Union Board can decide within itself who in the board is responsible for informing the relevant body or the affected event organizer about the decisions made.

To allow the Union Board to implement decisions made regarding the matter, certain individuals, bodies, or groups within the organization may need to be informed of the decisions and any consequences. Information about the matter should be avoided in written form and instead communicated verbally. If affected individuals or groups need additional information to comply with the decision, they should contact the Göta Union Chairperson.

### If there is a suspicion that a decision is not being followed

If a Representative Assembly or Union Board member suspects that a decision in a disciplinary matter is not being followed, they should inform the relevant body or the affected event organizer about the decisions made.

If there is a suspicion that a decision is not being followed, information about the matter should be avoided from being disseminated in text.

### Documentation

The organization coordinator is responsible for ensuring that documentation regarding ongoing and completed suspension disciplinary matters exists and is followed up and stored on the server.

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