



Lancaster University Hiking Club

Code of Practice

This code of practice is in addition to Lancaster University Student Unions' [general code of practice](#) for student groups which must also be followed.

As a member of the club, you must abide by this code of practice at all times during club activities so that all activities are carried out safely.

Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the club (see [Duty of Care](#)).

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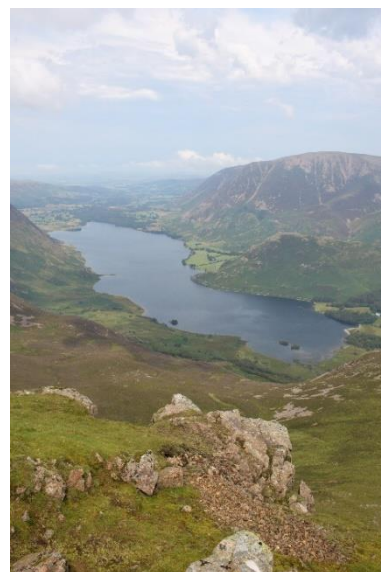
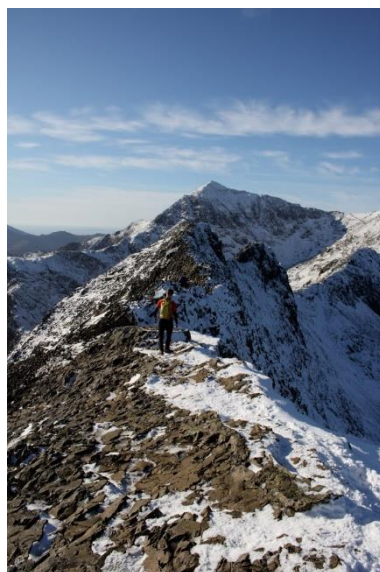
LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

All clubs and societies are affiliated to Lancaster University Students Union and are therefore bound by the Union regulations and constitution.

The Exec are required to follow all safety guidance from Lancaster SU, the Lancaster SU Safety Framework, and all safety documentation for the group and the activity they are doing. The Exec are also responsible for ensuring the members are made aware of all relevant safety documentation and the safety responsibilities they and the members hold.

The Aims of the Club

- The Club exists to promote the interests of hiking amongst members of the Club and to encourage safe practice and appreciation of the open countryside, as well as promote this activity for improving wellbeing.
- To provide an opportunity for members of the Club to meet and participate in hiking activities together.
- To act on behalf of and in the interests of Club members.
- To promote awareness of the need to maintain access, conservation and protection of the mountain environment.





The Responsibilities of All Members

- All members are strongly advised to attend the intro talk at the start of the year which contains information about safety, use of equipment, and the club. Anyone who joins the club after this talk will be briefed by an Exec member and made aware of the essential equipment list. Members are also advised to attend any training sessions that may be organised through the year, such as the annual winter skills course and avalanche talk.
- All members must read and understand the whole of this Code of Practice and understand that hiking is a high-risk activity before being allowed to participate in any hiking activity.
- All members are responsible for their own safety and wellbeing whilst out hiking.

Gear:

All members must have all appropriate gear prior to club trips, as detailed in the trip emails. Anyone unsure about gear must ask the Exec.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Hiking boots with good ankle support
- Waterproof trousers and coat (No umbrellas)
- Spare layers
- Walking trousers / sportswear (No jeans)
- Food
- Head torch
- At least 1 L of water
- Emergency whistle and knowledge of how to use it
 - 6 short blasts repeated every minute should attract the attention of other walkers. Continue until help arrives.
- Extra water, sun cream and caps for forecasted hot weather
- A hot drink, hat, scarf/buff and gloves for forecasted cold weather
- Insect repellent, especially during summer months.
- Personal medication

Anyone without appropriate gear, or wearing jeans or trainers, will not be allowed on trips and will not receive a refund.

- Before leaving Lancaster all members must physically check their own rucksack for essential gear to make sure no one has forgotten an essential item.
- All members must be dressed appropriately for the conditions and always carry plenty of water, extra food, and extra clothing in case of unintended overnight activity.
- All members should wear long clothing during tick season and check for ticks after hiking.



- All members must be vigilant and secure their own property; especially their safety equipment and essential items.
- All members must always be aware of equipment they have borrowed from the club and its whereabouts. If equipment is moved the individual must inform the relevant Exec member.

Before a trip:

- The contact numbers of the Exec on each trip will be sent in the trip email, all members are expected to be able to access these throughout the trip in case of emergency.
- The Exec will not permit any member to come on a trip if they appear under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The information of the proposed routes is always provided to members by announcement at the start of each trip. For example;
 - Basic information on the proposed route (E.g. Distance, ascent, estimated time hiking)
 - Potential hazards en-route (E.g. Exposed ridges, avalanches, scree)
 - Whether the route will involve walking in the dark
 - Whether the route will require ice axes and crampons
 - Whether the route involves any scrambling

Where possible, a selection of routes will be provided to suit different abilities. All members must choose a route best suited to their ability. If anyone is unsure about a route they must ask the navigator for more information before setting out.

- A meeting point and time for the end of the hike (usually a pub!) will be agreed and communicated to all members at the start of the hike. It is expected that all groups will meet there by the designated time.
- All groups must have a minimum of 3 people. This means if one person is injured, one person can stay with the casualty and one person can get help (where there is poor phone signal).
- All members should download location identification apps such as OS Locate and What3Words in case of emergency. These do not replace the ability to use a map and compass.
- If the conditions mean that crampons and an ice axes are needed, members are shown how to fit crampons and told about ice axe arrest before setting off on the walk.
- All members must inform the Exec of any relevant medical details before they begin any activity. If in doubt as to whether they should attend members should contact their doctor before going on the trip.
- All members must ensure they have their medication with them on trips.



- If any member is uncertain as to whether any medical conditions/injury will be affected by hiking, or whether any medication they are taking will affect their ability to hike, they need to check with a medical professional before participating.
- All members must arrive at their pick-up location at least 10 minutes before their pick-up time, as detailed in the trip email. Anyone who is late will be left behind.
- Any member that cannot make a trip must inform the Exec at least 3 days before the trip for day trips and at least 5 days before the trip for weekend trips. This gives the exec the best chance of selling the ticket and offering a refund. Only tickets sold by the Exec are valid for trips. Members will only receive a refund on hike tickets if the Exec are able to resell the ticket.
- Any member who needs to drop out last minute due to illness or other reasons should inform the Exec as soon as possible.

During a trip:

- All members must listen for and follow instructions given by the Exec and/or navigators.
- Each group will carry spare warm clothing and a shelter for emergencies and have sufficient safety equipment to deal with an exposure situation (Survival bags, bothy bags, survival blankets, and spare clothes).
- All members must look for risks and announce them to the group. The Exec hold the right to request the discontinuation of any activity that could impair/distract the perpetrator's or the rest of the group's senses to said risks (e.g. headphones/excessive phone use).
- All members must use the agreed code for falling rocks by shouting "Below!". Routes will be planned so that they avoid rock fall prone locations, and everyone must use caution when walking near climbing crags.
- In larger walking groups experienced members will be spread throughout the group to help less experienced members when in hazard areas.
- When walking on roads members must be extra vigilant and walk in single file facing oncoming traffic; and walk on the outside of bends. In poor light conditions torches must be used to increase visibility of the group on the road; where possible walking on roads in the dark will be avoided.
- Rivers must be crossed at footbridges where available. Water river crossings will not be attempted until it is the last possible option; a water crossing will be done in a group with strongest members on the outside, or in a line reducing the surface exposed to the current.
- All members must ensure navigators and/or Exec know if anyone cannot swim when near deep or fast flowing water. Members who cannot swim must stay away from the water's edge and if necessary, avoid the hazard area.
- Natural water sources are only be used as a last resort and should be treated with an appropriate water treatment.



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- All members must be courteous and respectful to other members of the public and landowners, following waymarked routes through private land.
- All members must follow the [countryside code](#).
- Mixed-ability groups must walk at the pace of the slowest person.
- Should a member wish to turn back or break from a larger group, they must do so in a group of a minimum of 3 people. This must include a navigator. They must inform the navigator and/or Exec in the original group of their plan, and carry all appropriate equipment including a first aid kit, with knowledge of how to use it.
- There will always be a first aider and a full first aid kit present within each group.

Camping:

- The Exec will offer training on the safe use of cooking stoves and the hazards associated with the use of methylated spirits. All members who will be using stoves must attend this training.
- Methylated spirits must be used in a well-ventilated area away from anything flammable. All cooking must be done away from tents.
- Anyone who uses methylated spirits must first have been briefed by the Exec on the safe use and storage of these liquids.
- All Members must maintain high levels of hygiene whether cooking for themselves or during communal cooking; this will be enforced by the Exec with knowledge from food safety trained Exec persons.
- All members must only cook for themselves; where they cook for others a food safety person must be present to supervise.
- All members will be given advice from the Exec on food safety for all types of trips, and how to avoid food poisoning, with the knowledge coming from a food safety trained person.
- Campfires should be lit well away from tents and overhanging branches, be located close to a good water supply and be well contained, for example, in a fire pit. All members must be under the supervision of an exec member when building, lighting, managing and extinguishing the fire.





The Responsibilities of Hike Navigators

Training:

If you're interested in becoming a club navigator, please speak to the Exec to get the most up to date information on required training!

- All new navigators must have previously been on at least two trips with the club.
- Before they can navigate for a group a navigator must pass a rigorous internal assessment. In addition, it is recommended for them to have taken part in navigational and mountain leadership courses. The club will, where possible, provide training evenings/weekends to encourage new navigators; it is expected that all new navigators will go on the training when it is available.

Before a trip:

- All navigators and Exec must be subscribed to the emergency text service so they can alert mountain rescue where there is limited signal. They must also have the University Security's contact number (01524 594541) in case of emergencies.
- When hiking in multiple groups, the members in each group, the route they are taking, what equipment they have, how long they will be, and relevant contact details must be clearly communicated to the navigators and/or Exec in all other groups.
- The 'pink card' must be filled in by the Exec and/or navigators at the start of each hike and placed in the vehicle window.
- Where no Exec are present on a trip, the group navigators must exchange contact information and be fully aware of all safety procedures.
- An Exec member and/or navigator in each group must have a copy of the trip sheet with everyone's contact information in case of emergency.
- The Exec and/or navigators must check members clothing and footwear before the walk to ensure it is suitable; if clothing or footwear is not suitable the member will not be able to participate.
- The group navigator and/or Exec will make sure people are well informed of hazards and how to safely navigate them before starting to hike into a hazard location. If the route goes near a large drop the navigator will warn the group before they reach it.
- Group navigators and/or the Exec must check the hike area for avalanche risk and check the weather and avalanche forecast before starting the hike. The Scottish Avalanche Information Service website and Be Avalanche Aware app are useful for this. Before a trip to areas with heavy snow the Exec must remind all members of the avalanche procedures.
- The group navigator will ensure that all members have been given the full description of what the walk entails before leaving, and that new members are given advice on which walk to pick.



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- Members will be made aware that the length of many walks will result, particularly during winter, in a considerable amount of walking in the dark.
- The Exec and/or navigators will make sure the hikers are aware of the appropriate safety code (“below!”) where there is a risk of falling rocks.
- Every group of walkers must have at least one assessed navigator and a minimum of 3 people.
- The maximum navigator and/or Exec to non-navigator and/or Exec ratio for all trips is 1:10.
- Exec and/or navigators will check the weather forecast beforehand to make sure the weather is appropriate for the planned hike.

When planning routes:

- Ensure the route is suited to your ability and you are confident navigating it. E.g. If you have never navigated a route in winter conditions, you will not be expected to do so.
- Ensure the route is appropriate for the level of the group.
- Ensure there are plenty of escape routes to use in case of emergency. Navigators must have full knowledge of all the escape routes to avoid unintended overnight stays.
- Routes should avoid:
 - The use of ropes
 - Avalanche prone locations
 - Rock fall prone locations
 - Water river crossings
 - Exposed areas (for low and medium ability groups)
 - Walking in the dark over rough terrain
 - The simplest route over the safest terrain should be used when walking in the dark.

During a trip:

- The navigators and/or Exec will keep a check on the condition of the group to make sure the pace is suitable and ensure stoppage breaks and food stops are regularly taken to reduce the effect of fatigue. Adjustments to the route will be made by the navigator if the group struggles with the planned route.
- When walking the group navigator will announce any dangers that appear, making sure that the entire group receives the message. All members must also look for dangers and announce them to the group.
- Rivers must be crossed at footbridges where available. Water river crossings will not be attempted until it is the last possible option; a water crossing will be done in a group with strongest members on the outside, or in a line reducing the surface exposed to the current.

The navigator and/or Exec will lead the process and fully explain it to all members before they attempt the crossing.

- Keep members who cannot swim away from the water's edge and if necessary, avoid the hazard area.
- Natural water sources are only be used as a last resort and Exec and/or navigators will advise members on selecting sources of natural water (i.e. not from the outlet of a tarn).
- The group navigator will constantly assess the conditions and if the conditions deteriorate to the point where the planned route would be unsafe, an alternative route/escape route will be taken.
- The navigators and/or Exec will keep a check on the condition of the group to make sure the pace is suitable and ensure stoppage breaks and food stops are regularly taken to reduce the effects of fatigue. Adjustments to the route will be made by the navigator if the group struggles with the planned route.
- During the trip the Exec and/or group navigator must know where all the group equipment is and who is carrying it.





The Responsibilities of the Exec

- All Exec members must have a comprehensive understanding of this code of practice, the Student Unions general code of practice and the clubs risk assessment.

Training:

- All Exec members must be trained in navigation and first aid.
- The Exec will organise an annual winter skills course and avalanche talk for members who take part in winter hiking.
- The Exec will organise navigation training for new navigators and an annual first aid course.

Before a trip:

- The Exec will notify members before the trip of what gear is required by means of the equipment list in the trip e-mail.
- In the event no Exec are present on a trip, the Safety Officer will ensure all navigators on the trip are fully briefed and understand all relevant safety procedures.
- The Exec will ensure the trip sheet is submitted to University Security.
- The Exec will make sure routes are well planned by the navigators so that they are appropriate for the level of the group and so that they avoid the use of ropes during the hike.
- The Exec will make sure the members on the trip are supplied with gear which is in working order. Before the trip members are taught by more experienced members and the Exec how to use the gear in a correct manner, and check that the gear is appropriate for the intended locations (i.e. crampons and walking axe in icy conditions).
- The Exec will advise the group before the trip on the risk of being bitten by insects and how this can be reduced by carrying insect repellent; it is advised for all members to carry insect repellent, especially during summer months.
- The Exec will ensure members of the hiking group are well advised on the risks of water poisoning and are advised that water treatment should be used for natural water sources.
- If all routes on the trip are planned to involve walking in the dark this will be announced before people sign up to the trip.
- The Exec must be aware of shooting seasons and locations and inform the navigators. The Exec must check with landowners that no shooting will be taking place in the location of the hiking; any area where shooting will take place, such as active military areas, must be avoided.



- The Exec will check the safety gear to make sure it is in working order before setting off on the hiking trip.
- The Exec will ensure there is a sufficient supply of clean cooking facilities and equipment before leaving for a trip.

During a trip:

- There will always be a first aider and a full first aid kit present within each group. Items in the first aid kit must be kept within the expiry date. No medications or creams are to be kept in a first aid kit being used for the group.
- The Exec will make sure correct group management is followed by the group navigator in determining the correct group size relative to the hiking environment and group ability. The maximum Navigator/Exec to non- navigator/Exec ratio for all trips is 1:10.
- The Exec will check the campsite to make sure it is in a suitable condition for the pitching of tents and advise all members on the hazards of the campsite.
- The Exec will provide information and guidance on the correct pitching of tents; especially for pitching tents in the dark.

Other:

- The Exec will ensure that all minibus drivers have passed the University minibus test and that all drivers are registered with the SU before transporting any member of LUHC.
- A log of trained first aiders will be kept by the Exec, to ensure each group always has a first aider present.
- The Exec will keep a database of those who have signed the declaration to say they understand hiking is a high-risk activity and that they have received all the safety information and understand it.
- The outgoing Gear Officer will train the new Gear Officer on all aspects of equipment and safety checks. The Gear Officer will train other Exec members on performing safety checks on gear before trips.
- The Gear Officer will fully check all equipment for damage and wear at least once a term. Damaged items will be removed from use until they are repaired or replaced. Tents will be dried after use to prevent mould and damage.
- The Gear Officer and Exec will make sure that when not in use methylated spirits are correctly stored in labelled silver sigg bottles; the use of these chemicals must be carried out within well ventilated locations.



The Responsibilities of Drivers

- All minibus drivers must follow the minibus driver's handbook.
- Drivers will inform passengers that they must be wearing seatbelts; all members must wear seatbelts. The driver has the right not to drive if he/she thinks the conditions are unsafe (i.e. a passenger not wearing a seatbelt).
- All car drivers must have appropriate insurance, including breakdown cover, and be registered with the student's union.
- When arriving and leaving destinations or after any stop drivers must ensure a head count is conducted to make sure nobody is left behind.
- The Exec will provide the destination and a trip list. Drivers must ensure the trip sheet is submitted to the university as instructed by the Exec, by paper or at <http://www.lusu.co.uk/triplist>.

From the [general code of practice](#):

- All drivers must be registered with the SU and hold the relevant driving qualification.
- When members are driving the driver must take at least a 10-minute break every two hours of driving and must not drive or must stop if feeling tired.
- All vehicles will be hired through the SU and be driven by a driver registered with the SU. The driver must be over the age of 21, under the age of 70 and have held a full clean driving license for at least two years
- Drivers must check that the vehicle is roadworthy and adequately insured before travel.
- The driver must hold the relevant minibus driving qualification or have completed the University Minibus Assessment to drive on the Community Permit Scheme. If driving on the Community Permit Scheme, the vehicle being driven must not weigh more than 3.5 tonnes when loaded with passengers, belongings and equipment.



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Duty of Care

Please note that on top of the above procedures, all individual members of the society owe a Duty of Care to fellow members of the society and other societies, and where appropriate the public. Any society member who acts in such a way as to deliberately cause harm or injury to a fellow member and/or who displays open and persistent disregard for the societies Code of Practice will be disciplined by the society Executive committee and may face expulsion from the society.

If anyone has any questions or queries relating to this document, please contact us at [fb.com/LUHikingClub](https://www.facebook.com/LUHikingClub) or hiking@lancaster.ac.uk

Happy Hiking!



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