

Leeds University Union Caving Society
University of Leeds Speleological Association



Code of Conduct

September 2019

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Introduction

The Leeds University Union Caving Society (LUUCaS) is a student run club that undertakes caving trips for members from novice level through to more technical and challenging trips for the more experienced. Over each university year the club provides training to new and existing members to develop these skills which eventually will enable them to gain the technical and physical capabilities to plan and carry out their own caving trips, and potentially pass these skills on to future members. LUUCaS, nor any persons teaching, instructing, leading or seconding during LUUCaS activities, claim to do these actions in any professional capacity with official qualifications; rather LUUCaS, and such persons, use their knowledge and experience to voluntarily help LUUCaS members experience caving recreationally.

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To facilitate the training of caving techniques and planning of trips, LUUCaS and ULSA together have developed guides and risk assessments to ensure the full implementation of safe practices with regards to these caving activities, whether underground or on surface training.

These include:

- ULSA General Risk Assessment
- ULSA Edge Training Wall Risk Assessment

- LUUCaS Code of Conduct
- ULSA Caving Without Tears Handbook
- LUUCaS Caving Kit List

The aim of the LUUCaS Code of Conduct is to outline the responsibilities, and expectations of LUUCaS members when partaking in club activities centred on behaviour and attitudes within all aspects of the club's activity (including trips, training, and socials.)

ULSA and LUUCaS

ULSA is the University of Leeds Speleological Association and comprises mainly ex-members of LUUCaS (or formerly LUUSS), referred to as 'older members'. LUUCaS members are automatically ULSA members and have the same voting rights as these 'older members'. However, ULSA members are only also members of LUUCaS if they still reside at university. This is an exceptional club in that many members having left university continue to cave with ULSA and therefore help train and lead trips, ensuring experience within the club is never lost.

Member Responsibilities

Members will be expected to conduct all activities within the guidelines of the ULSA guides, risk assessments and inductions. A level of common sense is expected of all participants and all individuals involved must deliver a duty of care to each other. Where members are felt to act outside this code of conduct, the LUUCaS committee may take disciplinary action, as outlined further in this document.

Safety responsibilities during caving and training

All members of the club, whether experienced or at novice level are responsible for their own safety, as well as the safety of their fellow members.

- Caving is a group activity and before the beginning of each trip it will always be communicated by the more experienced members that each member on a trip needs to look out for themselves as well as their fellow cavers.
- Caving and associated activities is an activity which can lead to serious harm or injury and in some cases it may only be recognised that a member is in danger by another member in the group, for example exhaustion and hyperthermia is often recognised by a third party.

Each member is responsible for ensuring that they are physically capable of undertaking the caving trip for that day, including expressing any medical conditions to the more experienced members of the group. However, it is also the responsibility of the experienced members to ensure that all those persons on the trip understand what the trip will entail such as describing the technical aspects, i.e. rope work, constricted passages, swimming, etc.

Each member will ensure they are wearing the correct clothing for caving (e.g. suitable underlayers). This can be found in the Caving Kit List and Caving without Tears handbook. The Caving Kit List will be circulated to new members and trips leaders shall check whether new members have the correct clothing. Failure to wear the correct clothing may result in a member not being allowed on a trip.

Using and maintaining club equipment

Club equipment will be kept in suitable conditions in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation. It will be subjected to regular checks as per the ULSA Equipment Checklist. The club takes no responsibility for the maintenance, safety or reliability of member's personal equipment (equipment owned by a member).

Club equipment will be first made available to new LUUCaS members, then to established LUUCaS members and finally to ULSA members.

Members will use club equipment in appropriate manner such that it does not damage the equipment and/or make the equipment unsafe. This can be done by attending training sessions to understand how to use club equipment appropriately (e.g. use of SRT kit, appropriate descent speed down rope).

Members will check, or ask an older member to check, that their equipment is in good condition and it is set up properly before and during a caving trip. For newer members, it is expected that trip leaders should also carry out these checks (or that during training sessions, the members that are teaching should check).

Members will inform an appropriate person if they feel equipment is damaged/unsafe (e.g. the caving trip leaders during a caving trip; Tackle Officer or other committee members in other situations).

Conservation responsibilities during caving

Members will strive to preserve the environment of all caves, such as the preservation of sediments and formations and consideration to cave wildlife such as bats.

Members will be encouraged to participate in conservation and speleological works which may include cleaning formations, removal of rubbish and waste, surveying and stabilisation.

The West Kingsdale system is ULSA's adopted cave and therefore the club (including LUUCaS) is specifically responsible for the conservation and speleological works here.

Social conduct and wellbeing of others

Members of the club are required to act within the club constitution, without discrimination of members (including age, race, sex, sexuality and social status) and with consideration of their own personal and other member's wellbeing. Members will also be required to have a duty of care to other members, whether it is during social activities, training sessions or caving trips etc.

Disciplinary Procedure

The LUUCaS committee shall enforce disciplinary procedures in response to complaints in order to ensure every member is acting safe and appropriately during LUUCaS activities.

If a complaint is made against a member to the committee, appropriate action shall be taken that is specific to the nature and context of the complaint. In some instances, the committee may have to consult with more experienced members outside of the committee, especially in regards to safety. Complaints may include, for instance: a member acting unsafe (intentionally or unintentionally) within a cave, thereby putting themselves or others in danger; poor leadership within a cave by leaders or seconders; disregard of cave conservation; unsafe organisation of a club activity

(including a day trip or weekend trip); inappropriate social conduct or disregard for the wellbeing of others within a club activity.

Complaints can be made in person (to an individual within the committee or to the entire committee) or via the club's email address (leedsunicaving@gmail.com). If a member wants to make their complaint confidential then they should make this clear. However, if a committee member does not know how to deal with the complaint themselves, then they may have to consult with other committee members or more experienced members of the club.

Disciplinary actions in regard to caving trips may include: explaining to a member how they broke a guideline and why this guideline is important; requiring a member to carry out further training to demonstrate they can cave or lead others safely; and in exceptional circumstances suspending or banning a member from caving with the club. Any disciplinary action may be appealed by discussion with the committee.

In the case of more complicated complaints or disciplinary procedures, the LUU may get involved with disciplinary action or the appeal process.

Reputation

During club activities, member's actions and behaviours represent LUUCaS, ULSA, the Leeds University Union and the University of Leeds, and therefore members should abide by these guidelines.

Statement of Acceptance

We the undersigned agree to uphold the above Code of Conduct.

Document approved for publication by LUUCaS committee

President: Michael Brigham

Signed: 

Date: 13 Sep 2019

Secretary: Rosi Elliott

Signed: 

Date: 13 Sep 2019

Treasurer: David Newcombe

Signed: 

Date: 13 Sep 2019