

Hall Orientation Guidelines
Submission to the Committee on Halls

1. Definition

- a) Hall Orientation Programmes refer to the collective set of activities organised by the Hall Students' Association registered with Co-curricular Support Office (CCSO), individual floors, units, or groups of residents intended for new residents¹ or/and new hallmates². This includes activities such as Hall Orientation, Floor/Unit Orientation and Room Visits.
- b) Recruitment Activities designed for HKU students who are not yet residents and conducted during Orientation Period, as defined by the Orientation Regulations for Student Societies (Orientation Regulations) published by the Centre of Development and Resources for Students (CEDARS), including but not limited to Touch Camps, must comply with the Orientation Regulations.

2. Eligibility

Students' Associations organising Hall Orientation Programmes and Recruitment Activities must meet all of the following requirements:

- a) Maintain registration status with the CCSO and duly submit all required documents for change of session, including the Annual Report, Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, and updated membership list, to CCSO;
- b) Submit the full Executive Committee (ExCo) list, endorsed by the Warden, to CCSO; and
- c) Submit the Annual Financial Report for the previous session, duly reviewed and endorsed by the Warden and presented to hall members, to CEDARS.

3. Principles

The University has established the following principles in relation to Hall Orientation Programmes:

- a) the main objective of Hall Orientation Programmes is to facilitate all incoming residents—both local and non-local—in transitioning into a new living and learning environment;
- b) organisers of Hall Orientation Programmes should recognize residents' priority in their academic programmes;
- c) no penalty or pressure should be imposed on residents for incompleteness of any part of the Hall Orientation Programmes;
- d) at no time during the Hall Orientation Programmes and the period in residence should the dignity and right of an individual be infringed upon;
- e) seniority must not be used to create any form of power imbalance or privilege. Such practices undermine equal rights and may lead to the exploitation of others;
- f) all activities must be strictly free from any form of discrimination, harassment, or prejudice. There shall be no discrimination against any individual based on characteristics including, but not limited to, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability;

¹ ¹ In case of non-residential halls, "residents" refer to "members".

² "New hallmate" in this document refers to a student who participates in hall orientation for the first time. He/She may be a new member or a current student who did not join the Orientation when s/he first joined the hall.

- g) the Hall Orientation Programmes do not involve ragging, scolding (private or public), embarrassment, or humiliation of any new hallmate. Comments should not infringe on the dignity of any new hallmate; and
- h) the Hall Orientation Programmes should not infringe on the personal properties of any new hallmate.

4. Aims

The University and Hall Students' Associations work in partnership to achieve the following aims of the Hall Orientation Programmes:

- a) to enable new hallmates to experience hall education;
- b) to orientate new hallmates to ways of learning, behaving and living that are conducive to the development of the attributes of HKU graduates as set out in the six educational aims of HKU (Annex 1);
- c) to enable new hallmates to formulate clear and realistic academic and personal goals and expectations of university learning and hall life;
- d) to enable new hallmates to handle changes to their personal and academic lives and multiple demands in the University, and to prioritize their commitments, including those to Hall; and
- e) to help new hallmates to adapt a lifestyle in Hall and University that is conducive to their psychological and physical wellness.

5. Orientation for All New Residents

- a) To foster a shared hall culture and ensure a standardised starting experience where no resident is left behind, participation in the Hall Orientation Programmes is highly expected and strongly encouraged for all new residents. All incoming residents, particularly non-local students, must be formally informed of the orientation schedule and expectations and invited to join the Hall Orientation Programmes well in advance.
- b) All Hall Orientation Programmes are accessible by and available for all new residents.

6. Communication of Incentives

In the case that the Warden decides to add incentives for the completion of the Hall Orientation Programmes, such as merit score for readmission, the benefits shall be clearly articulated to all residents. There should be reasonably attainable alternative ways to make up for those additional benefits if a new hallmate decides not to join the Orientation.

7. Group Composition

All small groups within the Hall Orientation Programmes shall, where appropriate, be deliberately mixed and comprise both local and non-local students in reasonable proportion.

8. Language

All Hall Orientation Programmes and their related communication and publicity materials shall generally be conducted and prepared in English. Other languages may be used to facilitate effective communication.

9. Financial Management and Accountability

- a) All fees of the Hall Orientation Programmes must be kept at a reasonable level and clearly justified.
- b) Hall Students' Associations are accountable for the proper use and management of their income, which is contributed by hall members and shall be subject to oversight by the Tutorial Team. They are required to maintain transparent and accurate financial records and to ensure that all financial activities comply with University policies and guidelines. As part

of this responsibility, the outgoing Executive Committee (ExCo) shall ensure clear and transparent financial reporting and a proper handover of financial records and financial status before the incoming session undertakes major activities, including Hall Orientation Programmes and Recruitment Activities.

10. Dates of the Orientation

Hall Orientation Programmes should not cause any detriment to academic study. If the programme is to be extended beyond the start of teaching, the Warden and Students' Association should consider such decision very carefully and do so with strong justifications.

11. Health, Safety and Well-Being³

New hallmates have adequate rest time and free time every day. Hallmates should be reminded to avoid prolonged fasting and dehydration.

- a) Sleep needs vary by age and individuals. Sleep is considered to be adequate when there is no daytime sleepiness or dysfunction. Nevertheless, over fatigue might result in having trouble going to sleep. Average amount of sleep required by adults is 7-8 hours per day.
- b) It is also suggested to have a continuous 10-12 hour daily rest period for all students (including the sleep hours), in addition to meal breaks and small breaks during the programme.
- c) Our bodies need energy and water to function properly. Whilst allowing some variations, three meals per day are recommended. Drink water regularly during physical activity with sweating and drink liberally to quench thirst.
- d) Other than minor accidents and illnesses, seeking medical treatment is recommended. If the condition could become worse or life threatening on the way to the Accident & Emergency Department or it needs the skills or equipment of paramedics or emergency medical technicians, call an ambulance immediately and inform the Warden/Senior Resident Tutors simultaneously.

12. Activities Content

The Hall Orientation Programmes consists of a good mixture of social, intellectual, cultural and sport activities both inside and outside the Hall. Safety and health are concerns of utmost importance.

13. Physical Activities

- a) All organisers of Hall Orientation Programmes are provided a package of safety precautions in physical education (Annex 2). All physical activities must follow the relevant safety precautions. No activity requires excessive physical exertion or imposes a heavy physical demand on new hallmates.
- b) Each new hallmate signs a health declaration form. New hallmates with valid health concerns are exempted from physical activities.
- c) Qualified first-aid personnel must be present at all physical activities.

14. Psychological Stress

- a) No orientation activity sets a target that is beyond reasonable reach of new hallmates.
- b) No excessive psychological or mental stress is imposed on new hallmates through prolonged activity.
- c) There is no coercion on new hallmates to participate in any orientation activity or pressure on them to conform to certain views or behaviour.

³ A review of the 47 incidents reported to the Committee on Halls from 2013 to 2017 showed that 33 (70%) were medical illnesses and 14 (30%) were accidents. Common medical illnesses were fainting (13 [28%]), muscle strain and/or ligament tear (7 [15%]) and breathlessness (5 [11%]). Serious medical illnesses such as heat stroke (3 [6%]) and rhabdomyolysis (1 [2%]) were uncommon. There was greater variability in accidents, with sprained ankle (5 [11%]), and slip and fall injury (3 [6%]) being more common.

- d) Challenging tasks, if any, should be incremental. Adequate briefing as well as thorough and appropriate debriefing should be provided. New hallmates should be given the choice to opt out anytime.

15. Duration of Activities

No single activity spans a long period of time. Breaks between each session are encouraged.

16. Balance Between Academic and Hall Activities

- a) New hallmates choose freely and are allowed to join academic activities including lectures and tutorials, official orientation or induction activities of the University and Faculties during the Hall Orientation Programmes.
- b) Academic elements may be included in room visits.

17. Involvement of Wardens/Tutorial Team

- a) Each Hall sets up a Monitoring Group. The Monitoring Group includes Warden and resident tutors and student representatives, with the staff to student ratio at 1:1. The Monitoring Group is to ensure the proper implementation of these guidelines taken into consideration of the specific circumstances of each Hall.
- b) The Warden shall ensure that at least one resident tutor conducts regular check-ins on each day of the Hall Orientation Programmes. The resident tutor shall immediately report to the Warden any concerns or irregularities involving potential breaches of the Hall Orientation Guidelines or other University regulations.
- c) The Students' Association shall coordinate with the Warden and tutorial team to hold a Warden's session during the Hall Orientation Programmes.
- d) In the event that no Hall Orientation Programmes are organised by students, the Warden and tutorial team shall at least arrange a welcoming session for all new residents.
- e) The Warden may apply the provision of Clause (b) of H2 Administration and Hall Rules of the Regulations Governing Halls⁴ according to the specific circumstances of the Hall.

18. Proposal Review and Approval

No Hall Orientation Programmes for new residents and/or new hallmates may take place unless it has been included in a proposal and formally approved by the Warden and CEDARS by the deadline stipulated in Orientation Regulations for Student Societies.

19. Reporting of Special Events or Emergencies

- a) The Warden/tutorial team provide all students with an emergency phone number.
- b) The Warden must be informed in writing immediately of the following incidents:
 - injuries and serious illness (including flu, fever and food poisoning);
 - visit of students to the University Health Service (UHS)/emergency room/private doctor and hospitalization;
 - illegal activities or activities in violation of university guidelines and regulations;
 - mental health crises;
 - abuse, discrimination or harassment incidents; and
 - withdrawal from the Hall Orientation Programmes.
- c) The Warden informs the Dean of Student Affairs and Director of UHS in case of hospitalization or cluster of health problems.

⁴ Clause (b) of H2 Administration and Hall Rules of Regulations Governing Halls reads:

The Warden may make such rules additional to these Regulations as may appear to him to be necessary for the maintenance of good order and discipline in the Hall. These rules shall be effective from the time of their posting on the principal notice board of the Hall; shall be formally communicated by the Warden within twenty-four hours of posting to the Committee on the Hall Association as defined in H3; and shall be subject to subsequent approval by the relevant Senate Committee (Note: H3 is on the composition and constitution of the Hall Association).

20. Feedback Channels for New Hallmates

- a) Each new hallmate is assigned to a tutorial team staff during the Hall Orientation Programmes. The staff member is available for direct contact with his/her new hallmates during the Orientation.
- b) The Warden/tutorial team hold daily office hours during the Orientation for new hallmates to drop in.
- c) New hallmates may meet with the Warden and tutorial team during the Orientation. The Warden and tutorial team communicate with every new hallmate who quits the Hall Orientation.

21. Evaluation Mechanisms

- a) The Warden and Students' Association conduct formal and systematic evaluation of the Hall Orientation Programmes at its conclusion.
- b) The tutorial team shall administer a survey to all new hallmates in the absence of current hallmates on the final day of the Hall Orientation or no later than two weeks after its completion. The survey shall be conducted in the absence of current hallmates to encourage candid feedback. The target survey response rate shall be reasonable and agreed between the Hall Students' Association and the Warden/tutorial team.

22. Dissemination of Guidelines

- a) All current students must be aware of and observe the principles and guidelines of the Hall Orientation Programmes.
- b) The Warden reiterates the principles and guidelines of the Orientation to all new hallmates on the first day of the Orientation.
- c) The principles and guidelines of the Orientation are printed in the Orientation handbook.
- d) CEDARS organises a workshop to advise organisers of the Orientation on the Hall Orientation Guidelines, including the health (physical and psychological) and safety issues, and other issues mutually agreed upon by both parties.

23. Hall Orientation Reports

The Warden and the Hall Students' Association shall submit a Hall Orientation Report to the Committee following the conclusion of the Hall Orientation Programmes. The report shall include the survey findings, any complaints received, incidents encountered, and breaches reported or investigated, as well as an evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Hall Orientation Programmes and recommendations for future improvement.

24. Penalties

- a) Any Hall Students' Association, organising committee, floor/unit organiser, student helper, or resident who breaches these Guidelines, the approved proposal, instructions of the Warden/tutorial team, or relevant University policies may be subject to proportionate follow-up action or penalties.
- b) Minor breaches may be discussed, handled and decided by the Warden and tutorial team at hall level without referral to CEDARS. Minor breaches refer only to isolated, low-risk, non-systemic and promptly remediable non-compliance that does not create any imminent or significant risk to health, safety or well-being and does not involve coercion, humiliation, harassment, discrimination, abuse, ragging, illegal conduct, significant property damage, misconduct, dishonesty, obstruction of monitoring or investigation, or repeated non-compliance.
- c) For minor breaches, the Warden and tutorial team should, where appropriate and proportionate, prioritise restorative, corrective and educational measures over formal penalties to promote accountability, critical self-reflection, and leadership development. These measures may include, but not limited to:

- additional briefing, training and debriefing
 - request for apology letter and improvement plan
 - supervised modification of future activities
 - modification of an activity; and
 - adjustment of timing, venue, grouping or logistics
- d) For minor breaches, the Warden and tutorial team may also consider formal penalties, which may include, but are not limited to:
- verbal or written warning;
 - restriction of the persons concerned from participating in part or all of the remaining Hall Orientation Programmes;
 - cancellation of an activity;
 - any other proportionate measure considered appropriate by the Warden.
- e) Serious, repeated or urgent cases shall be referred to CEDARS and/or other relevant University offices for follow-up. Such cases include, but are not limited to:
- severe injury, serious illness, hospitalisation or mental health crisis;
 - harassment, discrimination, abuse, violence, ragging or coercion;
 - repeated or deliberate conduct that undermines voluntariness, dignity, safety or well-being;
 - illegal activities or activities in violation of university guidelines and regulations;
 - major deviation from the approved proposal and student helpers list;
 - misuse of funds or other serious financial misconduct;
 - unauthorised collection, use or disclosure of personal data;
 - significant property damage;
 - obstruction of monitoring, reporting or investigation; or
 - repeated non-compliance after warning or direction for correction.
- f) For serious, repeated or urgent breaches, the Warden/tutorial team, CEDARS or the University may take immediate interim measures where necessary. Such interim measures may include temporary suspension of activities, access to resources, booking rights, funding or privileges, or any other temporary measure reasonably necessary in the circumstances. Any interim measure taken shall be reviewed as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within 48 hours of its imposition.
- g) Where a serious breach is established after review, the Warden/tutorial team, CEDARS or the University may impose further penalties, including but not limited to:
- suspension or termination of all activities;
 - withdrawal of approval or resources;
 - suspension of booking rights, funding or privileges;
 - disqualification from future Hall Orientation Programmes;
 - suspension or termination of hall residence in accordance with the Regulations Governing Halls and Flats; and/or
 - referral for disciplinary proceedings with reference to the Disciplinary Committee Regulations
- h) Students concerned should normally be given a reasonable opportunity to provide an explanation before a final decision on formal penalties is made, except where immediate interim action is necessary to protect safety, well-being or good order. Where interim action has been taken first, the student concerned should be given an opportunity to respond before any final penalty is confirmed, unless exceptional circumstances make this impracticable.
- i) All cases shall be handled with due regard to confidentiality, fairness and non-retaliation.
- j) The Warden and tutorial team shall keep proper records of all reported or suspected breaches, the decisions made, and the follow-up actions taken, and shall complete such records within one month after the conclusion of the case. Such records may be documented using the reporting form provided by CEDARS, which may include, where applicable, the date and time of the incident, the activity involved, the persons concerned, a brief description of the incident or concern, the immediate action taken, the preliminary risk assessment, whether

any referral was made and to whom, whether the student concerned was given an opportunity to provide an explanation, the follow-up action taken, and the closure status.

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HKU Educational Aims

The new undergraduate curriculum at HKU is designed to enable our students to develop their capabilities in:

- Pursuit of academic/professional excellence, critical intellectual enquiry and life-long learning
- Tackling novel situations and ill-defined problems
- Critical self-reflection, greater understanding of others, and upholding personal and professional ethics
- Intercultural understanding and global citizenship
- Communication and collaboration
- Leadership and advocacy for the improvement of the human condition