Rules of Conduct: DASI Digital Communications

These Rules of Conduct apply to all users of digital communication channels administered by DASI. This includes all WhatsApp chats under the DA 2026/2027 umbrella, including the All Students Chat, cohort chats, and society chats.

The rules apply both to messages posted within these groups and to direct communications with other students arising from their use. They also apply to all official communication with the DASI Board and Ombudspeople, including communication by email or direct message.

The DASI Board consists of the DASI Presidium and the elected Course Speakers.

> Dasi Presidium: Adel Mussabekova (President), Dolunay Altan (Vice President), Gilbert Frank (Treasurer), Jessica Hall (Secretary).
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> Course Speakers: TBA
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> Ombudspeople: Eliana Aloisio, Selinay Demirel, Grace Carey, Patrick Gallaway, Lara Güven

Rules

1. No hate speech or discriminatory language

Hate speech, harassment, and discriminatory language will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexism, gender-based discrimination, ableism, and discrimination based on religion, nationality, ethnicity, or any other personal characteristic.

2. Treat political, military and other international affairs matters with sensitivity

As students of international affairs, discussion of political and military developments is both relevant and encouraged. However, jokes, trivialising comments, or deliberately inflammatory statements concerning ongoing conflicts, humanitarian crises, or other sensitive political events are not appropriate.

Students are expected to communicate diplomatically and respectfully. It is important to remember that your colleagues may be personally affected by the matters being discussed.

3. Keep communication relevant, concise and efficient

DASI communication channels include large numbers of students and are intended to share useful information with the DA community efficiently. Before posting, consider

whether the message is *relevant* to the group, whether it could be *communicated more concisely*, and whether the chosen group chat is the *most appropriate place* for it.

Where possible, information should be consolidated into a single message rather than sent across multiple consecutive messages.

DASI communication channels may be used for matters relevant to the DA community, including academic information and questions, social and society events, professional and employment opportunities, administrative information, and other matters affecting the student community.

Repeated messages, excessive posting, unrelated content, or other conduct that unnecessarily disrupts or overwhelms a group may be treated as spam.

Personal disputes, extended discussions, or matters relevant to only a small number of people should be moved to a private message or a smaller, more appropriate group chat.

Moderation

The DASI Presidium reserves the right to moderate DASI-administered communication channels and to remove content that breaches these Rules of Conduct. This is especially the role of Jessica Hall (Secretary), and any issues may be directed to her personally (or any member of the Presidium) in the event you feel something has been missed.

Where necessary, the Presidium may contact the individuals involved, request that a discussion be moved to a private channel, issue a warning, or refer the matter for further review.

Each Society Chat has an elected Admin responsible for moderation, as identified in the relevant group description. Society Admins are responsible for maintaining order within their respective chats and may refer any concerns or incidents to DASI or the Ombudspersons where appropriate. Society Admins may moderate discussions and take reasonable steps to ensure compliance with these Rules of Procedure. However, they are not authorised to issue formal warnings to individual members.

Repeated Misconduct and Escalation

Where a student repeatedly breaches these Rules of Conduct, the following process will normally apply.

This warning and escalation process forms part of DASI's moderation of its digital communication channels. It does not replace or amend the procedures established by the DASI Constitution or Rules of Procedure. Where a matter falls within an existing constitutional procedure, that procedure shall apply.

Records of incidents and breaches will be maintained for the duration of the relevant academic year.

First incident: Initial warning

The student will receive an initial written warning identifying the conduct concerned, the relevant provision of these Rules of Conduct, and the expected standard of future conduct.

The warning is a moderation measure under these Rules of Conduct and does not constitute a finding of a grave violation of DASI membership obligations.

Where relevant, the student may also be reminded of the general obligations applying to DASI members under **Article 6(2) of the DASI Constitution**, including the obligation to adhere to basic rules of conduct and to treat other members with respect.

Second incident: Final warning

Where a student breaches these Rules of Conduct again, they will normally receive a second and final written warning.

The warning will identify the relevant rule, the conduct giving rise to the warning, and the possibility of further referral if concerns continue.

As with the first warning, this is a moderation measure under these Rules of Conduct and does not in itself constitute a formal disciplinary decision or a finding of a grave violation of membership obligations.

Third incident: Referral to the DASI Ombudspersons

Where concerns continue following previous warnings, the matter may be referred to the DASI Ombudspersons.

This referral reflects the functions of the Ombudspersons established under **Articles 20-23 of the DASI Rules of Procedure**.

In particular, under **Article 20**, the Ombudspersons may provide confidential peer-to-peer support in matters involving harassment, discrimination, abuse of power, welfare concerns, or related issues; inform students of available support and reporting mechanisms; and advocate for students where requested and consented to.

The Ombudspersons may meet with the individuals involved in order to:

- clarify the circumstances;
- address possible misunderstandings;
- facilitate communication or an appropriate resolution;
- provide confidential support;
- explain available reporting, support, or dispute-settlement mechanisms; and

- determine whether referral to another appropriate body is necessary.

The Ombudspersons' role at this stage is supportive, impartial and conciliatory, rather than disciplinary.

In accordance with **Article 23 of the Rules of Procedure**, Ombudspersons must maintain impartiality, respect confidentiality requirements, avoid conflicts of interest wherever possible, and must not use their position for disciplinary purposes.

Where appropriate, the Ombudspersons may transfer or refer a matter in accordance with **Article 22 of the Rules of Procedure.** This may include referral to the DASI Board, the relevant DA administrative partner, the Bar Society in matters falling within its competence, or another appropriate body.

Typical proceeding
One Ombudsperson will be present, selected by the respondent, subject to confirmation by the DASI Board and the selected Ombudsperson that no conflict of interest exists. Where a conflict of interest is identified, the respondent will be given the opportunity to select another Ombudsperson. Alternatively, the respondent may defer the selection to the DASI Presidium.

Severe breach
Three Ombudspersons will be present. One will be selected by the respondent, subject to confirmation by the DASI Board and the selected Ombudsperson that no conflict of interest exists. The remaining two will be selected by the DASI Board in consultation with the Ombudspersons, subject in each case to confirmation that no conflict of interest exists.

<u>Fourth incident or continued serious misconduct: Referral to the DASI Board</u>

Where conduct continues despite previous warnings and attempts at resolution, the matter may be referred to the DASI Board for formal consideration.

This referral does not automatically mean that a member will be expelled or that a grave violation of membership obligations has occurred. The Board must consider the circumstances of the matter and determine whether any action falling within its competence is appropriate.

Under **Article 14(1) of the DASI Constitution**, the Board manages the affairs of the association except where a matter is assigned to another organ. This includes decisions concerning the denial or expulsion of members and decisions on Rules of Procedure.

Where repeated or serious conduct may amount to a breach of a member's general obligations, **Article 6(2) of the Constitution** is relevant. This requires members to

refrain from conduct that could negatively affect the reputation of the association, to comply with the Constitution and decisions of association organs, to adhere to basic rules of conduct, and to treat one another with respect.

Where the conduct may constitute a grave violation of membership obligations, the requirements governing expulsion apply;

- Under **Article 5(3) of the Constitution**, members may be expelled by the Board in cases of grave violations of their membership obligations.
- Under **Article 3(2) of the Rules of Procedure**, a decision to expel a member requires a two-thirds majority of the Board.
- Article **3(3) of the Rules of Procedure** further specifies categories of grave violations, including conduct committed through gross negligence or deliberate intent that violates the association's purpose or universally accepted rules of behaviour and academic integrity.

Repeated breaches of these Communication Rules may therefore be considered by the Board as part of the circumstances of a case, but the number of warnings alone does not automatically establish a grave violation or justify expulsion.

Serious cases

The above stages represent the process that will normally apply to repeated misconduct.

They do not require DASI to issue a particular number of warnings before responding to conduct that is sufficiently serious to require immediate referral.

Where conduct may involve serious harassment, discrimination, threats, a serious welfare concern, a violation of DA regulations, or a possible grave violation of DASI membership obligations, the matter may be referred directly to the Ombudspersons, the DASI Board, the appropriate DA administrative partner, or another competent body.

Any such referral must respect the respective powers and responsibilities established by the DASI Constitution and Rules of Procedure.

Disputes and the Court of Arbitration

The moderation, warning, Ombudsperson, and Board procedures described above do not replace the DASI Court of Arbitration.

Under **Article 18 of the DASI Constitution**, disputes arising from the association shall be settled before the Court of Arbitration.

Accordingly, where a matter concerning these Rules of Conduct develops into a dispute arising from the association that cannot be resolved through ordinary communication, moderation, or the supportive involvement of the Ombudspersons, the dispute shall be

dealt with through the Court of Arbitration in accordance with the DASI Constitution and Rules of Procedure.

General Principles

All action taken under these Rules of Conduct should be handled as fairly, consistently, proportionately, and confidentially as reasonably possible.

Where a decision may adversely affect an individual, they should normally be informed of the concern and given a reasonable opportunity to explain their perspective before a final decision is made.

These Rules of Conduct supplement the DASI Constitution and Rules of Procedure. They do not override them. In the event of any inconsistency, the DASI Constitution and Rules of Procedure prevail.