



Operational Protocol

between

DITSU Student Council

and

DIT Students' Union CLG

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***Approve by Student Council on 7th December 2016 &
The Board of DITSU CLG on 18th January 2017.***

1. Introduction

1.1 DITSU has, as its principle purpose, the provision of opportunities for students at the DIT to experience education in the widest sense. To this end DITSU is structured as set out in its Constitution. A key resource of DITSU is the employed staff, who provides continuity, professional advice, managerial expertise and day-to-day operation and implementation of policy.

The purpose of this protocol is to clarify relationships between students, their elected representatives and full-time staff, and the respective accountability of all concerned to the Student Council and the Board of DITSU CLG as appropriate. It is intended that following discussions this document would be adopted by both Student Council as an operational protocol to the Constitution and by the Board of DITSU CLG, as Company policy.

1.2 While staff members will wish to establish their own particular working relationships, this written protocol, together with other agreements and contracts between staff and DITSU, will be recognised as contractual in the event of any dispute.

1.3 The CEO shall ensure that every member of staff and the Officer Group is issued with a copy of this protocol.

1.4 The terms of this protocol will apply to all staff irrespective of their position in the organisation and their status as a member/or not of a Trades Union.

1.5 Any breach of this protocol will be considered as a serious disciplinary matter.

2. Specific Intent

2.1 It is the specific intention of this Agreement to ensure that DITSU shall:

- Comply with all Employment and Employment Protection Laws currently in force.
- Empower the DITSU CLG board to act with full authority as the legal employer of DITSU staff.
- Ensure that elected officers (full and part time) are fully accountable to the Student Council and thereby, to the students that elect them.
- To protect DITSU from any interference in the conduct of its political policy-making by employees as this is the prerogative of the democratic student structures established under the DITSU Constitution.
- Maintain sound employment practices and good staff relations.

3. Definitions

3.1 In this document, the following definitions apply:

3.1.1 "Political Policy" is policy that is developed and approved by the Student Council and elected officers through the democratic structures and maintained in the official Mandates and Policies manuals. It also includes Constitutional mandates such as the membership of USI.

3.1.2 "Policies" are documents, such as this one, financial management procedures etc., largely developed by staff, which provide frameworks and procedures for the day to-day operation of the organisation in a manner which ensures good governance, and to which all staff are bound under their employment contracts

3.1.3 "Staff" are individuals or groups of individuals who are employed by DITSU CLG.

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3.1.4 “Student Staff” are students at the DIT, including sabbaticals, who are elected employees of DITSU CLG. Permanent staff who have chosen to undertake a course to complement their work will not be regarded as “student staff”.

3.1.5 The distinction between “Staff” and “Student Staff” in this document exists solely to provide guidance on issues of conflicting priorities. In the event of confusion as to the status of an individual staff member, guidance from the Chairperson of the Board and the Chairperson to Student Council will be sought.

4. Staffing matters and elected officers

4.1 Elected officers provide political leadership to the organisation, defining political policy through democratic means. They represent the members of DITSU and work closely with staff to ensure that the operations of the Union, particularly those within an officer’s portfolio, cater for, and are responsive to, the needs of the membership.

4.2 DITSU CLG Management, especially the CEO, shall take responsibility for ensuring that organisational direction is informed and influenced by the political agendas of elected officers.

4.3 In many instances, elected officers (in particular, but not exclusively, full time officers) work closely with staff members. Staff members and officers are expected to invest time and effort to ensure that productive working relationships are developed. Broadly, however, the work of staff is to be directed by the management structure, and elected officers’ impact on the day-to-day work of staff should be limited to the development of political policy, discussions within the Board of DITSU CLG, and discussions with related portfolio managers on matters pertinent to their roles.

4.4 Courtesy between Officers and Staff is expected at all times and officers will never instruct staff without observing the requirements of the line management structure. Specific attention should be paid to the tenor of written communications amongst all staff.

4.5 The Board of DITSU CLG will be the only body where elected representatives are empowered to discuss individual staff members, and to discuss matters relating to recruitment, appointment, remuneration and terms and conditions of staff.

4.6 All employee related discussions at Board level shall be held in camera (closed session) and there shall be no published minutes of such discussions. The CEO will keep a written confidential record that will be countersigned by the Chairperson of the Board as being a true and accurate record of such discussions.

4.7 The elected officers of the Union should actively ensure that discussions on individual staff members, on conduct, performance, recruitment and of terms and conditions do not take place:

- In Institute or external media
- On online fora or websites
- In formal and informal Union meetings

4.8 DITSU CLG Board shall be responsible for staff matters. The membership of the Board shall be as specified in the Constitution, and shall be serviced by the CEO.

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5. Responsibilities of Staff

- 5.1 Staff members are expected to advise elected officers of the Union on any matter within their area of work, but shall not seek in any other way to influence the policy-making process.
- 5.2 The President shall be the official spokesperson of DITSU. Staff may not take part in any public discussion on DITSU policy, nor give public expression to views contrary to DITSU policies, including:
- In Institute or DITSU media
 - In formal and informal Union meetings
 - In formal or informal meetings or discussions with representatives of the Institute
 - In social environments
- 5.3 Staff should not enter into discussion with Union members as to the performance of Union officers.
- 5.4 Staff may not seek to influence the outcome of the democratic processes of the Union, though they may contribute to the administration and fair operation of such processes.
- 5.5 Staff may not show support by the wearing of badges or the display of any campaign literature relating to any internal elections.
- 5.6 Unless defined as "Student Staff" in accordance with section 3 above, the responsibilities and restrictions placed on staff members shall override the privileges of Union membership. In practice:
- Staff members cannot participate in democratic meetings other than in an administrative and recording capacity.
 - Staff members should not stand or vote in any Union elections.
- 5.7 Staff may not be members nor participate in the activities of clubs and societies that give expression to political views or opinions that may undermine the roles of elected officers within DITSU.
- 5.8 Staff will develop professional working relationships with personnel from the Parent Institution. At all times care needs to be taken not to compromise DITSU on issues concerning elected officers or any other member of DITSU staff.
- 5.9 The CEO is the designated senior staff member with responsibility for servicing and attending Board meetings and employed to provide professional advice and continuity in the organisations affairs.
- 5.9.1 The CEO will be in attendance at all meetings of Board. When such discussions directly relate to the CEO they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- 5.9.2 The CEO, after consultation with the Union President may appoint a nominee to attend a meeting in their place. Staff may not exercise a vote in any meeting organised under the auspices of the DITSU Constitution.

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6. Student Staff

- 6.1 Student staff are employed by DITSU CLG to carry out specific duties within DITSU's employment structure as provided for by the DITSU Constitution.
- 6.2 Student Staff shall enjoy the full rights and privileges of all employees but shall be accountable to the President and Student Council in respect of all day to day aspects of their contracts of employment.
- Student Staff may not campaign on an issue or in an election in a manner that is contrary to DITSU policy.
 - Points 5.1 to 5.8 above apply to Student Staff whilst on duty or acting as a staff member.
 - Student staff are precluded from raising any matters in relation to their employment with DITSU in any public forum or meeting.
- 6.3 Student staff may raise complaints or grievances about their employment directly to the President and have recourse to the DITSU CLG Grievance Procedure including its appeal procedures

7. Complaints

7.1 Procedure for complaints about Student Staff (as defined in 3.1.4)

- 7.1.1 Any individual member of DITSU or any full-time staff member of DITSU CLG having cause for complaint or grievance on a matter relating to any individual or group of staff employed by DITSU CLG, including performance complaints, should in the first instance raise the matter with the President or CEO, who will discuss with the matter with each other. If the matter concerned relates to the President or CEO themselves, then it should be raised with either the Chairperson to Student Council or the Chairperson of DITSU CLG, respectively.
- 7.1.2 If the matter relates to a Student Staff member as defined in 3.1.4, and concerns their performance of their duties, then the President will discuss with the CEO who shall investigate and report back to the President within 10 working days. The Chair of Student Council shall also receive a copy of the report and following discussions with the President shall have full discretion to place the report before Student Council.
- 7.1.3 The CEO and President shall determine what, if any, further action is to be taken in relation to the complaint. DITSU CLG discipline and grievance procedures may be invoked.

7.2 Procedure for complaints by staff

- 7.2.1 Any member of staff having cause to complain about the conduct or behaviour of any student shall raise the matter in confidence with their Line Manager.
- 7.2.2 The Line Manager will raise the matter with the President and the CEO. The complaint shall be investigated by the CEO, with a report back by the CEO to the staff member once a decision has been made.

7.3 Discipline and Grievance Procedures

- 7.3.1 This Agreement does not affect an employee's right to access under DITSU discipline and grievance procedure or any rights of an individual in law.

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8. Performance and Accountability of Student Staff

Prior to each meeting of Student Council, the CEO shall update the Chairperson to Student Council in relation to any HR or work performance issues relating to student staff.

It shall be at the discretion of the Chairperson to Student Council in conjunction with the CEO, to seek solutions in the matters arising or to refer the matter directly to Student Council for their consideration.

9. Communications Protocol

At the invitation Student Council each year some members of DITSU full time staff shall update Council on various aspects of the work of DITSU.

The Chairperson of the Board of DITSU CLG shall address a meeting of Student Council to update the councillors on the work of the Board.

The CEO shall address a meeting of Student Council to discuss the annual DITSU Programme of Work.

The Deputy CEO and Company Auditor shall address a meeting of Student Council to explain and go through the audited financial statements for the previous year end.

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