



Technological University

Dublin Students' Union

Student Council

Policies

**Policies are valid for a period of five years from the date they were passed
i.e. 22nd April 2016 to 22nd April 2021**

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Drug Harm Reduction- 23rd October 2019

TU Dublin Students' Union is the largest students' union in Ireland with approximately 29,000 members.

As outlined in Article 2 of our Constitution (2019) we act in the best interests of our members and per Article 3 (v) we work to 'promote the welfare and well-being of members'.

One area of concern for us relates to addressing the issue of drug use which is becoming more widespread in the general population according to data from the *European Monitoring: Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction*, as follows:

"Available data suggest that drug use has become more common among the adult general population aged 15-64 years in Ireland over recent years. Fewer than 2 in 10 adults reported use of any illicit drug during their lifetime in 2002-03, but this figure increased to approximately 3 in 10 in 2014-15"

Trends would assume that since this, numbers may have further increased. There is currently a lack of understanding in Irish culture regarding harm reduction and due to this there is no effective response to drugs in Irish society. Drug harm reduction aims to reduce harm associated with the use of drugs, and do not fail on the basis of abstinence.

The Union recognises that drugs are illegal but believe that harm reduction should be viewed as a middle ground where people with widely differing views on drug policy can agree with one another regarding practical immediate ways to reduce drug-related harm among users.

The Students' Union wishes to promote the safety of students by providing accurate and relevant drug harm reduction information.

To act upon this the Union will:

- Lobby TU Dublin to work towards having a policy on drug harm reduction
- Collaborate with organisations which already run drug harm reduction initiatives
- Provide drug harm reduction information in all campaigns related to drugs.

TUDSU Accommodation – 10th April 2019

The difficulty that students face in finding accommodation has risen dramatically in the last few years. Students struggle to look for affordable and fit-for-purpose accommodation. There is also a need to increase student awareness of their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

We have seen an increase of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) around the Grangegorman area that is unaffordable and taking advantage of our students. TUDSU has serious concerns and disappointment in the price of these PBSA complexes.

TUDSU has decided that it can no longer support or publicly promote this private student accommodation as we believe that it is not affordable for most of the student population that we represent in TU Dublin. Students will be paying over €1000 a month which we cannot stand for.

TUDSU also will not support and will stand up against any unaffordable accommodation that TU Dublin, Grangegorman Development Agency or any other external or internal organisation build on the Grangegorman campus.

The Union wants:

- Secured grants for Higher Educational Institutions to build purpose built student accommodation
- Affordable and fit-for-purpose student accommodation
- Lobby for the regulation of Air B n B
- Introduce rent pressure zones for purpose built student accommodation
- Ensure students have appropriate tenancies rights in both student accommodation and digs
- Criteria to be introduced on the TU Dublin Student Pad so that student accommodation is safe, affordable and of good quality

TUDSU Welfare – 10th April 2019

Homelessness

TUDSU recognises and supports the Coalition for Homelessness and Housing policies as formed in 2016

LGBTQ+

TUDSU recognises that Northern Ireland does not recognise same-sex marriage. After supporting the marriage for equality campaign in 2015, TUDSU believes that same sex marriage should be legal. TUDSU also believes that everyone is equal and has the right to marry the person of their choice regardless of their sexual orientation.

TUDSU will support Students' Unions in Northern Ireland in their Love equality campaign to legalise same sex marriage in Northern Ireland.

Irish Gender Recognition

TUDSU will continue to support the lobby to review the Irish Gender Recognition Act, in support of a more inclusive society.

Abortion Rights

The TU Dublin Students' Union recognises the Repeal of the 8th Amendment and the legislation of Abortion Rights in Ireland. The Union also recognises the time, effort and hard work put in to achieve this result but that the legislation is still quite restrictive and has evident loop holes.

The Union shall support the campaign for full access to free, safe and legal access to abortion services in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, for all.

Consent Classes with TU Dublin

TUDSU welcome the exciting and ambitious project with TU Dublin to roll out consent classes to 4,500 first year students this September as part of the 2019 Orientation.

The Students' Union is further committing to working with and lobbying TU Dublin for rolling out mandatory consent classes to all students in TU Dublin across all campuses.

Sustainability and Climate Action – 10th April 2019

According to NASA, carbon dioxide levels in the air are at their highest in the past 650,000 years and since 2001, 18 out of the 19 warmest years have all occurred. In 2012, the Arctic summer sea ice shrank to the lowest extent on record and the global average sea level has risen 7 inches (178mm) in the last 100 years. In adTU Dublin ion, every day in Ireland 2 million disposable coffee cups end up in landfill waste and 8 million pieces of plastic find their way into our oceans.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our century and creates considerable stress to our environment. Shifting weather patterns threaten food production, the rising sea levels increase the risk of flooding, the impacts of climate change are global and bizarre. These impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly if we do not act on it today.

To act, the Students' Union will:

- Work in partnership with appropriate campaign groups to actively lobbying government on meeting sustainability targets.
- Lobby TU Dublin to recycle their waste, for a plastic free campus and provide appropriate facilities to allow students and staff to wash any plastic materials
- To work with USI to lobby government to increase the carbon tax in Ireland
- Organise a 'Green Week' Campaign once a year that will raise awareness about sustainability to students
- Reduce the use of paper and plastic where possible at all TUDSU meetings, events and commercial activities
- Encourage the use of reusable cups and water bottles amongst students in TU Dublin

TUDSU RAG Charity – 20th March 2019

The TU Dublin Students' Union recognises the benefits of raising money for charity, both in terms of fundraising for worthy causes and in raising the profile of the Students' Union and the services it provides. RAG stands for Raising and Giving.

In order to further raise the profile of this concept, the TU Dublin Students' Union Student Council, and the respective Councils in IT Tallaght SU and IT Blanchardstown SU, shall vote on and determine three charities, one each, by the last council of the year. A percentage contribution of all profitable events run by the TU Dublin Students' Union throughout the year, shall be set aside, divided by three and added to the proceeds generated from the designated RAG charity events.

This policy should be advertised to all students in the lead up to the election of the charities. Nominations for the three RAG Charities shall open during the second semester for the following academic year. Two registered students shall be required to nominate each charity. Following the close of nominations, the charities nominated shall be contacted and required to submit a proposal detailing who they are, what they do and how any money raised for them will benefit the charity.

Student Councillors will be given the opportunity to review the proposals and decide on which charity they would like to support. The three Charities who receive the greatest support, from TUDSU, ITBSU and ITTSU, will become the chosen charities for the following academic year and will be announced by the last Student Council meeting of the year. The Student Council in TUDSU and respective Councils in ITBSU & ITTSU, will only select three chosen charities, to which all RAG proceeds for the following academic year will be divided equally between the three charities and donated.

A presentation of the funds raised for the designated RAG charities by the Union shall be made at the Recognition Ceremony held at the end of the academic year, on the total funds raised throughout the year.

Charities chosen to receive RAG funds may not be nominated as a RAG charity for the following two years.

The Union shall not offer financial support to any charity other than the official three RAG charities in any given year but shall advise any other charity seeking financial support as to how they may receive a nomination as the official three RAG Charities for future years, by way of a standard reply from the Clerk to Student Council. Thus, where a charity wishes to promote itself on campus, it may be allowed where it is deemed by the President not to interfere with the official RAG Charities, and where it is not a burden on the Union.

Ending Direct Provision – 28th February 2019

Direct Provision is the current system for accommodating asylum seekers in Ireland. Conceived in 1999, direct provision was intended as a short-term measure of 6 months, yet it continues today. The system is overseen by the department of justice through the reception and integration agency but is largely operated by private interests.

The system has time and time again received criticism from human rights organisations for its living conditions in Dublin and long stays, which often lead to declining physical and mental health for the residents. Direct provision represents state sponsored infringement of human rights.

To this end, the Students' Union shall:

- Endeavour to inform students of Direct Provision and the reality of the lives of those living within it;
- Oppose the system of direct provision;
- Support the campaign to end direct provision;
- Avoid supporting any company profiting from the system of direct provision; and
- Campaign for the Irish government to ratify the EU Reception Conditions Directive which mandates minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers

Support Campaign Against Church Ownership of National Maternity Hospital – 12th December 2018

TUDSU has supported and campaigned for the repeal of the 8th Referendum. With a high majority of the student body voting in favour of supporting the removal of the 8th amendment, the wish to promote bodily autonomy during pregnancy is supported.

The current plans of the government to allow the ownership and governing of the National Maternity Hospital to go to Catholic organisations may hinder the opportunity to have full access to services that should be available. The continued opposition of religious organisations in abortion access and bodily autonomy in maternal healthcare may impact people seeking these services.

TUDSU supports the campaign for the National Maternity Hospital to be under public ownership and governed by a new, secular charter.

Education Policy - 18th October 2018

Class Reps

Where a Class Rep misses two class rep meetings in a row without sending apologies, their respective College Officer or School Rep will directly contact that Class Rep through whatever means deemed appropriate in order to offer support/guidance. Where necessary the College Officer or School Rep will report back to their Student Advisor or the Vice President for Education.

The College Officers to have a "most valuable class rep" awards at the end of each class rep meeting every semester to create an incentive to attend and recognise when a rep is actively contributing to the Union in these meetings.

School Reps

The VP for Education must hold training for all school reps once per semester minimum. In this training the VP for Education will guide the school rep through issues they face in their roles.

TUD Students' Union recognises the important role that School Reps hold in regards to representation within their varying schools and in raising matters through the appropriate channels in both TUD and TUDSU. In order for School Reps to be as effective as possible, they should be in regular contact with the relevant College Officer(s) for their school. In order for this to be possible College Officers shall meet with all relevant school reps to their sites at least twice a semester. These meetings shall include; any and all relevant TUDSU activities that school Reps should know, relevant updates from the schools of the representatives present. To ensure that school reps are as effective as possible the Vice President of Education shall endeavour to have a meeting held with the relevant School Reps and the Dean of each College within the TUD at least once per academic year, between the end of semester one and halfway through semester two.

Postgraduates

The TUD Students' Union believes that Postgraduate students within the TUD should have academic supports provided to them all year round.

Education Campaigns

The Vice President for Education to run a campaign before the end of the First Semester every year to ensure students are made aware of their rights under the Student Charter.

TUD Students' Union recognises the important role poster campaigns play in the day to day communication with the students of the TUD. More importantly, in the run up to exams they act as a valuable source of information and the Union feels that it is an essential part of its communication with its membership. In order to get the maximum amount of recognition for the services the Union provides, it's important that students see the Union as a helpful agent that wants to inform and settle students concerns in the run up to the stressful exam period. It is therefore the belief of the Students' Union that the running of a yearly poster campaign around exam preparation should be carried out. This campaign should reflect the examination requirements and practices of each TUD node appropriate to the practices set out by the exams office as well as giving practical advice to students.

TUD Quality Assurance

Academic Calendar Policy – 1 st December 2015

It shall be the policy of TUD Students' Union to hold a position as dictated by the below principles in relation to the Dublin Institute of Technology Academic Calendar:

- That four weeks' notice must be given between the release of exam timetables and the first week of examinations commencing in all scheduled sittings of exams.
- That all continuous assessment must be concluded at least one week prior to the examination period.
- That library facilities across all campuses must be open for at least three full days in the calendar week prior to an examination week.
- That a review of the academic calendar be carried out by TUD that includes student representation at least every two years.
- That any proposed changes made to the academic calendar be brought to TUDSU Student Council for discussion and feedback in a timely manner.

Library Reading Resources – 15th October 2015

As per the TUD Handbook for Quality Enhancement (2014), it is affirmed that any changes to reading resources "should be accessible to students and where new resources are to be recommended this information must be provided to the library with the timeframe specified" as being "finalised by the end of May for programmes due to be delivered the following September and by mid-November for programmes due to commence the following January". It is the policy of TUD Students' Union that all reading resources as prescribed by the Programme Committee of all courses within TUD be made available to the library services as set out as above, so as to best serve student learning.

Access to Education

It is the policy of TUDSU to lobby the Irish Government at all levels to make greater provision to provide support, shelter and assistance to refugees who are seeking help. It is the policy of TUDSU to lobby the Irish government at all levels to make available supports to refugees to allow them to enrol in educational institutes at all levels, including third-level.

TUDSU Opposition to Fees – 18th October 2018

TU Dublin Students' Union will openly oppose the rise in the cost of the Student Contribution Charge and the introduction of an Income Contingent Loan scheme as a method of accessing third level education.

TUDSU believes that education is a fundamental right and serves a public good and that access to it should not be hindered.

TUDSU also calls for a reduction in the current Student Contribution Charge and for an increase in funding for student grants and other financial supports.

TUDSU Relationship with TU Dublin – 18th October 2018

TUDSU is committed to maintaining open and transparent dialogue with TU Dublin , as per the TU Dublin Student Charter (2004), and will act in the best interest of ensuring excellence in learning and a positive experience for students of the TU Dublin .

Elected Officers of the Union sit on various committees and boards within the TU Dublin structure, as the representative voice of the students of TU Dublin , through the Student Council. From time to time, the officers may be called upon to make decisions on behalf of the student membership. It is important that the officers consult with the Student Council on their views, particularly when there is proposed expenditure of student funds.

The Union recognises that funding is provided by way of the Student Contribution Charge through a funding agreement between TU Dublin and TUDSU. If funding of the Union is ever reduced or lost, the President shall take any necessary action in order to secure a satisfactory funding agreement. As per the Funding Agreement, the President shall not allow TU Dublin Internal Audit to have any function in the oversight of TUDSU.

Student Development Fund

TU Dublin recognises the Students' Union as the body which co-signs expenditure from the Capital Development Reserve, of which the Student Development Fund (SDF) forms part of. As the decision-making body of the Union, the Student Council is the ultimate forum to where expenditure must be presented.

The SDF is a fund which was set up to further enhance student's college experience, as a proportion of the Student Contribution Charge paid by each student annually, and any proposed expenditure applied for through the SDF must be presented to the Council for their consideration.

Grangegorman – 18th October 2018

TUDSU welcomes and supports the creation of a Student Centre on the Grangegorman campus.

If facilities do not meet the requirements of the student population, the President shall take whatever action is deemed appropriate, following consultation with the Student Council to ensure students have adequate facilities.

If current facilities deteriorate or if reported facilities issues are ignored, the President following consultation with the Executive shall take appropriate action.

Mental Health - 18th October 2018

Part Time Officer Well-being

TUDSU shall run a well-being and stress management workshop at the start of each semester for part time officers and provide an Employee Assistance Program pamphlet to each office, with continued encouragement to part time officers to avail of the services provided if needed.

Access to Student Counselling

All students in TU Dublin should be able to readily access and avail of the TU Dublin student counselling services, within their own campus, in a timely manner.

Mental Health Campaign

TUDSU believes in providing a framework for good practice for the support of students, promotion of mental well-being and prevention of mental health difficulties. TUDSU acknowledges that it's important to promote informed and positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing, and that we adopt a positive approach in our activities. This will encourage our students to look after their own mental health, that of their friends and those around them.

TUDSU shall liaise regularly and where possible with the TU Dublin Counselling Service, TU Dublin Medical Centre, TU Dublin Chaplaincy and any other relevant divisions of Campus Life in the development of mental health initiatives. It is also critical that the Vice President for Welfare considers the impact of other external issues such as finance, accommodation etc., on the mental health of students. Mindfulness is recommended as a treatment for mental ill-health as well as those who want to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Mindfulness should be incorporated into Mental Health campaigns.

Being physically active as well as being involved in extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on an individual student's mental wellbeing. TU Dublin Clubs and Societies offer useful opportunities for students to engage, connect with their peers, stay fit and have fun! TUDSU shall collaborate, where possible, with Clubs and Societies in initiatives that reduce stigma of mental illness and offer positive and meaningful opportunities to students.

TUDSU will lobby to protect funding of the relevant student support services on campus and will work to ensure student support services meet the highest standards of quality and ensure that students in financial need are catered for through various funds, such as the Student Assistance Fund.

The Vice President for Welfare will run a mental health campaign in, incorporating information about:

- Positive mental health and methods to maintain such a mind-set
- Mental health difficulties and how they can be treated
- Stigma reduction around Mental Health difficulties
- Suicide awareness
- Encourage students to seek help, both on and off campus
- Highlight the importance of talking and support one another
- Support services available both on and off campus

Sexual Health and Personal Safety - 18th October 2018

Sanitary Products

All TUDSU offices will have emergency supplies of sanitary products.

Consent during Orientation

TUDSU will include a section on consent in all first-year induction presentations.

Condom Distribution

TUDSU acknowledges the wide availability of contraception in Ireland, following the Health (Family Planning) (Amendment) Act of 1993, permitting both the sale and advertisement of condoms in Ireland. Enshrined in the Union's mission statement is a pledge to represent and protect the welfare of the members. It is therefore necessary for TUDSU to actively promote good sexual health practices.

The Vice President for Welfare and the appropriate staff shall be responsible for lobbying for the standards and conTU Dublin ions outlined below, as well as all information campaigns relevant to the distribution of condoms.

TUDSU will endeavour to provide condoms to its' members throughout the academic year. In tandem with distribution, TUDSU will endeavour to provide information outlining but not limited to the risks associated with sexual activity and instructions on the use of condoms. TUDSU will further try to provide latex free condoms, shall be distributed through staff upon request.

TUDSU acknowledges that condoms are not 100% guaranteed to work and only abstinence can avoid the risks associated with unprotected sex. TUDSU will endeavour to provide adequate information where possible but also act as a signposting service for students who seek more information from relevant student services, such as the TU Dublin Health Centre.