

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTIONAL RULES

Rule 4

Appendix 1

STUDENT OFFICER PROTOCOL

Preamble

- (i) The term 'Student Officer' shall mean 'a Sabbatical Officer or a Non-Sabbatical Officer'.
- (ii) A Student Officer will, insofar as it is possible, represent the interests of all Students to the University and to the wider community where appropriate.
- (iii) This Protocol shall serve as a Memorandum of Understanding between the Students' Union and the Student Officers.
- (iv) Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union will not be considered to be employees of the Students' Union.

1 Line Management

The Union President shall effectively act as line manager for all other Student Members of the Executive Management Committee, regulating and overseeing arrangements for holidays, sickness absence and performance management.

2 Term of Office

A Sabbatical Student Officer shall hold their post from the first working day of July in the year in which they were elected, until the last working day of June in the following year, except when the position to which they have been elected is vacant or becomes vacant whilst they are an Executive Management Committee Officer-Elect.

All Non-Sabbatical Student Officers shall hold their post from the first working day of July in the year in which they were elected, until the last working day of June in the following year.

If a Non-Sabbatical Student Officer post is vacant at the time of election, the Executive Management Committee Officer-Elect shall assume office immediately upon the result being declared by the Returning Officer. If a Non-Sabbatical Student Officer post becomes vacant whilst they are an Executive Management Committee Officer-Elect, they shall assume office immediately upon the post becoming vacant.

If, for whatever reason, a postholder ceases to be a registered student of the University or is suspended from the University between election, until the end of their term of office, they will be deemed to have resigned and a Bye-Election may be staged at the earliest opportunity in order to elect a successor, which should be held within a reasonable period of time.

A postholder under precautionary suspension shall be suspended from their post pending the outcome of any investigations.

3 Equality and Discipline

- 3.1 A Student Officer shall be bound by the University's Student Conduct Regulations, the Equality and Diversity Statement and other Equality Policies of the University and Students' Union, and shall undertake Equality Training provided by the University, notwithstanding their freedom within the law to put forward controversial or unpopular opinions.
- 3.2 A Student Officer shall not engage in behaviour which brings or may bring the name of the University or the Students' Union into disrepute.

4 Statement of Professional Responsibility

- 4.1 Student Officers shall act in a professional manner appropriate to their post in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, and have a responsibility to work in the best interests of the members of the Union regardless of religious belief, political opinion, race, sex, marital status, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability.
- 4.2 Each Student Officer is a member of a team and should, as far as possible and practical, work together in a team spirit for the benefit of the Students' Union membership. Student Officers shall at all times have regard to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility.

5 Conflict of Interest

- 5.1 A Student Officer shall remain impartial in the exercise of their duties at all times and shall disclose throughout their term of office any relationships with individuals or organisations that may prevent them from doing so.
- 5.2 Student Officers shall not serve as a member of the committee of a Club or Society during their term of office.
- 5.3 A Sabbatical Student Officer shall not hold another job within the University during their term of office.
- 5.4 Student Officers should not hold a second job if it interferes with their role as a student representative. Student Officers shall not receive benefits, whether pay or otherwise, for promoting premises that are competing with the Students' Union. Student Officers shall not receive personal payment or gifts in return for offering the services of the Students' Union.

6 Crossover / Training Events

- 6.1 The Students' Union shall provide induction, crossover and training to Student Officers.
- 6.2 A Student Officer shall attend all required training and crossover events.
- 6.3 The induction shall include an accessibility needs assessment for each Student Officer.

7 Hours of Work

- 7.1 A Student Officer shall work such hours as are reasonably required to carry out the roles and responsibilities of their office in a professional manner.

- 7.2 As a minimum, Sabbatical Student Officers shall generally make themselves available to carry out their roles between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. (Monday to Friday), notwithstanding any arrangements made with the Union President in advance.

- 7.3 A Sabbatical Student Officer is expected to work for a minimum of 35 hours per week.

8 Sickness and Holidays

- 8.1 A Student Officer shall inform the Union President and the Director of the Students' Union if they are unable to carry out their role due to illness.

- 8.2 A Sabbatical Student Officer may take up to twenty-three days' leave in addition to all Statutory and University holidays during their year of office.

- 8.3 Sabbatical Student Officers should make their colleagues aware of their intention to take leave in writing, and should arrange for their roles and responsibilities to be covered by another Sabbatical(s) if appropriate.

9 Committee Attendance

- 9.1 A Student Officer shall attend all Students' Union, University and external committees / meetings relevant to their post, to represent Union members' interests to the University as far as possible and shall report back to the Executive Management Committee on any issues that affect the membership.

- 9.2 The views expressed at these committees shall be consistent with the live policies and Constitution of the Students' Union and the views of the Student Membership.

10 Confidentiality

- 10.1 A Student Officer shall act in a professional way regarding confidentiality, especially in regard to any member whose interests they may be representing.

- 10.2 A Student Officer shall be aware that they are bound by the provisions of legislation, e.g. Freedom of Information Act and the General Data Protection Regulation.

11 Complaints Procedure

A Student Officer wishing to make a complaint shall refer to the University's General Regulations and the University Calendar for Procedures.

12 Students' Union Council

- 12.1 The Council shall have responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the Students' Union subject to Chapter XII of the University Statutes, and shall take account of any resolutions duly passed at Union General Meetings or any Referendum.

- 12.2 A Student Officer shall attend all Students' Union Council meetings.

- 12.3 A Sabbatical Student Officer shall provide a written report of their general activities undertaken in the students' interests to each Statutory Meeting of the Council.

A Non-Sabbatical Student Officer shall present one report of their general activities undertaken in the students' interests to one Statutory Meeting of the Council in each semester.

The Union President shall present a written report of the general activities undertaken in the students' interests by the Executive Management Committee to each Statutory Meeting of the Council.

- 12.4 A Student Officer who fails to attend two meetings of the Council, with or without submitting apologies, shall normally be deemed to have resigned their post as a member of the Executive Management Committee.

A Student Officer may be reinstated if they can demonstrate that exceptional circumstances or a valid academic commitment prevented Council attendance, and they have demonstrated engagement with the Council by submitting apologies for non-attended meetings.

13 Management Board

- 13.1 The executive functions of the Council shall be vested in the Management Board which shall represent and act for and on behalf of the Council.
- 13.2 The primary responsibility of the Management Board shall be to oversee the planning and implementation of the Students' Union's activities. The Management Board shall report to each Statutory Meeting of the Council.
- 13.3 The Management Board ('the Board') shall consist of those members as set out in Annex 3 of the Students' Union Constitution.
- 13.4 A Sabbatical Student Officer shall provide a written report of their general activities undertaken in the students' interests to each meeting of the Management Board.
- 13.5 A Sabbatical Student Officer who fails to attend three meetings of the Management Board shall normally be deemed to have resigned their post as a member of the Executive Management Committee.

14 Executive Management Committee

- 14.1 The Executive Management Committee shall be formed, as a sub-committee of the Management Board, in order to deal with the Students' Union's day-to-day operations. This Committee shall be recognised as the body with responsibility to act as the 'driving force' of the organisation.
- 14.2 The Executive Management Committee shall comprise a team of Student Officers, and the Director and Deputy Directors of the Students' Union, all of whom shall have voting rights. The Union Speaker shall be in attendance, but shall not have voting rights. The staff members will withdraw from those sections of the meeting when reserved student officer business is being discussed.
- 14.3 The Executive Management Committee derives its authority from the Council, and shall report to the Council via the Management Board.
- 14.4 A Student Officer who fails to attend three meetings of the Executive Management Committee without an acceptable reason shall normally be deemed to have resigned their post as a member of that Committee. This clause shall not apply to the following posts: Non-Sabbatical Officers.

15 Media

All communications on behalf of the Students' Union with the media should be processed through the Students' Union staff member who has responsible for such inquiries and shall be countersigned by the Union President in conjunction with the staff member concerned.

16 Roles and Responsibilities

A Student Officer's individual roles and responsibilities shall be as detailed in Rule 4.

Each Sabbatical Student Officer shall, during teaching weeks, dedicate a minimum of three hours per week between the hours of 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. participating in general, in-person, engagement with Student Members.

17 End of Year Reports

A Student Officer shall produce an End of Year Report containing the major issues facing their relevant post and they shall be available upon request in order to discuss these matters at crossover training.

18. Publication of Student Officer Reports

- 18.1 A Sabbatical Student Officer shall produce a report of their general activities undertaken in the students' interests to each Statutory Meeting of the Council.
- 18.2 A Non-Sabbatical Student Officer shall produce one report of their general activities undertaken in the students' interests to one Statutory Meeting of the Council in each semester.
- 18.3 Reports shall be published on the Students' Union website and available to Student Members no later than five clear working days after a Statutory Meeting of the Council.
- 18.4 The Clerk to the Students' Union Council shall determine the details for submission and publication of reports.

19. Questions to Student Officers

- 19.1 Any student may submit a question to a Student Officer. The question shall bear the name of the Proposer, being the name by which the Student is officially known to the University, along with their student number.
- 19.2 The question must be submitted in writing to the Clerk to the Students' Union Council through a process determined by the Clerk.
- 19.3 A Student Officer shall provide a reply to the question within ten working days.
- 19.4 A Student Officer may refer a question to the Union Speaker for consideration as a Tabled Question at the next meeting of the Council. Any question considered as a Tabled Question shall be displayed on an authorised noticeboard of the Students' Union along with the answers not later than 5 working days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) after the Council meeting.
- 19.5 Any Student, including members of the Council, may submit questions on the report of a Student Officer as prescribed in the Rules.

- 19.6 Each Sabbatical Student Officer shall, on two occasions per semester, be required to attend a meeting open to the Student Membership for the purpose of presenting a report on their general activities undertaken in the students' interests and responding to questions from Student Members. The meetings shall be chaired by Speaker. The schedule of meetings shall be published by the Clerk of Council and the meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules.

20 Rejection of Reports to the Council

Should Reports by Sabbatical Officers to the Council be rejected, the following actions will be invoked:

- 20.1 The Council shall not consider Reports from Sabbatical Officers that have not been submitted within the timeframe specified for the submission and publication of reports. Reports that have not been submitted within the set timeframes shall be considered to have been 'rejected', subject to the right to appeal to the Council.
- 20.2 On rejection of a Report from a Sabbatical Officer, mechanisms shall be put in place to monitor the work of that Officer on a weekly basis. This shall be reported to the next meeting of the Management Board.
- 20.3 If two Reports from a Sabbatical Officer are rejected, this shall automatically lead to the staging of a Special Meeting of the Council to consider the removal of that Officer from post, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 1 Paragraph 5.
- 20.4 If three Reports from a Sabbatical Officer are rejected in one academic year, this shall automatically lead to the staging of a further Special Meeting of the Council to consider the removal of that Officer from post, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 1 Paragraph 5.

21 Breaches of Discipline / Removal of a Student Officer

- 21.1 The procedures and protections of the Student Conduct Regulations of the University shall apply in respect of Student Officers as they apply to any Student.
- 21.2 In relation to any Student Officer who acts in a manner which, in the opinion of at least a two-thirds majority of the Management Board, is in contravention of the Student Conduct Regulations or the Student Officer Protocol, then the Management Board may at its discretion request that the Vice-Chancellor of the University considers whether disciplinary action is appropriate in the circumstances.
- 21.3 The Senate shall be notified, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, of all instances whereby allegations of misconduct against a Student Officer are proven. All such disciplinary action shall be implemented in with the University's Student Conduct Regulations.
- 21.4 The Council shall have the power, upon representation from a majority of the Executive Management Committee or the Management Board, or a petition of concern from 20 Council members, to take into consideration the conduct of the holder of any office in the Union and for good cause as defined in Rule 1 remove them from the post. The resolution for such removal shall not be carried unless supported by at least two-thirds of those members of the Council present and voting (by secret ballot) at a Special Meeting of the Council called for such purpose.

- 21.5 A Student Officer may be removed from their post by means of termination of their employment if they are deemed to have committed any serious breach of their obligations as an employee or committed any act of gross misconduct, or if they cease to be entitled to work in the UK.
- 21.6 The Students' Union Management Board shall have responsibility for developing, approving, and monitoring all Students' Union employment-related workplace conduct procedures as they apply to Student Officers.