

The principal objective of any Union's Protocol is to clarify the working relationship between ordinary students, elected officers, staff and managers.

Whilst the statement makes reference to contracts, terms and conditions of employment, grievance and disciplinary procedures, they do not form part of the contract but rather a separate agreement between the Union and the staff.

1 STUDENTS UNION PROTOCOL

The University of Bath Students' Union exists to represent its members and provide them with services, support and opportunities for development to enable them to maximise the benefits of their overall student experience. Critical to the successful operation of the Union is a positive and harmonious working relationship between Union members, officers and staff. The purpose of this Protocol is to clarify the relationships between these stakeholders and should be read within the context of the Union's agreed Constitution.

- 1.1 Central to the resources of the Students' Union are the employed staff who provide continuity, professional advice, managerial expertise and who undertake its day-to-day operation and implementation within a policy framework agreed by its members. Union staff are University employees who work under the direction of the Chief Executive.

2 SPECIFIC INTENT

- 2.1 It is the specific intention of this agreement to ensure that the Union shall:
- 2.2 Work with University Personnel to ensure that employee and employer protection legislation at the time being in force, is complied with.
- 2.3 Strive to implement and monitor the University's and the Union's Equal Opportunities policies and to encourage the University to work towards being an Equal Opportunities employer.
- 2.4 Maintain sound employment practices and good staff relations.
- 2.5 Unless otherwise provided for within the Constitution, the following Protocol outlines the relationship between staff and the elected officers.

3 GUIDE TO STAFF PROTOCOL DOCUMENT

- 3.1 Elected Officers of the Students' Union share a collective and individual responsibility to ensure that under no circumstances shall discussions take place of matters relating to the responsibilities, conditions of employment, performance or conduct of members of staff other than at a closed session meeting of the Executive Committee.

This section protects you as an employee from having your terms and conditions of employment, salary, grievance, discipline, etc discussed by the

student body in general, in open meetings and allows issues relating to your employment to be discussed only through a specified committee structure.

- 3.2 Criticism or negative comments made against individual staff matters should be treated with STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY at all times and should never, therefore, be the subject of Students' Union publicity; neither shall staff or elected officers communicate with any media concerning such matters.

This section ensures that strict confidentiality is observed in relation to staffing issues and that staff members individual names will not be disclosed in minutes, leaflets, documents, etc. Reference in minutes should be to the post title and not individual names. Whilst members of the Executive share a collective responsibility for enforcing this, the Vice President (Democracy & Communications) is responsible for monitoring this and for handling any such communications with the media.

- 3.3 Staff shall not publicly question or disagree with agreed Union policy.
- 3.4 Students and users of Union facilities who have cause to comment on staff or staffing matters should contact the SU President (or in the SU President's absence, one of the two Vice-Presidents) who will take up the matter with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will take whatever actions are necessary and prudent, within the terms and conditions appertaining to those staff.

Should a student have cause to complain about you as an employee then they would first report the incident to the SU President and they would bring this matter to the attention of the Chief Executive, who will then be responsible for the investigation into such a complaint directly with the employee concerned. The procedure used will be that adopted by the University.

- 3.5 The Chief Executive has the contracted authority to be responsible for all staffing matters within agreed policies and procedures. This authority should be respected by all members of staff and elected officers. Policy matters or issues such as the establishment of new posts shall be within the remit of the Executive Committee.

This means that, within the Students' Union, the Chief Executive has the authority and responsibility for all matters relating to your employment although, in practice, certain aspects are delegated to Line Managers. This includes discipline and grievances, holidays, job performance etc.

- 3.6 In order to avoid confusion and ensure that the smooth operation of the Students' Union is not adversely affected, the appropriate channels must be used at all times when dealing with Executive/Staff matters or inter-relationships.

The clause does not exclude an elected officer from making a request of a relatively minor nature in the absence of the relevant senior manager.

However, as a general rule, staff members should not be INSTRUCTED direct either verbally or in writing to perform duties and responsibilities indicated by an Executive Officer. It is important to stress that the Union operates by way of a partnership between elected officers and staff. Every effort should be made to respond positively to reasonable requests from elected officers which can be accommodated within agreed priorities and current workload.. "Appropriate Channels" means the relevant Line Manager structure.

- 3.7 In appointing a member of staff to service a Committee or Body of the Students' Union, that Committee should do so in consultation with the Line Manager and/or Chief Executive.
- 3.8 Courtesy between executive Officers and Staff is expected at all times. Executive Officers will, at all times, pursue any complaints or comments regarding management of staff with the SU President, who will liaise with the Chief Executive or Senior Managers concerned. Conversely, staff should address any complaints or comments about Executive Officers or students through the University's grievance procedure.

This section merely states the obvious that staff and elected officers should be polite and courteous to each other and allows elected officers to have a channel to complain about inappropriate behaviour by staff to the SU President and staff members to complain about inappropriate behaviour by elected officers to the Senior Managers who will refer such matters through the Chief Executive to the SU President. It should be stressed that every effort should be made to resolve a complaint or grievance informally before invoking the formal procedure.

- 3.9 Members of staff shall not become actively involved in the politics of the Union, or be encouraged to do so by Executive Officers or the general student population, nor will they become politically involved in, or attempt to, influence Union Elections. The only involvement may be in giving assistance to the Returning Officer.

It is often easy for staff members to get 'drawn in' to political or Executive debates and often problems arise at election time. Staff members may provide professional advice but essentially should remain neutral and not get involved in taking sides with elected Officers and prospective candidates nor make statements nor volunteer opinions about the behaviour or politics of the Executive Committee or any elected officer.

- 3.10 Confidential matters must not be the subject of discussion between staff and Executive Officers or any members of the student body.

Again, confidential matters should be kept confidential and your employment should be a matter for you and your relevant Line Manager or Senior Manager. Please note that the Students' Union's Academic, Welfare and Representation Centre should not be asked to give advice on individual employment issues.

- 3.11 To avoid jeopardising the smooth running of the Union and the operation of agreed upon Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, this Protocol Agreement should be adhered to at all times.

The Disciplinary Procedure can be flawed if elected Officers get involved in pursuing the case of an employee who is being disciplined or believes they have a grievance and this clause ensures that employment law is followed and that staff and officers adhere to this document.

- 3.12 The Chief Executive will ensure that each member of staff and the Executive Committee is issued with a copy of this Protocol Agreement.

The protocol sets out standards of conduct and behaviour and may be referred to in relation to any disciplinary or grievance proceedings.

- 3.13 The protection of this protocol document shall extend to everyone working within the Students' Union, except when this contradicts any current employment legislation.

This ensures that the Protocol is adhered to at all times and applies to all members of staff. You are all protected by this document and only when it contradicts employment legislation can it be waived.

- 3.14 This Protocol Agreement should not be altered or amended in any way unless by mutual agreement between the Chief Executive, following consultation with the staff, the SU President and the Executive Committee.

Although this document is not formally a part of the employment contract, it is important in defining the relationship between staff and elected officers and should only be amended by mutual agreement. However, the Executive Committee will merely ratify any changes proposed.

- 3.15 Any complaint about the operation of this Protocol Agreement should be made in the first instance to the Chief Executive and, thereafter, to the SU President or in the case of a Students' Union officer, direct to the SU President.

4 ADDITIONAL CLAUSES FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

- 4.1 Students who become casual or part-time employees of the Students' Union (University) may be members of the committee(s) which oversee that trading area (eg Commercial Services Committee) whilst they are employed by the Students' Union (University) but must declare an interest prior to any debate which might directly or indirectly affect their employment terms. In such circumstances, they may be asked by the Committee Chair to abstain from any vote taken. This does not affect their right to ordinary membership of Clubs & Societies, nor to vote in Union elections, nor in Club, Society or General meetings.

- 4.2 Any student officer or member of the Students' Union who has a potential conflict of interest, for example by way of relationship to or with an employee of the Students' Union, should declare the interest in all discussions or debate in that area of union work.