

THE STUDENTS' UNION (*THE SU*) BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND RECOVERY POLICY

Vision: Supporting Student Members to be at the heart of all decisions made about business continuity and recovery of The SU.

Rationale: To ensure that The SU is prepared and able to respond effectively in the event of disruption to normal services and activities.

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Definition of business disruption

The SU defines business disruption as a national or local event which has the potential to disrupt its ability to continue its conventional day to day activities for a period of more than seven days.

Some examples of business disruption include:

- A fire, chemical leak or severe storm that has made part or all of campus inaccessible;
- A sudden or unexpected loss of staffing;
- A political event causing wide-scale national unrest;
- The outbreak of a disease that results in social isolation or quarantine.

Preparing for business disruption

To ensure that The SU is prepared to respond in the event of business disruption it keeps a business continuity plan.

The business continuity plan focuses only on the essential activities and records for each;

- the impact that its loss or disruption would have on The SU;
- the maximum amount of time that a loss or disruption could be tolerated;
- the target time for recovery;
- the actions that can be taken to reduce the impact of disruption and/or ensure continuity;
- the staff responsible for oversight of the activity.

An essential activity is defined as one which must be considered or continued in the event of disruption due to:

- it being vital for ensuring that Student Members can be advised, supported and represented;
- the severe financial impact that it could have on the long term future of The SU;
- the impact that it could have on the health & safety of staff and Student Members;
- it being a legal requirement.

The Board of Trustees and senior management are responsible for annually reviewing the business continuity plan to ensure that it is kept up to date.

Responding to business disruption

When the threat of a potential business disruption to The SU is identified the business continuity group (*Officers and senior management*) will hold regular meetings until the disruption has been resolved.

To limit the risk associated with the group being assembled in a single place meetings may be held virtually.

This group will normally be led by the Chief Executive but, if absent, by the following staff in descending order:

- Deputy Chief Executive;
- Head of Student Voice & Engagement;
- Another Head of Department as determined most appropriate by the group.

Where a staff member acts up in the place of the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive they may be eligible for acting up allowance in accordance with University policy.

The group lead will be responsible for:

- deciding the frequency and length of meetings, and who else should be invited to attend;
- making decisions regarding essential activities included on the business continuity plan;
- determining what other (*if any*) non-essential activities should be prioritised;
- monitoring the impact the disruption is having on the budget and making decisions to help reduce this;
- resolving further issues that might arise as a result of the disruption;
- communicating the impact of the disruption to Student Members, staff, Trustees and the University;
- planning how The SU will recover in the long term from the disruption.

The Board should be informed when a business disruption is occurring and consulted where;

- it needs to be reported to the Charity Commission as a serious incident;
- decisions need to be made which will permanently affect staffing;
- decisions need to be made which will significantly impact on the planned budget for the year;
- money needs to be authorised from the reserves to support The SU operating costs.

Reviewing a business disruption

Following an end to business disruption the business continuity group should review their response to identify:

- any long term implications of the disruption to The SU;
- possible opportunities missed to avoid or reduce the impact of the disruption;
- any amendments that need to be made to the business continuity plan;
- any new practices adopted temporarily during the disruption that should be kept going forward;

This should be written up as a report and submitted for review and consideration at the next meeting of the:

- Finance & Audit committee;
- Board of Trustees.

Testing preparations for business disruption

As it is unlikely that a business disruption will occur often The SU should test annually its ability to respond.

This should be done by having the business continuity group respond to a hypothetical business disruption.

The purpose of this should be to:

- test and familiarise senior management with the procedures within this policy;
- test the effectiveness of the current business continuity plan and identify any improvements needed;
- prepare senior management by getting them to think about how The SU can continue to function under potentially different and more challenging circumstances.

The test should also ensure that a review of the hypothetical business disruption is carried out exactly in accordance with the procedures above for reviewing a business disruption.