



University of Bath

Students' Union

Regulation 8

Staff Protocol

Staff Protocol

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Staff Protocol

The principal objective of this Protocol is to clarify the working relationship between Members, including those elected to any SU committee and SU 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. **SU PROTOCOL**

The Students' Union exists to help students get the most from their student experience. Critical to the successful operation of the SU is a positive and harmonious working relationship between SU Members and staff. The purpose of this Protocol is to clarify the relationships between these stakeholders and should be read within the context of the SU's Articles of Governance.

- 1.1. Central to the resources of the SU 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. SU 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 SU shall:
 - 2.1.1. Work with University Human Resources Department to ensure that employee and employer protection legislation at the time being in force, is complied with.
 - 2.1.2. Strive to implement and monitor the University's and the SU's policies.
 - 2.1.3. Maintain sound employment practices and good staff relations.
- 2.2. Unless otherwise provided for within the Articles of Governance and Bye-Laws, the following Protocol outlines the relationship between staff and the Members.

3. **GUIDE TO STAFF PROTOCOL DOCUMENT**

- 3.1. SU Officers of the SU 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 Management Group.

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

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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 SU publicity; neither shall staff or SU 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 SU Officer team share a collective responsibility for enforcing this, the SU President 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 SU policy.
- 3.4. Students and users of SU 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 other SU Officers) 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 SU Officers. Policy matters or issues such as the establishment of new posts shall be within the remit of the Board of Trustees and subject to University procedures.

This means that, within the SU, 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 SU is not adversely affected, the appropriate channels must be used at all times when dealing with SU Officer/staff matters or inter-relationships.

The clause does not exclude a SU Officer from making a request of a relatively minor nature in the absence of the relevant

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Senior Manager. However, as a general rule, staff members should not be INSTRUCTED either verbally or in writing to perform duties and responsibilities indicated by a SU Officer. It is important to stress that the SU operates by way of a partnership between SU Officers and staff. Every effort should be made to respond positively to reasonable requests from SU 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, Student Group of the SU, that Committee or Group should do so in consultation with the Line Manager and/or Chief Executive.
- 3.8. Courtesy between SU Officers and staff is expected at all times. SU 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 SU Officers or Members through the University's grievance procedure.

This section merely states the obvious that staff and SU Officers should be polite and courteous to each other and allows SU 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 SU 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 SU, or be encouraged to do so by SU Officers or the general student population, nor will they become politically involved in, or attempt to, influence SU 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 SU Officer 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 SU Officers and prospective candidates nor make statements nor volunteer opinions about the behaviour or politics of the SU Officer team or any Member.

- 3.10. Confidential matters must not be the subject of discussion between staff and SU 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 neither the SU's Advice and

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Representation Centre nor Joblink should be asked to give advice on individual employment issues.

- 3.11. To avoid jeopardising the smooth running of the SU 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 Members 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 Members adhere to this document.

- 3.12. The Chief Executive will ensure that each member of staff and the SU Officer team 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 SU, 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 Board of Trustees.

Although this document is not formally a part of the employment contract, it is important in defining the relationship between staff and SU Officers and should only be amended by mutual agreement.

- 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 Member, direct to the SU President.

4. ADDITIONAL CLAUSES FOR STUDENT EMPLOYEES

- 4.1. Any Member of who has a potential conflict of interest, for example by way of relationship to or with an employee of the SU, should declare the interest in all discussions or debate in that area of SU work.