

<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Date of approval:</b>	15 July 2024
<b>Implementation date:</b>	1 August 2024
<b>Review date (<i>no later than</i>):</b>	1 August 2027
<b>Responsible for implementation:</b>	Chief Executive and Board of Trustees
<b>Responsible for interpretation:</b>	Chief Executive and Board of Trustees

# Student-Staff Protocol

## 1.0 The Protocol

- 1.1 This document will serve as a protocol, which will be an established and accepted code of practice, determining the etiquette, conduct, and decorum expected to inhere in the relationship between the members of City St George's Students' Union ("The Union"), its officers, staff, and trustees.
- 1.2 As a protocol, this document will serve to complement, but not supersede or contravene, the Union's Articles of Association or any Union policy or bye-law which pertains to the conduct of members, officers, staff, and trustees.
- 1.3 This document will not or supersede or contravene any contract of employment issued by the Union.
- 1.4 In the event of a conflict, the Union's Articles, policies, bye-laws, and the particulars of any applicable contracts will take precedence over this document.

## 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This document will apply to:
  - a. Any member of the Union, which will include all students enrolled at the City St George's, University of London ("The University") excepting those who have chosen to terminate their membership, and associate members.
  - b. Any officer of the Union, which will include any elected representative of the student membership.
  - c. Any staff member of the Union, which will include anyone employed by the Union and the University to work on behalf of the Union who was not elected to office by the student membership.
  - d. Any trustee of the Union, which will include the sabbatical officers elected by the student membership; and two student trustees and five lay trustees chosen by Appointments Committee.
  - e. Any volunteers or student staff of the Union, which will include any student of the University employed by or working on a voluntary basis for the Union in a non-permanent Union role.
- 2.2 This document will not apply to the conduct expected of staff employed by the University who are not employed to work on behalf of the Union. The University will be responsible for the conduct of its staff.

## 3.0 Working Relationships

- 3.1 This document will clarify the expected working relationships between the individuals to which it applies in order to facilitate effective team working and

promote a thorough understanding of individuals' roles and responsibilities with respect to one another in the course of Union business.

- 3.2 The Union will uphold its principles as a democratic organisation. This will mean that the Union will be accountable to its members first and foremost.
  - a. Union officers will be elected and work in the capacity of serving and representing the members.
  - b. Union staff will work in the capacity of maintaining the operational function and services of the Union to the benefit of its members.
  - c. Union trustees will govern the Union such that it fulfils its objects to the public benefit and the benefit of its members.
  
- 3.3 Union officers will work with Union staff and trustees to serve the members as their representatives. Officers will:
  - a. Not hold management responsibilities or authority over staff.
  - b. Not interrupt, interfere with, or otherwise jeopardise the day-to-day work of staff.
  - c. Work with staff as the officer's remit aligns with and may be supported by the staff member's role and duties.
  - d. Not involve staff in the politics of the Union or prejudice them in their duties in any way.
  - e. Serve as the Union's political leadership, and thus direct the Union in fulfilment of its democratic purposes and commitments, as well as the fulfilment of the officers' own manifesto promises.
  - f. In the case of sabbatical officers, serve as trustees of the Union, representing the membership and working with the other trustees to further the objects of the Union, but will not prejudice the board or any trustee in their duties by involving them in the politics of the Union.
  - g. Work with, but not hold direct oversight or managerial powers over, volunteers or student staff as appropriate to their remit and the staff's duties.
  
- 3.4 Union staff will work with officers and trustees to manage and implement the day-to-day function of the Union. Staff will:
  - a. Answer to the management structures and duties detailed in their job descriptions.
  - b. Not participate or play any part in the politics of the Union except to impartially facilitate the democratic process.
  - c. Follow the directorate and political leadership of the officers, which will be delivered through the Chief Executive.
  - d. Work with officers to facilitate their goals and aims as representatives of the membership.
  - e. Comply with and work within the remit of the operational policy handed down from the Board of Trustees.
  - f. Work with, support, train, and oversee volunteers or student staff.

- 3.5 Union trustees will sit on the Board of Trustees which governs the Union, its budget and strategy. Trustees will:
- a. Work to fulfil the objects of the Union and thus be answerable to the membership.
  - b. Determine the operational policy of the Union which will govern the activities of the Union, but not otherwise interfere with staff in their duties.
  - c. Work alongside and in support of the officers of the Union, but neither answer to nor hold authority over them.
  - d. With the exception of the sabbatical officers, not participate or play any part in the politics of the Union.
  - e. Not be expected to have any significant contact with volunteers or student staff of the Union.
- 3.6 Union student staff will be engaged on an ad hoc basis such as Union activities demand. Student staff will:
- a. Answer to the management structures and duties as defined in the job descriptions under which they will be engaged.
  - b. Follow the remit of the Union operational policy handed down from the trustees in their duties.
  - c. Work with officers as their duties necessitate.
  - d. Retain their right, as members of the Union, to fully participate in the politics of the Union, but will undertake no campaigning or other political activity during the course of their duties.
- 3.7 Union volunteers will be engaged as Union activities demand. Volunteers will:
- a. Work with the staff member(s) relevant to their role as detailed in the Opportunity Profile under which they will be engaged.
  - b. Follow the minimum requirements dictated in their Opportunity Profiles and the Union operational policy as applicable.
  - c. Work with officers as their remit necessitates.
  - d. Retain their right, as members of the Union, to fully participate in the politics of the Union, but will undertake no campaigning or other political activity during the course of their duties.
- 3.8 Union members will:
- a. Not hold direct or individual authority over any officer, staff, trustee, or volunteers or student staff member of the Union.
  - b. Hold the Union and hence, its elected officers and its trustees to account insofar as they, in their official capacities, will be answerable to the membership as a whole.
  - c. Understand that, in their official capacities in respect of the Union, officers, staff, trustees, and volunteers or student staff serve them in their professional duties, not in a personal relationship, and will not prejudice these duties regardless of the personal relationship that obtains between any individual and any member.

- 3.9 Notwithstanding any of the above, members, officers, staff, trustees, volunteers and student staff will be expected to behave courteously and cordially towards each other as far as their obligations to their respective roles extend.
- 3.10 The Union will expect any personal relationship which would prejudice, or cause a conflict of interest in any of the working relationships subject to this protocol to be declared to the charity secretary (Chief Executive), who will keep conflicts of interest on the register of interests. The Union's full Conflict of Interest Policy will dictate further procedure on conflicts.
- 3.11 For the avoidance of doubt, the following will be examples of, but not an exhaustive list of, personal relationships which the Union would expect to be declared:
- a. A family relationship including a spousal, civil or other enduring partnership or relative;
  - b. A business/ commercial/ financial relationship;
  - c. An intimate/ sexual relationship;
  - d. A close friendship;
  - e. Any instance of the above which may have occurred in the past if the potential for conflict remains significant even if the relationship itself is no-longer in effect between the concerned individuals.
- 3.12 This document will have no bearing on the conduct of any individual outside of their duties and roles with respect to the Union.

## **4.0 Information Disclosed in the Public Sphere**

- 4.1 This document will clarify the expected conduct of the individuals to which it pertains in relation to information disclosed in the public sphere.
- 4.2 Information disclosed in the public sphere will include:
- a. Information disclosed in any Union meeting the minutes of which will be publically available.
  - b. Communications the contents of which would become publically available under a data subject access request or freedom of information request.
  - c. Information disclosed on online forums, websites or social media.
  - d. Information disclosed to press, television networks, or other external media.
  - e. Information disclosed at any other meeting relating to the Union's affairs, except where the contents are explicitly defined as confidential.
- 4.3 The Union will supply a position to be taken in any event which necessitates public disclosure.

- 4.4 No individual subject of this protocol will publically disclose views, opinions, critique (constructive or otherwise), or commentary of any kind on the activities of the Union without prior consultation on and permission to disclose the Union's own position.
- 4.5 No individual subject of this protocol will publically disclose views, opinions, critique (constructive or otherwise), or commentary of any kind on any other individual subject of this protocol, be they member, officer, staff, trustee, or volunteers or student staff without prior consultation on and permission to disclose the Union's own position.
- 4.6 No individual subject of this protocol will make public reply to publically disclosed comments about them without prior consultation on and permission to disclose the Union's own position.
- 4.7 No trustee, staff member, or volunteer or student staff member will publically disclose views, opinions, critique (constructive or otherwise), or commentary of any kind on the democratic processes of the Union or the proceedings of such democratic processes including elections, referendums, assembly meetings, and related exercises of the democratic powers of the Union members without prior consultation on and permission to disclose the Union's own position.
- 4.8 Officers may make public disclosure of their own views on the democratic processes and proceedings of the Union for the purposes of their own election campaigning and political agenda, providing they make clear that their views do not constitute a public statement of the views of the Union.
- 4.9 Trustees may, in the limited case that it arise as an item for discussion (e.g. in the case of disciplinary action against staff, officers, or a revision or violation of election policy), make commentary upon the conduct of staff members, officers, and the democratic processes of the Union during a meeting of the board of trustees (of which minutes will be publically available and hence publically disclosed) in full consideration that views expressed therein will be publically disclosed as the views of the Union.
- 4.10 No individual subject of this protocol will publically disclose views, opinions, critique (constructive or otherwise), or commentary of any kind in the name of the Union on events external to Union business without prior consultation on and permission to disclose the Union's own position.
- 4.11 This document will not, in any way, restrict or infringe upon any individual's rights to freedom of expression, but will remind the individuals to which it pertains to make clear that their own views publically disclosed must be made distinct from and not in the name of the Union and will not necessarily be endorsed by the Union itself.

## 5.0 Concerns and Disagreements in the Union

- 5.1 This document will clarify the means by which concerns and disagreements within the Union may be addressed without recourse to already-extant policy on complaints.
- 5.2 A concern or disagreement will refer to any act, event, behaviour, object, item, or configuration of the above which an individual feels directly or indirectly impedes or jeopardises their duties in the Union, or which violates any of the conduct defined in this protocol.
- 5.3 Concerns and disagreements from staff, volunteers, or student staff will be reported to a line manager in the first instance (if applicable), the Chief Executive, or another member of the Union senior management team if necessary (e.g. in the case that the Chief Executive or line manager be subject of the concern).
- 5.4 Concerns and disagreements from officers will be reported to the President in the first instance, the Chief Executive or another member of the Union senior management team if necessary.
- 5.5 Concerns and disagreements from trustees will be reported to the President or Chief Executive or another member of the Union senior management team if necessary.
- 5.6 All concerns and disagreements will be taken seriously and the relevant notified individuals will support individuals pressing concerns in resolving such concern.
- 5.7 All concerns and disagreements will be addressed through informal remedy where possible (e.g. informal mediation), to be determined by the relevant notified individuals.
- 5.8 If individuals are subject of the concern, they will be approached in the first instance and where possible to pursue an amicable resolution to any given concern or disagreement.
- 5.9 Where the inclusion of all individuals subject of concerns is not possible for any reason (including fears of reprisal or concerns towards confidentiality), every effort will be made to support the concerned individual and the peaceable resolution of the concern or disagreement, even without the inclusion of other parties.
- 5.10 In the event that informal remedy to the concern or disagreement is not possible, concerned individuals may escalate their concern to the formal complaints procedure as appropriate to the nature of their complaint.

- 5.11 All proceedings, even informal, will remain confidential and subject to the conduct defined in this protocol. Individuals subject of or expressing a concern or disagreement will not prejudice or be prejudiced in their duties by any other individual's conduct or by public disclosure.

## 6.0 Harassment

- 6.1 This document will clarify the Union's position on harassment and the expected conduct of the individuals to which it pertains in relation to harassment.
- 6.2 The Union will consider harassment to be the *causing alarm or distress* or the *putting in fear of violence* of a person or persons or groups of persons or persons by proxy as detailed in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 or any unwanted conduct which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or degrading environment, or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, as detailed under section 26 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3 The Union may consider any violation of the conduct defined by this protocol in relation to any individual to be harassment. As detailed in the Equality Act 2010, violations will not have to be repeated or intentional to be considered harassment.
- 6.4 The Union will offer protection from harassment to the individuals to which this protocol pertains.
- 6.5 Any instance of harassment will be reported to the Chief Executive or other member of the Union senior management team and kept on record for further investigation. The Chief Executive, concerned parties, and other staff as appropriate or nominated by the Chief Executive will meet to determine an appropriate course of action as soon as possible following such an instance.
- 6.6 Any report of harassment of any kind from third parties or any other groups will be taken seriously and treated with the same investigatory procedure as detailed above. Third parties making such reports will be offered the same protections as individuals subject to harassment.
- 6.7 Any reports which are later discovered to be deliberately false or made with malicious intentions will themselves be considered instances of harassment, even if the individuals making them are not subject to this protocol.
- 6.8 Any individual subject of this protocol found to be violating the conduct defined herein and therefore to be perpetrating harassment, will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Union's Articles of Association, Bye-Laws, and, if applicable, the terms of their contract of employment.
- 6.9 Any case of harassment which falls under the definitions laid out in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 or the Equality Act 2010 will be

considered under that legislation and may be pursued with the full legal proceedings as appropriate.

## **7.0 Responsibility and Review**

- 7.1 Responsibility for this protocol will lie with the Chief Executive and the Board of Trustees.
- 7.2 The Chief Executive and Board of Trustees will approve any changes or amendments to this document.
- 7.3 This document will be reviewed at a frequency no less than every three years.