

GENERAL REGULATIONS

**Appendix 1 : Code Of Practice On The Operation Of The Students' Union
And Its Relationship With The University And Students.**

Name of Code of Practice :	Code Of Practice On The Operation Of The Students' Union And Its Relationship With The University And Students.
Purpose of Code of Practice :	To establish guidelines for the membership and operation of the Students' Union at Staffordshire University
Approval for this Code of Practice given by :	Academic Board
Responsibility for its update :	Dean of Students and Academic Registrar
Code of Practice applies to :	All Students registered on Staffordshire University awards.
Date of Approval :	29 June 2011
Proposed Date of Review :	May 2012

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice has been produced by the Board of Governors of Staffordshire University in accordance with the requirements of Part 2 of the Education Act 1994.

2. STUDENTS' UNION

- 2.1 In accordance with Section 12 of the University's Articles of Government, there shall be a Students' Union of the University (hereinafter called the Union).
- 2.2. The Union shall be able to make representations as a matter of proper concern to the Board of Governors, Academic Board or Vice-Chancellor as may be appropriate.

3. THE MEMBERS OF THE UNION SHALL BE:

- (a) all registered students of the University;
- (b) such members of staff of the University as may elect to become Associate Members of the Union; and
- (c) such persons as the Union, in accordance with its Constitution, may from time to time admit or elect as Associate, Life, Honorary or External Members.

Any registered student shall have the right not to be a member of the Union if he/she so wishes, and shall not be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised this right. Students wishing not to be members of the Union must indicate this wish in writing to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar and the Students' Union Communications Officer (or such officer as may be designated for the purpose) within four weeks of their enrolment on the programme of study. This decision will remain effective for the duration of their registered student membership of the University unless they take specific action to resume membership. Students who have opted out may not resume membership of the Union during the session in which they have opted out, but they may take up membership in any subsequent session, provided that they indicate a wish to do so in writing to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar and the Students' Union Communications Officer.

4. THE UNION CONSTITUTION

- 4.1. The Union shall have a Constitution approved by the Board of Governors in accordance with which it shall conduct and manage its own affairs and funds. The Constitution shall comply with the terms of the Education Act 1994 (see 4.4 below) and copies shall be made freely available for inspection in the offices of the Union, the office of the University Secretary and in University Libraries.
- 4.2. No amendments to or revision of the Constitution, in part or in whole, shall be valid unless and until approved by the Board of Governors.

4.3. The Board of Governors shall review the Union Constitution at intervals of not more than five years.

4.4. The Constitution shall include, inter alia, the following provisions to satisfy the requirements of the Education Act 1994:

(a) The election of all Union officers shall be by a democratic process in which all members are entitled to vote in secret ballots.

The conduct of the elections of officers shall be subject to inspection by the University Secretary (or such officer as he/she may designate for the purpose), who shall be required to satisfy himself/herself on behalf of the Board of Governors that the elections have been fairly and properly conducted and without whose certificate any election shall be void.

(b) A person shall not hold sabbatical office or paid elected Union office for more than two years in total at the University.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS

5.1. The financial affairs of the Union shall be properly conducted and the Union shall:

(a) keep proper accounts and accounting records;

(b) maintain a sound system of internal financial management and control;

(c) plan and conduct its financial affairs so as to ensure that its total income is at least sufficient, taking one year with another, to meet its total expenditure and that its financial solvency is maintained;

(d) obtain the prior written consent of the University to the borrowing of any money for a period in excess of twelve months;

(e) not give any guarantees or indemnities incurring contingent liabilities;

(f) maintain such levels of insurance cover as may be deemed appropriate by the University's Finance Director; and

(g) produce financial regulations and standing orders relating to contracts, based on the University's regulations and standing orders which shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Governors.

5.2. The Union's proposed annual budget shall be presented to the Vice-Chancellor prior to the beginning of the financial year to which the budget will apply. The budget shall then be considered for approval by

the Board of Governors at its ordinary Summer term meeting each year.

5.3. The Union shall provide regular monitoring reports on its budget, covering both general and commercial Union activities, to the University's Finance Director and quarterly management reports for consideration by the Employment and Finance Committee of the Board of Governors.

5.4. The Union shall publish an Annual Financial Report and Audited Accounts which shall also be made available for the consideration of and be subject to the approval of the Board of Governors each year.

The report shall contain, in particular:

(a) a general review of the Union's financial performance for the year;

(b) a list of the external organisations to which the Union has made donations during the previous financial year and details of the donations; and

(c) information regarding the Union's affiliations to external organisations as detailed in Section 6.2 below.

Copies of the Annual Financial Report and Audited Accounts shall be made available for inspection in the offices of the Union, the office of the University Secretary and in University Libraries.

5.5. The Union shall produce, in writing, a fair procedure for the allocation of resources to groups or clubs, details of which shall be freely accessible to all students.

6. AFFILIATIONS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

6.1. If the Union decides to affiliate to an external organisation it shall publish notice of its decision stating:

(a) the name of the organisation; and

(b) details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made, to the organisation.

Any such notice shall be made available to the Board of Governors and to all students.

6.2. Where the Union is affiliated to any external organisations the following information shall be included in the Union's Annual Financial Report and Audited Accounts (see 5.4(c) above):

- (a) a list of the external organisations to which the Union is currently affiliated; and
 - (b) details of subscriptions or similar fees paid, or donations made to such organisation in the past year (or since the last report).
- 6.3. The Union shall produce procedures for the review of affiliations to external organisation under which:
- (a) the current list of affiliations is submitted for approval by members of the Union annually; and
 - (b) a requisition may be made by 5% of members no more than once each academic year that the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation be decided upon by a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote.

7. OTHER MATTERS

- 7.1. The University shall bring to the attention of all students, at least once a year:
- (a) this Code of Practice;
 - (b) any restrictions imposed on the activity of the Union by the law relating to charities; and
 - (c) The University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Lawful Assembly.
- 7.2. In addition, students have the right to a copy of the Students' Union Constitution, copies of which can be obtained from the Union offices on both campuses.
- 7.3. The University shall bring to the attention of all students, at least once a year and shall include in any information which is generally made available to persons considering whether to become students at the University:
- (a) information as to the right referred to in Section 3 of this Code; and
 - (b) details of the arrangements made by the University to provide services for students who are not members of the Union – see 7.4 (a) to (e) below.
- 7.4. (a) By agreement between the University and the Union, students who choose to opt out of membership of the Union may use the facilities

and services of the Union listed below, and will not be liable to pay any membership subscription or supplementary charge in order to do so:

- (i) Catering Services
- (ii) Shopping facilities

(b) Students who choose to opt out of membership of the Union have the right to become Associate Members of the Union and have access to the following:

- (i) Membership of the Students' Union clubs and societies
- (ii) Membership of other clubs and societies affiliated to the Union, except that non-members may not be elected as officers of such clubs and societies
- (iii) Welfare advice

(c) Non-members of the Union shall not have access by right to the Union venues or such activities organised by the Union where the terms of the Union's licence do not extend to non-members eg Summer Ball.

(d) Non-members of the Union may not take part in its government, policy making or representation activities or serve on any University Committee with student membership, where the terms of reference of the committee specify that the positions are to be held by members or officers of the Union.

(e) The University has made no special arrangements for the provision of services or facilities specifically for non-members of the Union, since it is satisfied that the range of services provided by the University and the Union for all students (whether members of the Union or not) are sufficient to ensure that non-members are not unfairly disadvantaged within the meaning of the Education Act 1994

7.5. The Union shall be subject to the law relating to charities and incur no expenditure and take no other action, which is inconsistent with its charitable status.

7.6. The Union shall produce procedures for the consideration of any complaints by students (whether members or not) who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union.

The procedures shall include, inter alia, provisions for:

(a) complainants to have a right of appeal to a person independent of the University appointed by the Board of Governors;

(b) complaints to be dealt with promptly and fairly; and

(c) an appropriate and effective remedy to be applied when a complaint is upheld.

- 7.7. Students who, not being members of the Union, claim to have been unfairly disadvantaged as a consequence (see Section 3) should submit details of their complaint, in writing, to the University Secretary.

The University Secretary will formally acknowledge the complaint, will institute an enquiry and will respond to the claimant with his/her conclusions within 14 working days of receipt of the complaint.

- 7.8. A student wishing to appeal against the decision arising from the Union's complaints procedures or the decision of the University Secretary should express this desire, in writing, to the Vice-Chancellor within 14 working days of receipt of the decision. The Chair of the Board of Governors shall then appoint a person independent of the University and the appointment shall be reported to the next meeting of the Board. The independent person shall carry out such enquiries as he/she deems appropriate and shall normally be expected to submit his/her conclusions within 21 working days of appointment. The independent person's decision shall be final, and shall be delivered to the Chair of the Board of Governors and to the complainant in writing.

Staffordshire University's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, jargon-free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request. If you think we can improve the fairness of this policy, please contact the individual who has responsibility for its update.