



Item for Agreement of Class Rep Council

ITEM NO. 2328-22

Schedule G

Proposed by

Podge Sheehan (Returning Officer)

Schedule G: Officer Accountability

The elected student officers (Sabbaticals and Part-time Officers) hold key leadership positions within DCU Students' Union and they have been elected by the student body to lead, represent and advocate for them. The student body is entitled to expect high standards of representation and leadership from the elected officers. Leading by example is vital and is evidenced by the elected officers conducting themselves in accordance with this schedule.

As elected student representatives, the officers are expected to perform their representational activities effectively and appropriately and to give a fair representation of student feedback.

To support the elected student officers to understand their roles and ensure they are delivering high standards of representation and leadership of the student body, DCUSU has identified the following key principles (based on the Nolan Principles). In taking up office, the elected officers agree to adhere to and fulfil these principles in carrying out the responsibilities of their officership.

1. Selflessness

Officers will always act in the best interests of DCU students through their behaviour, actions, and decisions.

2. Integrity

Officers must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships where there is a potential conflict.

3. Objectivity

Officers must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence available to them and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Officers are accountable to the DCU student body for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the appropriate democratic scrutiny to ensure this.

5. Openness

Officers will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner and will be able to justify their decisions. Information should not be withheld from students unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

6. Honesty

Officers will always be truthful and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects the collective interest of the students of Dublin City University

7. Leadership

Officers should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat students, officers, and staff with respect at all times. They should actively promote and vigorously support the principles, as well as challenge inappropriate behaviour wherever it occurs.

Collective Responsibility

The principle of collective responsibility underpins all decisions of the sabbatical officers and the executive as a whole. Officers will accept and support decisions made by the Executive even if they do not agree with them.

Accountability Process

Accountability is a key aspect of democratic organisations and one of the Nolan Principles of public life. All officers are democratically elected by the student body and are accountable to the student body, in accordance with the Constitution and rules of the Students' Union, for their manifesto commitments and the conduct of their political activities. Sabbatical officers are also employees of the Students' Union and are accountable to the Office of Student Life Board in respect of their contract of employment with the Students' Union and are, in turn, subject to OSL Employee policies.

As the Sabbatical officers are elected representatives and employees of the Students' Union, there is an intersection of political accountability and employment law. Accordingly, decisions made by any part of the Students' Union under this Schedule and the Constitution will ultimately need to be considered by the Board to ensure that no action proposed undermines the Students' Union's legal compliance or causes it to breach its fiduciary responsibilities

Routes of Accountability for Part-time Officers

- Class Rep Council for issues relating to the political work of the Part-time Officer (such as how they have fulfilled their policy areas or a manifesto pledge). If CRC and the student body removes a part-time officer then they will be removed from their position but will continue to be a member of the Students' Union
- The University for issues relating to their behaviour as students. Part-time officers are subject to University policies and are required to continue to observe these e.g Student Code of Conduct and Discipline. If the University applies a sanction to the part-time officer which results in their suspension or expulsion revoking their student status from DCU then they will cease to be a part-time officer and a member of the Students' Union.

Routes of Accountability for Sabbatical Officers

The routes for accountability are as below, but either route may lead to the removal of the Sabbatical officer as an employee, a member of the Students' Union, and a Director where applicable:

- Class Rep Council for issues relating to the political work of the Sabbatical Officer (such as how they have fulfilled their policy areas or a manifesto pledge). If CRC and the student body removes a Sabbatical Officer then that officer will automatically be removed as a Students' Union employee, a Director where applicable, and if not on a programme of study, as a member of the Students' Union.
- The Office of Student Life Board for issues relating to the fulfilment of the contract of employment as an employee (such as breaching policies that apply to employees, serious or gross misconduct, or reputational and legal damage to the Students' Union). The Students' Union shall be entitled to terminate the employment of a Sabbatical Officer where there is a serious breach of a sabbatical officers' obligations as an employee or as a Director. and, if not on a programme of study, as a member of the

Students' Union.

Terms of Employment for Sabbatical Officers

Sabbatical officers are employed on a full-time fixed-term twelve-month contract with a salary package worth €28,000 (€27,100 gross pa + two 'Small Benefit' tax-free vouchers totalling €900)

Complaints

Complaints relating to the conduct of an officer can be raised through the online Complaints Form due to be available on the website by Sept 2023. The conduct of the officer could relate to either the current or a previous year in elected office. If the complainant is unsure which route is correct they should consult the President or the appropriate staff member in the Office of Student Life. Should a complaint be made during an election period about the conduct of a current officer who is standing for re-election, the Returning Officer will be consulted on how the complaint should proceed. All complaints will be dealt with through the appropriate channel based on the nature of the complaint e.g Class Rep Council Employee Disciplinary Policy, or Dignity & Respect Policy.

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