

CHRIST CHURCH
**STUDENTS'
UNION**



**'to better student life and enrich student experiences
at Canterbury Christ Church University'**

STAFF AND OFFICERS WORKING TOGETHER

Officer Champions	Students' Union President Union Council Chair
Staff Champions	Managing Director Membership Services Manager
Approval bodies and date passed	Board of Trustees, 24th June 2016
To be reviewed by	June 2019

[Preamble](#)

[Purpose](#)

[Elected full-time and part-time officers](#)

[The role of staff](#)

[Working Together](#)

[Union Governance](#)

[Sabbatical Transition](#)

1. Preamble

- a. Christ Church Students' Union ('CCSU' or 'the Union') is a democratic organisation that works under the direction of its students and through its elected representatives. The Union employs staff to; manage its activities and services, to ensure continuity and to effectively support elected officers and other student representatives.
- b. CCSU strives to be recognised as an excellent place to work and seeks to create a positive and productive working environment. The Union places a high level of importance on the relationship between its staff and student representatives.
- c. Staff and elected officers are expected to take personal responsibility for the continuous development of an effective working environment and to approach new or challenging situations in a professional, proactive and reasonable manner, in keeping with our shared mission, vision and values, for the benefit of all members of Christ Church Students' Union.
- d. This document aims to provide some general guidance on broad principles, and to provide avenues for the resolution of problems as and if they should arise. The complex nature of the Union naturally leads to a number of shared responsibilities in terms of the role of staff, full-time and part-time officers and trustees that are, in most cases, managed informally. These relationships are also expected to change periodically as new officers are elected, new policies are developed and new initiatives started.
- e. This document is intended to complement other Union and University policies in informing the positive working relationship between Union staff and the elected officers of the Union. Specifically these are:
 - i. the Articles of Association;
 - ii. the Bye-Laws;
 - iii. the Student and University Partnership Agreement;
 - iv. the Delegation of Authority from the Board of Trustees;
 - v. Sabbatical Officer Agreements;
 - vi. Trustee and Elected Representatives Code of Conduct;
 - vii. role descriptions for elected officers;
 - viii. All employment policies for Union staff; and

- ix. job descriptions for Union staff.

2. Purpose

- a. This document intends to:
 - i. provide a set of guidelines which ensures that staff, elected full-time and part-time officers and trustees work together to ensure the effective delivery of the organisations strategy and the manifesto objectives of elected officers;
 - ii. ensure everyone is provided with an environment in which they are entitled to appropriate confidentiality and protection from unfair treatment;
 - iii. ensure staff are equipped to support the process and development of governance and political policy development but do not unduly interfere or seek to influence the conduct or outcome; and
 - iv. provide clarity around roles and responsibilities of:
 - 1. trustees;
 - 2. elected full-time officers;
 - 3. the Managing Director;
 - 4. managers; and
 - 5. staff.

3. Elected full-time and part-time officers

- a. Elected officers provide the political leadership and student voice legitimacy to the Union, shaping political policy through democratic means. They represent students and work closely with staff to ensure that the operations of the Union are responsive to the needs of the membership. Simply put, elected officers are why the Union exists.
- b. Elected officers should actively ensure that discussions concerning individual staff members (on conduct, performance, recruitment and terms and conditions) do not take place in any public forum.
- c. If an elected officer has concerns regarding a staff member they should first direct these, informally, to the staff in question. However, if this is not possible or does not resolve the issues then concerns should be shared with the manager of the staff member.
- d. The University's Staff Code details the process for serious complaints regarding a member of staff.

4. The role of staff

- a. The role of Union staff is to empower elected officers to achieve their manifesto goals and to represent the wider membership.

- b. Staff are expected to provide professional advice and support to the full-time and part-time officers in their areas of expertise, but may not seek to unduly influence political policy decisions.
- c. Staff should not seek to unduly influence or probe Elected Officers, or any other Trustees, concerning individual staffing matters or any other reserved and confidential business of the Trustees or Executive Leadership Team.
- d. Staff may not participate in, or seek to influence, the democratic decisions of the Union or participate in democratic meetings. Union staff members who are also students of the University should seek the counsel of the Membership Services Manager before considering standing in Union elections.
- e. Staff should not negatively comment on the conduct or performance of elected officers, or the Union's political policy or political direction.
- f. If a staff member has concerns regarding an elected officer they should first direct these, informally, to the officer in question. However, if this is not possible or does not resolve the issues then concerns should be shared with the Managing Director.
- g. Ultimately, the Unions Bye-Laws detail the process for serious complaints regarding elected officers.

5. Working Together

- a. In many instances elected officers (in particular, but not exclusively, full-time elected officers) work very closely with Union staff members. Staff members and elected officers are expected to invest time and effort to ensure that productive working relationships are developed. As part of this, staff and officers should hold high expectations of each other's respective professional performance, and feel able to respectfully 'challenge' each other if there are grounds for doing so.
- b. The Union's Managing Director and Management Team take responsibility for ensuring that the organisational direction is informed and influenced by the political agendas of elected officers as well as quantitative and qualitative feedback from the Union's Research Strategy.
- c. Elected officers hold responsibility for the delivery of their manifesto objectives, fulfil their role descriptions they were elected to and adhere to their Sabbatical Agreement, with the support and guidance of Union staff.
- d. All major work, duties, projects and tasks for Union staff should be directed via the Union's line management structure and performance framework after being discussed at Leadership Team.
- e. Over and above stated manifesto objectives, much of the work of the Union is derived from; the Union's stated strategy; annual operating plan; supporting

strategies and active policy as well as day-to-day business. Elected officers are expected to fully engage, and challenge where appropriate, with this work to ensure the Union's stated objectives are achieved for the benefit of all members.

- f. Staff and elected officers are expected to nurture effective working relationships, but relationships of an intimate nature between staff and elected officers should be avoided. When a relationship of this nature arises, it should be disclosed to the Managing Director and the Chair of the Board of Trustees to protect all involved from accusations or perceptions related to conflicts of interest.

6. Union Governance

- a. Christ Church Students' Union is a democratic and student-led organisation, with a robust governance structure. However, from time to time, this may require review and adaptation to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, effective, and reflective of the wants and needs of all Union members and Union stakeholders.
- b. Elected officers should not seek to unduly influence the review or adaptation of the Union's democratic processes. The Board of Trustees is the ultimate authority in this regard.
- c. Sabbatical trustees should have due and ensure a clear distinction between their representative role as a sabbatical officer, and their legal role as a trustee of the charity. Union staff have a duty to ensure the complicated distinctions between these roles are clarified during the initial induction period and throughout their term of office.

7. Sabbatical Transition

- a. It is considered best practice within charity governance to ensure a clear distinction between the roles of trustees and staff. To support this the Union has a sabbatical officer to staff transition policy that is intended to ensure that;
 - i. the processes of recruitment and selection of paid staff are robust and transparent;
 - ii. sabbatical officers are able to reflect upon their time in office, and gain wider experience, before returning to work for Christ Church Students' Union; and
 - iii. all parties can be reassured that a trustee, or group of trustees, could be deemed to have used their power and influence to secure subsequent employment.
- b. To ensure the above a full-time elected officer is not eligible to be offered a paid role by Christ Church Students' Union until at least until the first anniversary of their last day as a sabbatical officer.