



Dublin Institute of Technology

Students' Union

Student Council

Policies

**Policies are valid for a period of five years from the date they were passed
I.e. 22nd April 2016 to 22nd April 2021**

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= President



= VP Events



= VP Education



= VP Welfare

DITSU Accommodation – 10th April 2019

The difficulty that students face in finding accommodation has risen dramatically in the last few years. Students struggle to look for affordable and fit-for-purpose accommodation. There is also a need to increase student awareness of their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

We have seen an increase of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) around the Grangegorman area that is unaffordable and taking advantage of our students. DITSU has serious concerns and disappointment in the price of these PBSA complexes.

DITSU has decided that it can no longer support or publicly promote this private student accommodation as we believe that it is not affordable for most of the student population that we represent in DIT. Students will be paying over €1000 a month which we cannot stand for.

DITSU also will not support and will stand up against any unaffordable accommodation that TU Dublin, Grangegorman Development Agency or any other external or internal organisation build on the Grangegorman campus.

The Union wants:

- Secured grants for Higher Educational Institutions to build purpose built student accommodation
- Affordable and fit-for-purpose student accommodation
- Lobby for the regulation of Air B n B
- Introduce rent pressure zones for purpose built student accommodation
- Ensure students have appropriate tenancies rights in both student accommodation and digs
- Criteria to be introduced on the TU Dublin Student Pad so that student accommodation is safe, affordable and of good quality

DITSU Welfare – 10th April 2019

Homelessness

DITSU recognises and supports the Coalition for Homelessness and Housing policies as formed in 2016

LGBTQ+

DITSU recognises that Northern Ireland does not recognise same-sex marriage. After supporting the marriage for equality campaign in 2015, DITSU believes that same sex marriage should be legal. DITSU also believes that everyone is equal and has the right to marry the person of their choice regardless of their sexual orientation.

DITSU will support Students' Unions in Northern Ireland in their Love equality campaign to legalise same sex marriage in Northern Ireland.

Irish Gender Recognition

DITSU will continue to support the lobby to review the Irish Gender Recognition Act, in support of a more inclusive society.

Abortion Rights

The DIT Students' Union recognises the Repeal of the 8th Amendment and the legislation of Abortion Rights in Ireland. The Union also recognises the time, effort and hard work put in to achieve this result but that the legislation is still quite restrictive and has evident loop holes.

The Union shall support the campaign for full access to free, safe and legal access to abortion services in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, for all.

Consent Classes with TU Dublin

DITSU welcome the exciting and ambitious project with TU Dublin to roll out consent classes to 4,500 first year students this September as part of the 2019 Orientation.

The Students' Union is further committing to working with and lobbying TU Dublin for rolling out mandatory consent classes to all students in TU Dublin across all campuses.

Sustainability and Climate Action – 10th April 2019

According to NASA, carbon dioxide levels in the air are at their highest in the past 650,000 years and since 2001, 18 out of the 19 warmest years have all occurred. In 2012, the Arctic summer sea ice shrank to the lowest extent on record and the global average sea level has risen 7 inches (178mm) in the last 100 years. In addition, every day in Ireland 2 million disposable coffee cups end up in landfill waste and 8 million pieces of plastic find their way into our oceans.

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our century and creates considerable stress to our environment. Shifting weather patterns threaten food production, the rising sea levels increase the risk of flooding, the impacts of climate change are global and bizarre. These impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly if we do not act on it today.

To act, the Students' Union will:

- Work in partnership with appropriate campaign groups to actively lobbying government on meeting sustainability targets.
- Lobby TU Dublin to recycle their waste, for a plastic free campus and provide appropriate facilities to allow students and staff to wash any plastic materials
- To work with USI to lobby government to increase the carbon tax in Ireland
- Organise a 'Green Week' Campaign once a year that will raise awareness about sustainability to students
- Reduce the use of paper and plastic where possible at all DITSU meetings, events and commercial activities
- Encourage the use of reusable cups and water bottles amongst students in TU Dublin

DITSU RAG Charity – 20th March 2019

The DIT Students' Union recognises the benefits of raising money for charity, both in terms of fundraising for worthy causes and in raising the profile of the Students' Union and the services it provides. RAG stands for Raising and Giving.

In order to further raise the profile of this concept, the DIT Students' Union Student Council, and the respective Councils in IT Tallaght SU and IT Blanchardstown SU, shall vote on and determine three charities, one each, by the last council of the year. A percentage contribution of all profitable events run by the DIT Students' Union throughout the year, shall be set aside, divided by three and added to the proceeds generated from the designated RAG charity events.

This policy should be advertised to all students in the lead up to the election of the charities. Nominations for the three RAG Charities shall open during the second semester for the following academic year. Two registered students shall be required to nominate each charity. Following the close of nominations, the charities nominated shall be contacted and required to submit a proposal detailing who they are, what they do and how any money raised for them will benefit the charity.

Student Councillors will be given the opportunity to review the proposals and decide on which charity they would like to support. The three Charities who receive the greatest support, from DITSU, ITBSU and ITTSU, will become the chosen charities for the following academic year and will be announced by the last Student Council meeting of the year. The Student Council in DITSU and respective Councils in ITBSU & ITTSU, will only select three chosen charities, to which all RAG proceeds for the following academic year will be divided equally between the three charities and donated.

A presentation of the funds raised for the designated RAG charities by the Union shall be made at the Recognition Ceremony held at the end of the academic year, on the total funds raised throughout the year.

Charities chosen to receive RAG funds may not be nominated as a RAG charity for the following two years.

The Union shall not offer financial support to any charity other than the official three RAG charities in any given year but shall advise any other charity seeking financial support as to how they may receive a nomination as the official three RAG Charities for future years, by way of a standard reply from the Clerk to Student Council. Thus, where a charity wishes to promote itself on campus, it may be allowed where it is deemed by the President not to interfere with the official RAG Charities, and where it is not a burden on the Union.

Ending Direct Provision – 28th February 2019

Direct Provision is the current system for accommodating asylum seekers in Ireland. Conceived in 1999, direct provision was intended as a short-term measure of 6 months, yet it continues today. The system is overseen by the department of justice through the reception and integration agency but is largely operated by private interests.

The system has time and time again received criticism from human rights organisations for its living conditions and long stays, which often lead to declining physical and mental health for the residents. Direct provision represents state sponsored infringement of human rights.

To this end, the Students' Union shall:

- Endeavour to inform students of Direct Provision and the reality of the lives of those living within it;
- Oppose the system of direct provision;
- Support the campaign to end direct provision;
- Avoid supporting any company profiteering of the system of direct provision; and
- Campaign for the Irish government to ratify the EU Receptions Conditions Directive which mandates minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers

Support Campaign Against Church Ownership of National Maternity Hospital – 12th December 2018

DITSU has supported and campaigned for the repeal of the 8th Referendum. With a high majority of the student body voting in favour of supporting the removal of the 8th amendment, the wish to promote bodily autonomy during pregnancy is supported.

The current plans of the government to allow the ownership and governing of the National Maternity Hospital to go to Catholic organisations may hinder the opportunity to have full access to services that should be available. The continued opposition of religious organisations in abortion access and bodily autonomy in maternal healthcare may impact people seeking these services.

DITSU supports the campaign for the National Maternity Hospital to be under public ownership and governed by a new, secular charter.

Active Engagement of Councillors and School Reps – 18th October 2018

DITSU recognises the vital role Student Councillors (including School Representatives) perform regarding debating of student issues at Student Council and escalating unresolved issues through the appropriate channels within DITSU and DIT.

In order to achieve maximum support for mandates and policies, Councillors are encouraged to attend as many Council meetings as possible. If Councillors do not attend meetings, they cannot express the views of the students they represent or have proper input into debate and discussion. Councillors who are not able to attend meetings of Student Council, must send their apologies to the Clerk to Council either by email, text message or in person.

If a student Councillor misses two meetings in a row, without sending apologies (or without due cause) they shall be expelled from Student Council.

School Representatives are ex-officio members of Student Council (Constitutional article 9.1.i) and as such cannot be expelled by virtue of their position. If a School Rep misses two meetings in a row, without sending apologies (or without due cause), they shall be reported to the Class Rep Meeting from where they were elected. The Class Reps within the School represented by the School Rep shall hold a simple majority vote to determine whether to impeach the School Rep. The Chairperson to Student Council, may suspend the School Rep from Student Council, until such time as the Class Rep Meeting sits.

If a School Rep has not been performing their functions from a quality assurance perspective, the College Officer must be informed. Upon investigation, and if the Executive Council find that there are grounds for impeachment, the College Officer, shall report the matter to the Class Rep Meeting, where the same procedure of impeachment applies.

Student Councillors who attend every normal meeting of Student Council during the academic year, shall be recognised by DITSU.

DIT Relationship with Sports and Societies – 18th October 2018

DITSU has a long-established working relationship with Sports and Societies and welcomes opportunities for continued communication and collaboration between the three bodies, with the aim to promote the improvement of student participation, engagement and an enhanced student experience .

The executives of DITSU, Societies Forum and Sports Council shall attend the Student Activities Committee (SAC), which meets once per month, to discuss student issues such as engagement, participation and student facilities in the Grangegorman campus.

Meetings of the SAC will take place before Student Council meetings and issues raised at these meetings will be addressed by the DITSU President at Student Council.

The President (or their nominee) of the Societies Forum and Sports Council will be given an opportunity under the Student Council agenda, to update and address the meeting.

The three executives are committed to ensuring that communication regarding proposed dates for events – particularly large events and formal balls, are discussed with each other as far in advance of the event as possible, to ensure that double bookings are avoided.

DITSU Education – 18th October 2018

Class Reps

Class Reps are the fundamental building blocks of the Union, and DITSU recognises their importance within its democratic structures, as a channel for the Union to interact with the wider student population and the role they play within the quality assurance structures of DIT.

It is vital that the Union maintains contact with the Class Reps, and where a Rep misses two class rep meetings in a row without sending apologies, their respective College Officer or School Rep will directly contact that Class Rep through whatever means deemed appropriate to offer support/guidance. Where necessary the College Officer or School Rep will report back to their Student Advisor or the Vice President for Education.

The College Officers will give out a “Most Valuable Class Rep” award at the end of each Class Rep Meeting to recognise the contribution made by a stand-out Rep.

School Reps

DITSU recognises the important role School Reps play representing their respective schools and raising matters through the appropriate channels in both DIT and DITSU. For School Reps to be as effective as possible, they should be in regular contact with the relevant College Officer for their school, and College Officers shall meet with school reps at least twice a semester to discuss issues arising at School level.

The Vice President for Education shall endeavour to hold a meeting with the relevant School Reps and the Dean of each College between the end of semester one and halfway through semester two.

The Vice President for Education must hold training for all school reps once per semester.

Postgraduates

DITSU believes that Postgraduate students should have academic supports provided to them all year round.

Education Campaigns

- My Rights Campaign – will be run before the end of the first semester to ensure students are made aware of their rights under the Student Charter.
- Exam Preparation Poster - To get the maximum amount of recognition for services the Union provides, it's important that students see the Union as a helpful agent that wants to inform and settle students concerns in the run up to the stressful exam period. DITSU will run a yearly poster campaign around exam preparation. This campaign should reflect the examination requirements and practices of each DIT node appropriate to the practices set out by the exams office as well as giving practical advice to students.

DIT Quality Assurance

- Academic Calendar – DITSU will lobby DIT for the following provisions:
 - Four weeks' notice must be given between the release of exam timetables and the first week of examinations commencing in all scheduled sittings of exams.
 - All continuous assessment must be concluded at least one week prior to the examination period.
 - Library facilities across all campuses must be open for at least three full days in the calendar week prior to an examination week.
 - A review of the academic calendar must be carried out by DIT, which includes student representation, at least every two years.
 - Any proposed changes made to the academic calendar must be brought to DITSU Student Council for discussion and feedback in a timely manner.

- Library Reading Resources - As per the DIT Handbook for Quality Enhancement (2014), it is affirmed that any changes to reading resources “should be accessible to students and where new resources are to be recommended this information must be provided to the library with the timeframe specified” as being “finalised by the end of May for programmes due to be delivered the following September and by mid-November for programmes due to commence the following January”. All reading resources as prescribed by the Programme Committee for all courses within DIT, must be made available to the library services as set out as above, to best serve student learning.

Access to Education

DITSU shall lobby the Irish Government to make greater provision to provide support, shelter and assistance to refugees who are seeking help, and make available supports to allow them to enrol in educational institutes, including third-level.

DITSU Elections – 18th October 2018

Student Reps

The Electoral Commission is established by the Student Council under Article 22 of the Constitution and plays an integral part in the democratic processes of the DIT Students' Union.

Membership consists of a maximum seven members, of whom 5 are student representatives elected at Student Council. These 5 student members are fundamental to the Electoral Commission, as they represent the students' voice, and they have contributed greatly to the Commission in the past. DITSU shall recognise the contribution these student representatives make by way of a stipend to be determined in conjunction with DITSU CLG.

The Student Council recognises the role description of the Student Reps as produced by the Electoral Commission, alongside the method of removal of Reps in accordance with Council policy.

The Electoral Commission will work with the Student Reps and provide appropriate training, in accordance with the Commission's training manual.

As work for the Commission may continue during the summer months, the term of office for the student representatives shall commence at the start of week 6 until the end of week 5 the following academic year, to facilitate ongoing work.

DITSU Opposition to Fees – 18th October 2018

DIT Students' Union will openly oppose the rise in the cost of the Student Contribution Charge and the introduction of an Income Contingent Loan scheme as a method of accessing third level education.

DITSU believes that education is a fundamental right and serves a public good and that access to it should not be hindered.

DITSU also calls for a reduction in the current Student Contribution Charge and for an increase in funding for student grants and other financial supports.

DITSU Relationship with DIT – 18th October 2018

DITSU is committed to maintaining open and transparent dialogue with DIT, as per the DIT Student Charter (2004), and will act in the best interest of ensuring excellence in learning and a positive experience for students of the DIT.

Elected Officers of the Union sit on various committees and boards within the DIT structure, as the representative voice of the students of DIT, through the Student Council. From time to time, the officers may be called upon to make decisions on behalf of the student membership. It is important that the officers consult with the Student Council on their views, particularly when there is proposed expenditure of student funds.

The Union recognises that funding is provided by way of the Student Contribution Charge through a funding agreement between DIT and DITSU. If funding of the Union is ever reduced or lost, the President shall take any necessary action in order to secure a satisfactory funding agreement. As per the Funding Agreement, the President shall not allow DIT Internal Audit to have any function in the oversight of DITSU.

Student Development Fund

DIT recognises the Students' Union as the body which co-signs on expenditure from the Capital Development Reserve, of which the Student Development Fund (SDF) forms part of. As the decision-making body of the Union, the Student Council is the ultimate forum to where expenditure must be presented.

The SDF is a fund which was set up to further enhance student's college experience, as a proportion of the Student Contribution Charge paid by each student annually, and any proposed expenditure applied for through the SDF must be presented to the Council for their consideration.

Executive Council – 18th October 2018

The Executive Council is elected by the student members to act on behalf of Student Council and is authorised to make certain decisions. The President (as Chairperson) will ensure that any decisions made by the Executive are reported to the Student Council.

Where the Executive Council makes a decision outside of term time, or in the case of an emergency decision, that would ordinarily have required a vote of Student Council, they shall inform Student Council at the next meeting. Where Student Council has an extended break, Student Council will be informed directly via email.

When appointments are made to bodies; committees or panels, Student Council shall be informed under the same regulations as above.

Communication

DITSU acknowledges the essential role good communication with its membership plays, particularly relating to the successful promotion of local democracy, events and campaigns, and will continually deliver and develop all communication channels available, including maintain a social media presence.

At the final Council of the year, the President shall give a “State of the Union” address.

Meetings

The Executive will meet within 5 working-days before all Student Council meetings to discuss the agenda and prepare for the meeting.

All minutes of Executive Council meetings will be publicly available on the DITSU website.

Annual Leave

If the President takes a week or more of annual leave, a detailed crossover document must be prepared and presented to the Deputy President and Vice Presidents to ensure they are adequately briefed in the Presidents absence.

National Council

Where the President believes that modules presented at a National Council meeting will benefit a College Officer or the Postgraduate Officer, or if they feel that the Officer can positively contribute to a module, they may be invited to attend National Council.

Grangegorman – 18th October 2018

DITSU welcomes and supports the creation of a Student Centre on the Grangegorman campus.

If facilities do not meet the requirements of the student population, the President shall take whatever action is deemed appropriate, following consultation with the Student Council to ensure students have adequate facilities.

If current facilities deteriorate or if reported facilities issues are ignored, the President following consultation with the Executive shall take appropriate action.

Mental Health - 18th October 2018

Part Time Officer Well-being

DITSU shall run a well-being and stress management workshop at the start of each semester for part time officers and provide an Employee Assistance Program pamphlet to each office, with continued encouragement to part time officers to avail of the services provided if needed.

Access to Student Counselling

All students in DIT should be able to readily access and avail of the DIT student counselling services, within their own campus, in a timely manner.

Mental Health Campaign

DITSU believes in providing a framework for good practice for the support of students, promotion of mental well-being and prevention of mental health difficulties. DITSU acknowledges that it's important to promote informed and positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing, and that we adopt a positive approach in our activities. This will encourage our students to look after their own mental health, that of their friends and those around them.

DITSU shall liaise regularly and where possible with the DIT Counselling Service, DIT Medical Centre, DIT Chaplaincy and any other relevant divisions of Campus Life in the development of mental health initiatives. It is also critical that the Vice President for Welfare considers the impact of other external issues such as finance, accommodation etc., on the mental health of students. Mindfulness is recommended as a treatment for mental ill-health as well as those who want to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Mindfulness should be incorporated into Mental Health campaigns.

Being physically active as well as being involved in extracurricular activities can have a positive impact on an individual student's mental wellbeing. DIT Clubs and Societies offer useful opportunities for students to engage, connect with their peers, stay fit and have fun! DITSU shall collaborate, where possible, with Clubs and Societies in initiatives that reduce stigma of mental illness and offer positive and meaningful opportunities to students.

DITSU will lobby to protect funding of the relevant student support services on campus and will work to ensure student support services meet the highest standards of quality and ensure that students in financial need are catered for through various funds, such as the Student Assistance Fund.

The Vice President for Welfare will run a mental health campaign in, incorporating information about:

- Positive mental health and methods to maintain such a mind-set
- Mental health difficulties and how they can be treated
- Stigma reduction around Mental Health difficulties
- Suicide awareness
- Encourage students to seek help, both on and off campus
- Highlight the importance of talking and support one another
- Support services available both on and off campus

Sexual Health and Personal Safety - 18th October 2018

Sanitary Products

All DITSU offices will have emergency supplies of sanitary products.

Consent during Orientation

DITSU will include a section on consent in all first-year induction presentations.

Condom Distribution

DITSU acknowledges the wide availability of contraception in Ireland, following the Health (Family Planning) (Amendment) Act of 1993, permitting both the sale and advertisement of condoms in Ireland. Enshrined in the Union's mission statement is a pledge to represent and protect the welfare of the members. It is therefore necessary for DITSU to actively promote good sexual health practices.

The Vice President for Welfare and the appropriate staff shall be responsible for lobbying for the standards and conditions outlined below, as well as all information campaigns relevant to the distribution of condoms.

DITSU will endeavour to provide condoms to its' members throughout the academic year. In tandem with distribution, DITSU will endeavour to provide information outlining but not limited to the risks associated with sexual activity and instructions on the use of condoms. DITSU will further try to provide latex free condoms, shall be distributed through staff upon request.

DITSU acknowledges that condoms are not 100% guaranteed to work and only abstinence can avoid the risks associated with unprotected sex. DITSU will endeavour to provide adequate information where possible but also act as a signposting service for students who seek more information from relevant student services, such as the DIT Health Centre.

Technological University Dublin – 18th October 2018

Following the granting of TU Status, and in anticipation of the establishment of TU Dublin on the 1st January 2019, DITSU is committed to ensuring parity of service for all students who are members of the University, particularly regarding access to the education and welfare service as underpinned in the DITSU Constitution.

DITSU is further committed to ensuring that from the 1st July 2019, a Students' Union consisting of the Unions of the 3 merged Institutes, will be fully functional to the greatest extent possible. The President will actively pursue the integration of student representation for all the students envisaged by the new technological university through the creation of one single Students' Union to represent the students currently represented by DIT Students' Union, IT Tallaght Students' Union and IT Blanchardstown Students' Union.

The President is authorised to avail of the assistance of staff, officers and legal advisors as appropriate and shall seek approval of the establishment of the new Students' Union in a referendum of the students no later than 30th April 2019.