

Campaigning and Political Activity Student Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1. De Montfort Students' Union (DSU) is bound to rules for campaigning and political activity set by the Charity Commission.
- 1.2. This policy has been created as a framework for all elected DSU post-holders to use to determine campaigning and/or political activity which can be engaged with in their elected capacity.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. It is a non-ministerial government department responsible for registering charities, ensuring they comply with charity law, and promoting public trust and confidence in the sector.
- 2.2. Under charity law, campaigning and political activities are only permitted if they are:
 - 2.2.1. Wholly ancillary to your charitable purposes. In this context, "wholly ancillary services" refers to activities or services that are considered essential for the primary function of the organisation, but are not the core activity itself. These activities are closely related to and support the main purpose of the organisation, but are not the primary source of its revenue or operations.
 - 2.2.2. Directly relevant to achieving their charitable objectives
 - 2.2.3. Not the primary focus of their organisation
- 2.3. DSU's charitable aims are to advance the education of DMU students for public benefit by:
 - 2.3.1. Providing representation, advice and assistance
 - 2.3.2. Providing sporting, social, cultural and recreational opportunities and facilities
 - 2.3.3. Promoting and encouraging contact and co-operation between students
 - 2.3.4. Advancing the welfare and physical and mental wellbeing of students
- 2.4. Everyday use and understanding of the terms 'campaigning' and 'political activity' can be quite wide in scope. For the purpose of this framework, we utilise the Charity Commission's definitions of 'campaigning' and 'political activity', based on charity law, which are set out below:
 - 2.4.1. Campaigning: the commission uses this word to refer to awareness-raising and to efforts to educate or involve the public by mobilising their support on a particular issue, or to influence or change public attitudes. It also uses it to refer to campaigning activity which aims to ensure that existing laws are observed. The commission distinguishes this from an activity which involves trying to secure support for, or oppose, a change in the law or in the policy or decisions of central government, local authorities or other public bodies, whether in this country or abroad, and which it refers to as 'political activity'.
 - 2.4.2. Political activity: political activity, as defined in this guidance, must only be undertaken by a charity in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes. The commission uses this term to refer to activity by a charity which is aimed at securing, or opposing, any change in the law or in the policy or decisions of central government, local authorities or other public bodies, whether in this country or abroad. It includes activity to preserve an existing piece of legislation, where a charity opposes it being repealed or amended. This differs from activity aimed at ensuring that an existing law is observed, which falls under campaigning.

3. Existing Policies

3.1. This policy should be read alongside existing student policies to determine if the campaigning and/or political activity has been previously approved.

4. Responsible Party

4.1. This policy applies to all elected representative roles at DSU, these include but are not limited to;

- 4.1.1. Course Representatives
- 4.1.2. Faculty Lead Representatives
- 4.1.3. Student Group Committee Members
- 4.1.4. Liberation Officers
- 4.1.5. Student Voice Leaders

4.2. DSU staff within the Membership Services department are responsible for including the content of this policy within the training provided to elected DSU post-holders.

4.3. Elected DSU post-holders are responsible for their own actions; this includes engaging with training provided and adhering to this policy.

5. Decision-Making Framework

5.1. Charitable Purpose Alignment

5.1.1. When evaluating campaigning and/or political activity engagement, elected DSU post-holders must consider if this will align with one or more of the below points:

- 5.1.1.1. Providing representation, advice or assistance
- 5.1.1.2. Providing sporting, social, cultural and recreational opportunities and facilities
- 5.1.1.3. Promoting and encouraging contact and co-operation between students
- 5.1.1.4. Advancing the welfare and physical and mental wellbeing of students

5.2. Beneficiary Analysis

5.2.1. DSU's charitable objects specifically reference "students of DMU" therefore the elected DSU post-holder must be able to prove engagement in the campaigning and/or political activity would demonstrably benefit current DMU students.

5.3. Political vs Charitable Assessment

5.3.1. An assessment must be made to determine whether the same outcome could be achieved through non-political means. If this is the case, the non-political option should be explored instead.

6. Decision Confirmation

6.1. In order to proceed with engaging in the campaigning and/or political activity, the elected DSU post-holder must:

- 6.1.1. Document the rationale for their decision, based on this framework
- 6.1.2. Submit their rationale and associated evidence to the supporting DSU staff team for their post. This could be but is not limited to;
 - 6.1.2.1. The Student Voice Team
 - 6.1.2.2. The Opportunities Team
 - 6.1.2.3. The Senior Management Team

6.1.3. Await written confirmation from the relevant DSU staff team that the rationale and evidence is substantial enough to proceed.

6.2. The DSU staff teams will endeavour to respond within 5 working days.

6.2.1. In the instance of complex political matters, more time may be required to sufficiently research the matter. The elected DSU post-holder will be notified in these circumstances.

7. Policy Review Date

7.1. Student policies will expire after two years of being passed. Before they expire, the Student Council will debate whether the policies should be retained or should lapse (expire).