

## Part 4: About the Union

### 1 Introduction

So you have decided that you wish to represent your fellow students as a Sabbatical Officer and picked the position most suitable for you. But what about the organisation you will be working for? What goes on in the offices at the Students' Union? How exactly do the existing managers integrate with elected officers and what else does the Union provide?

### 2 The Union – Internal Structure

This document has been written to give you an idea of the framework in which you are applying to work. This will hopefully give you a better understanding of the Union and make your time working here more effective.

The Union is a charity and operates in several areas which would not come together in any other organisation. Activities encompass representation of students, sports, welfare, media, academic advice, volunteering, campaigns and support.

Sabbatical Officers are involved in all of the above activities and are supported by Union permanent staff to achieve the Union objectives. Each Sabbatical position has a direct relationship with Union staff members who are there to offer support and training.

The ideas that you have as a Sabbatical Officer will shape the way the Union operates over the next 12 months. However, as the Union operates on a permanent basis it is pertinent for you to consider the constraints and long-term objectives of the Union when setting your goals.

### 3 Charity Activities

#### 3.1 Welfare

Our objective is to ensure that students get in touch with the services that they need, as well as signposting students to the relevant University departments and local organisations. We run our own campaigns and run campaigns for external organisations.

#### 3.2 Student Development

##### 3.2.1 VIP (Volunteering in Portsmouth)

This is the Union run-volunteering scheme allowing students to get involved with local charities and organise projects themselves.

##### 3.2.2 Internal Training

As part of the normal work we do at the Union we have consistently provided excellent DTP (Desk Top Publishing) training to students for the production of Pugwash – our award winning magazine.

### **3.2.3 SID (Students Individual Development)**

SID is a series of free training courses delivered to students over the course of the academic year.

### **3.3 Academic Advice**

The Students' Union offers free, independent and confidential advice on academic affairs and representation. If you are having problems on your course, believe you have extenuating circumstance or just need advice in terms of your degree, the Students' Union can set you straight, point you in the right direction or just show you options the University may not have thought of.

### **3.4 Media**

Student media at UPSU not only informs the student population of what is taking place both locally and nationally – it also provides students with opportunities to gain valuable experience using industry standard tools and techniques.

#### **3.4.1 Pugwash**

Pugwash has continued its high standards this year, producing 5 issues over the academic year with an excellent volunteer team.

#### **3.4.2 Pure FM**

This is the Union's radio station. It is streamed via the Internet and hopes to be able to raise money for a license soon.

#### **3.4.3 [www.upsu.net](http://www.upsu.net)**

The Unions' website undergoes continual change and development in order to keep track of trends and strive to interact with students as fully and transparently as possible.

#### **3.4.4 Purple Wednesdays**

Purple Wednesdays has continued to entertain the sports element of the University. It is produced on a weekly basis during term time.

### **3.5 Campaigns**

There have been many campaigns over recent years, such as RAG (see below) Breast Cancer, Aids and Sexual Health. The Union has also developed its own information campaign to inform students of the various local issues and where help is available to them. This was under the banner of the 'not just a' campaign and highlighted housing, binge drinking, good neighbour relations, mental health and getting involved (volunteering).

### **3.6 RAG**

Over the past year we have been raising the profile of RAG (Raising And Giving) within the Union. We have had many successful events for various different charities. 2005 was the first year of the RAG fund, which accumulates throughout the year, and it is then the responsibility of the RAG committee to sort through the bids and allocate the monies

accordingly. We are also in the process of setting up the Disaster Emergency Assistance Programme (DEAP). The idea is that the more structure there is within RAG the easier it will be to organise, the more events we can do and therefore the more effective we can be!

### **3.7 Sports**

The Athletic Union (AU) is a major part of Union life. We are lucky to have such an active sports group who are keen to get involved in union life! The AU is the strongest in the South East with the numbers increasing year on year.

### **3.8 Societies**

The main aim with regard to societies in recent years has been to increase participation. This year has seen a marked improvement and a vast number of the societies have begun to hire rooms and hold events here, but this increase needs to continue.

### **3.9 University**

The Students' Union is completely autonomous to the University. Sabbatical Officers sit on every level of University committees from the Board of Governors to the library committee. It's the Sabbatical team's job to make sure that the student voice is always heard and it's at these committees that the University listens.

However the student union is reliant on the University for our block grant, which basically funds all the Union welfare and sport activities and services that we provide to students.

Each month we attend University meetings with the directorate and the governors where we keep them informed of our projects and student activities as well as discuss any concerns that we may have.