

## OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Central Executive Committee (CEC)

27 – 28 April 2019

### ASSOCIATION POLICY SETTING

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The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **discuss** the paper
- ii) **decide** whether it is appropriate to have some high-level Association policy statements
- iii) (if applicable) **agree** appropriate policy statements
- iv) **note** that the appendix to this paper has not been published and will retain its strictly private and confidential status unless the C E C expressly determines otherwise

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Historically the Association had an extensive range of policies (often referred to by involved students from that period as “the green brick”). This became unwieldy and the approach involved was insufficiently agile in response to changing external circumstances. The reaction to this was to make the Association rather “policy-light” going forward.
- 1.2 However, it has become apparent in discussions amongst some Central Committee Representatives, CEC members and other interested students that going to a position of having only a minimal amount of policies can also have its problems. These include:-
  - 1.2.1 A student representative participating in a university meeting in which a contentious issue is being discussed may be put in a difficult position if the Association do not have a clear policy on the matter.
  - 1.2.2 A lack of policies can lead to a perception by members that the Association is not “fighting their corner”.
- 1.3 In response to this, a workshop on policy took place at the CEC meeting in

October 2018. The notes from the workshop are included here as an appendix.

## 2. **Workshop outcomes**

- 2.1 The feedback from the workshop was in favour of setting some policies (Appendix page 1) although there were concerns that these should not be too restrictive and that they should be subject to review. A focus on the “big issues” was thought to be appropriate.
- 2.2 The outputs from the workshop regarding specific policies fell into broad categories: -
- OU-related (Appendix pages 2-3)
  - External (e.g. government policy) (Appendix page 4)
  - Association-related (Appendix page 5)
  - CEC-related (Appendix page 6)

## 3. **OU-related policies**

- 3.1 The items suggested for policy were:-
- a) Recording of tutorials
  - b) Fees for international students
  - c) Online delivery
  - d) Module size
  - e) Plagiarism
  - f) Post-graduate funding issues
  - g) Delays in alternative formats
  - h) Consistency in modules
- 3.2 The CEC is asked to **discuss** whether it would be helpful to set policy on these areas.
- 3.3 For any areas in which it is agreed we should set a policy:-
- a) What should that policy be?
  - b) How should it be disseminated?
  - c) How are representatives expected to use it?

## 4. **External-related policies**

- 4.1 The items suggested for policy were issues with loan payments and the postgraduate loans issue (also mentioned above with regard to the OU).
- 4.2 It is suggested that these be **referred to the Campaigns and External Affairs Strategy Working Group**

## 5. **Association-related policies**

- 5.1 The items suggested for policy were volunteering, inappropriate conduct/ language and collective versus individual representation
- 5.2 The Deputy President and Head of Volunteering are already taking work forward on volunteering. It is suggested that the relevant meeting notes feed into that.

- 5.3 The Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy President are carrying out work on Organisational Culture, and CAP are working on revised forum guidelines. It is suggested that the meeting notes on inappropriate conduct/language feed into these.
- 5.4 Individual representation is to be considered and scoped by a specific group following its appearance in multiple places in the suggestions at our Strategy Weekend. It is suggested the meeting notes on collective versus individual representation feed into that.
- 5.5 However, the collective versus individual representation discussion also included a suggestion regarding provision of guidance on when and what to take forward to the OU, and who should do it. This could be a rather extensive discussion so it is proposed to **bring this back to July CEC**

## **6. CEC-related policies**

- 6.1 The one issue raised here was the way in which expenses and budgets work.
- 6.2 Whilst this is, of course, of great practical importance to CEC members, as an internal matter it seems less something we should be putting as a “policy”, but more a matter of looking at how we do things.
- 6.3 If the Deputy Chief Executive (Finance & Resources) and VP Administration are agreeable, I would like to arrange to discuss the matters raised with them, and then we could bring it back to CEC at a later date.

**Cath Brown**  
**President**