

Financial Representation Protocol

Background to this protocol

USI recognises the importance of financial student supports in supporting participation in third-level education and alleviating student financial hardship. Members of USI Officer board represent the student voice in a number of important policy arenas relating to student supports - such as the SUSI advisory group, and Higher Education Authority steering committees for fund administration and/or reform. Officer board also liaises regularly with organisations involved in the administration and management of financial student support, offering input on processes, proposals, and other operations. Further, casework queries are often referred to members of USI officer board by representatives of MOs.

In recent years, a number of conflicting motions have been passed by USI Congress in relation to the management of casework and representation, often leading to unnecessary duplication and poor coordination of effort. Congress has repeatedly asserted the importance of this work, but has so far failed to deliver a coherent protocol that will ensure optimum representation.

Aim of this protocol

To provide a framework for the management of casework and policy representation.

Scope of this protocol

This protocol relates to USI's management of casework and policy representation on the student maintenance (SUSI) grant, Student Assistance Fund, Back to Education Allowance, and the Fund for Students with Disabilities. This protocol does not instruct as to how USI should conduct campaigns or lobbying efforts.

Protocol statements

1. Financial student supports are an important means of sustaining access and durable participation from vulnerable socio-economic groups. USI insists upon the provision of supports sufficient to meet the need of those they are designed to assist.
2. The USI Officer board shall make representations on behalf of the student body as to financial supports.
3. Financial support policy and casework shall be the overall responsibility of the VP/Welfare, with the support of the VP/Academic and/or the VP/Equality where relevant.
4. Members of the USI Officer board shall support Member Organisations in managing casework in relation to student financial supports.
5. The VP/Welfare shall chair an open Student Financial Supports Working Group at every national council. The VP/Academic and the VP/Equality will also participate in the working group.
6. The VP/Welfare, VP/Academic and VP/Equality shall organise comprehensive training for MOs of USI and NUS-USI as to financial casework.

Student Universal Support Ireland - Maintenance Grant

1. The VP/Welfare will act as the primary representative to Student Universal Support Ireland. The VP/Academic will act as a secondary representative only where relevant.
2. Casework queries directed to the USI Officer board should be referred, in the first instance, to the VP Welfare.

3. USI officer board shall continue to request the designation of SU advisors within SUSI, to whom queries can be directed by MO representatives only when specialist advice is required.
4. The VP/Welfare and the VP/Academic will facilitate MO representatives in raising SUSI-specific policy issues through phone conference at least once a month between meetings of National Council.

Back to Education Allowance

1. The VP/Welfare will act as the primary representative in relation to the Back to Education Allowance. The VP/Equality will act as a secondary representative only where relevant, particularly where national policy is concerned.
2. Casework queries directed to the USI Officer board should be referred, in the first instance, to the VP Welfare.
3. USI shall request a point of contact within the Department of Social Protection to informally advise MO representatives on queries relating to casework.

Student Assistance Fund

1. The VP/Welfare will act as the primary representative in relation to the Student Assistance Fund. The VP/Academic will act as a secondary representative only where relevant.
2. Casework queries directed to the USI Officer board should be referred, in the first instance, to the VP Welfare.

FSD

1. The VP/Welfare will act as the primary representative in relation to the Fund for Students with Disabilities. The VP/Equality will act as a secondary representative only where relevant, particularly where national policy is concerned.
2. Casework queries directed to the USI Officer board should be referred, in the first instance, to the VP Welfare.