

Memorandum of Agreement between Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU) and the Trinity Hall Junior Common Room (JCR)

Purpose

This Agreement reinforces the joint commitment of the Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (hereinafter referred to as TCDSU) and the Trinity Hall Junior Common Room (hereinafter referred to as the JCR) in developing and supporting effective student engagement and representation within both organisations, and Trinity College Dublin (hereinafter referred to as TCD).

This Agreement does not intend to replace other strategic documents, and respects the provisions of the respective constitutions of TCDSU and the JCR; but rather it is intended as a concise user-friendly document aimed at elucidating areas of shared interest between the two organisations, with a view to improving and enhancing cooperation between members.

Background

As it stands, TCDSU is the only representative body for all students in the College. It has the dual and complementary functions of representing students' interests both inside and outside College and of providing student services.

The JCR acts to create a vibrant atmosphere within the Trinity Hall Campus through event organisation and the provision of student-directed services as well as representing Trinity Hall residents' needs within College, Halls & the Rathmines area.

Responsibilities

In order that the two organisations might avoid discord, and work together to promote the interests of the students of TCD, the two organisations formally agree to cooperate in areas of student interest, and in particular agree to the following:

1. Representation

1.1 Representation on College Committees:

All student representatives on a committee of the College or University shall be appointed by TCDSU, save where that committee's constitution calls for representatives from postgraduate students whereupon the representatives shall be appointed by the GSU. Where appropriate, the JCR may seek the support of the Students' Union in representing the interests of Trinity Hall residents by proxy.

1.2 Representation of the Student Body:

TCDSU is the principal representative body of the undergraduate students of TCD and represents all students. If representation is to be made on an issue that affects all students, the SU shall take action, representing the student body as a whole, with support from the JCR where appropriate.

If representation is to be made on an issue that affects primarily the residents of Trinity Hall, the JCR shall, where appropriate, consult with TCDSU in order to develop a plan to take action, with the appropriate support from TCDSU. This arrangement shall apply to issues that arise both within TCD and externally.

This section is without prejudice to either organisation.

2. Elections

2.1 Representation of the Student Constituencies:

TCDSU shall arrange for the election of representatives from the undergraduate student constituencies as specified in the TCDSU Constitution. These representatives shall be appointed by TCDSU to the TCDSU Council and its associated committees, and to Department, School and Faculty Committees as appropriate.

The JCR shall arrange for the election of representatives from the Trinity Hall student constituencies as specified in the JCR Constitution. These representatives shall be appointed by the JCR to the JCR subcommittees as appropriate.

2.2 Overseeing of Elections:

As per the provisions of the JCR Constitution, the TCDSU Electoral Commission shall oversee the voting process for the annual JCR Committee Elections.

Where appropriate, and with reasonable notice given, the JCR may request the assistance of the TCDSU Electoral Commission in running and/or overseeing any other election.

3. Financial Provision

JCR membership fee monies collected on behalf of the JCR by the Accommodation Office shall be transferred to the TCDSU account, via the Capitation Committee. The monies, which shall only be used to support the JCR and its activities, shall be administered by TCDSU on behalf of, and at the direction of, the JCR. The TCDSU Administrative Officer shall act as the de-facto accountant for the JCR, keeping detailed records of all transactions on behalf of the JCR. Records shall be maintained through the TCDSU accounts.

4. Partnership

The JCR Executive and the TCDSU Sabbatical Officer Board shall endeavour to meet once per semester to match prospective participants to identified projects; determine funding required; and to conduct an annual review of the Agreement, where appropriate.

In order to effectively represent the interests of the residents of Trinity Hall, the JCR and TCDSU shall seek to appoint officers of the JCR executive to *ex-officio* positions on both standing and ad-hoc committees of TCDSU Council, where appropriate. Similarly, the JCR shall strive to extend the invitation to their biannual open forums to members of the TCDSU Sabbatical Officer Board, and the TCDSU Union Forum.

5. Communication & Visibility

The TCDSU Communications & Marketing Officer shall invite the JCR President, or their appointed deputy, to submit content of relevance to members of both organisations to the TCDSU Weekly Email.

The Communications Officer of each organisation shall, where appropriate, promote the other's content on their relevant social media pages.

Similarly, the JCR shall, where possible, extend its invitation for participation in the JCR Trinity Hall 'Freshers' Fair' to the TCDSU Sabbatical Officer Board, and the TCDSU Union Forum.

In consultation with the TCDSU Electoral Commission, the JCR shall each year endeavour to host a hustings event during the TCDSU sabbatical election period.

Points of Contact

The Presidents of both TCDSU and the JCR are the primary sponsors of this Agreement. The document will also be signed by the Education Officer of TCDSU and the Vice-President of the JCR, who will endorse it.

Mediation

In the event of conflict between the SU and the JCR, either organisation shall request the Dean of Students to mediate a meeting as a neutral third party. Should such a meeting be convened, the Dean of Students shall hold the casting vote.

Duration of Agreement

This Memorandum of Agreement will be in effect for five years from the date of last signature. Approximately six months before expiration, both parties will discuss expiration or renewal, based on an assessment of the continuing value of the Agreement to both parties.

Following annual review, should both parties agree on any changes to the Agreement, it must be brought forward for noting at the next meeting of TCDSU Council and the JCR Open Forum. The Agreement may be terminated at any time upon written notification by one party to the other.

Signatories:

TCDSU-CATU Memorandum of Agreement

About TCDSU

The Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU) is run by students, for students. We collectively represent, defend and fight for students' rights, alongside standing in solidarity with the workers' movement. We represent 21,000 students and provide access to services, support and political activism.

About CATU

The Community Action Tenants Union (CATU) is a tenants' union across the island of Ireland. CATU is a direct-action organization that protects its member's rights, for tenants, temporary accommodation, mortgage holders and homeowners. CATU aims to protect members' interests in achievable demands and protect its members when faced with unlawful actions. CATU is a membership-led organization that decides based on member approval of the policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to create and deepen cooperation between the TCDSU and CATU. Students and workers are faced with so many challenges, from a government that underfunds education leading to widespread staff casualization, a terrible housing crisis leaving students without accommodation and rising far-right forces threatening marginalized groups. As a result, there has been a close cooperation between the student movement and the workers movement, alongside with housing groups like CATU. In 2021-2022, as well as in 2022-2023, the Union of Students Ireland (USI) has reaffirmed its commitment to working with CATU, and local student unions such as Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) have also been on the forefront of cooperation. TCDSU has multiple mandates in support of universal public housing, reducing rents and stopping housing insecurity, and it has also worked with CATU before. Therefore, this agreement seeks to formalize the relationship that already exists between the two organisations.

Summary of Alliance

This alliance is divided into 2 key areas.

- Alliance Motivation
- Scope

Alliance Motivation

This alliance expands a continuous mutual agreement of protecting those in accommodation and strengthening the rights of its members. As both unions, it is recognized that there is a significant overlap in the aims but also in part the membership of the two unions.

Through this alliance between the CATU and the TCDSU both parties hope to:

- Reach students on the Trinity campus to promote and advocate the rights of students in tenancies and the housing arrangements they have
- Share information about CATU campaigns and opportunities with students of third-level institutions associated with the TCDSU to get involved as an active and engaged member within their community and tenants' union
- Inform students on their rights to join a tenant's union, as well as to empower their own accommodation rights through organising
- Establish common campaigning platforms and objectives in the aim of achieving the mutual aims of both organisations in dialogue and the opportunity to run joint campaigns

Scope

The TCDSU and CATU Ireland elected leadership and staff will ensure that their wider organisations are aware of and understand this alliance's aims and objectives. Through this alliance between the CATU and TCDSU, both parties will work to:

- Improve communication to make this an agenda item at relevant TCDSU, including but not limited to the Campaigns Committee
- Improve collaboration through the Sabbatical Officers will designating appropriate PTOs with the responsibility for campaigning for housing justice, liaising with and keeping in touch with CATU, ensuring a maintained working relationship. In addition, the President and Communications and Marketing Officer will work with these designated PTOs to run a membership drive amongst Trinity students.
- Improve joint communications through the attendance of a TCDSU/CATU representative where requested and possible
- Promoting CATU materials as requested on the platforms of the TCDSU under the discretion of the Communications and Marketing Officer
- Offering organizational support such as allowing CATU to be present at Freshers Week and having stands in College buildings in association with TCDSU
- The exchange of information regarding campaigns of both TCDSU and CATU where it may be felt this exchange can mutually benefit each other's memberships, and TCDSU support of national CATU campaigns.
- Offering venue and meeting rooms to CATU if administratively possible

- Coordinating door-knocking activities with CATU and TCDSU
- Through the membership drive, contributing to the anti-eviction/protest contact list who can be mobilized in case of an eviction or other CATU actions
- Inviting CATU to give trainings that the student union holds, wherever time and resources permit

TCDSU will not be providing financial support to CATU, in respect of both organizations autonomy.

This agreement is to be reviewed every year in the first week of January by the Campaigns Committee and if changes are necessary, then brought to Council by the President to be voted on and ratified.

Signatories: