

Union Policy Review – ERB Consultation

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Union Policies: <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/your-union/policies>

Background:

- Imperial College Union has a body of Union Policy (81+ Policies) which set out stances that ICU has taken, and policies for ICU staff and volunteers to follow. These policies form an important part of ICU governance.
- These policies ‘lapse’ if not re-approved within a number of years, currently almost all Union Policies are lapsed, as policy review has not happened in the last few years.
- Many of the Policies on record have lost relevance since they were initially approved, or the circumstances have changed such that these policies need major review. This is particularly true of ‘stances’ taken, which frequently lose relevance within the lifetime of the policy.
- It is often unclear who has responsibility for ensuring particular policies are reviewed.
- There is a lack of clarity around what decisions taken by Council constitute Policy – resolutions to lobby College, or to mandate an Officer Trustee can be ambiguously considered Policy.

Proposal:

- To distinguish documents which may be properly considered Policy (e.g. defined procedures or regulations) from stances, and other resolutions with a limited lifetime.
- To review all existing policies, and decide which are no longer relevant, which need significant revision, and whether there are any areas where a policy is required and does not already exist.
- To reformulate the entire body of Union Policy based on this review, with responsibility for each policy allocated to one of Council’s subcommittees.

Past policies with Education/Representation remit:

- OpenCourseWare Policy (2011): resolves to support College introducing an OpenCourseWare system (i.e. making lecture recordings etc publicly available)
- Podcasting Policy (2011): resolves to support College introducing an internal video podcasting service (essentially Panopto).
- Blended Learning Policy (2012): re-commits to supporting College establish an OpenCourseWare platform and video podcasting service.
- Grade Point Average Policy (2013): resolves to oppose introduction of a GPA marking system.
- Postgraduate Taught Fees (2013): sets out ICU policy of PGT fees – including opposition to caps on fees and intake, support of loans-based funding system.
- Higher Education Policy (2014): resolves to campaign against increase of tuition fees and marketisation of higher education
- Representation Policy (2013): Outlines the structure and roles of academic representation within ICU, and the responsibilities of representatives.
- Stance on the use of academic sanctions by Imperial College to enforce payment of debts related to non-academic services (renewed 2017): resolves to oppose such sanctions.

Questions for ERB:

- Have you ever referred to any of these Policies yourself in the context of your volunteer role?
- Which of these Policies seem like they are no longer relevant / not worth reviewing?
- Which of these Policies seem like they still have relevance, but need significant review?
- Are there any areas relevant to Education / Representation where ICU ought to have a Policy, but one does not exist?