



national union of students scotland

Campaigning for an Organised and Brighter Future for Students and Young Workers

- *A Protocol between the STUC and NUS Scotland*

October 2009



STUC Youth Committee/NUS Scotland Protocol

1. Introduction

1.1 This protocol covers the relationship between the National Union of Students Scotland (NUS Scotland) and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).

1.2 NUS Scotland and the STUC are affiliate-based, democratic organisations committed to representing the best interests of their members.

1.3 The STUC represents six hundred and forty four thousand workers in 42 affiliated trade unions. The NUS in Scotland is the representative organisation for students in further and higher education, comprising over 60 local campus student organisations: the membership of NUS Scotland accounts for 85% of students in Higher Education and over 95% of students in Further Education in Scotland.

1.4 The elements of this protocol cover three areas:

- strategic engagement between both organisations
- support at an operational level
- parliamentary engagement
- consultation arrangements between NUS Scotland and the STUC.

2. Overarching Principles

2.1 Both NUS Scotland and the STUC are committed to ensuring that working students are protected from exploitation in their employment. Trade unions can help students to understand their employment rights and how to ensure that they are protected from exploitation in the workplace, especially through trade union membership. Students' associations can help trade unions to understand the issues facing working students.

2.2 Beyond issues of immediate concern to the world of work or further and higher education, both the trade union movement and the student movement share a concern to develop a new generation of activists who are engaged in the political process, participants in their local communities and campaigners for social justice.

2.3 Developing a relationship between NUS Scotland and the STUC around a common belief in the need for a more proactive organising culture in the work place and on campuses is a key element for both organisations of building a broad coalition in favour of a shared vision of a fairer and more equitable society.

2.4 Central to this shared vision is a joint commitment to equality for women, young and older workers, Black, Disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers and students.

3. Strategic engagement

3.1 A major aspiration of both organisations is that a more activist based culture is developed and that there is a greater understanding of trade unions within the student body.

3.2 Similarly, both organisations aim to develop a greater understanding of the employment problems faced by working students and to participate in projects and initiatives which help trade unions to recruit and represent students who are in work.

3.3 Both organisations also believe that activism and representation should continue beyond further and higher education and that as far as possible graduates should be encouraged to join their relevant trade union.

3.4 A key element of the partnership between NUS Scotland and the STUC will be support for union efforts to organise working students. A further element will be to support the efforts of unions in recruiting graduates in career professions.

3.5 Through this protocol both NUS Scotland and the STUC will agree to establish a single, coordinated approach to joint activity between the trade union and student movement, thereby adding a greater degree of credibility and long-term planning to their activities.

3.6 The officers of NUS Scotland and the STUC will meet regularly to discuss opportunities for joint working including;

- working with STUC affiliated trade unions to support and coordinate recruitment initiatives among working students within NUS Scotland affiliated students' unions.
- working with NUS Scotland and relevant trade unions to develop and strengthen links with graduates in unionised professions and those pursuing careers in non-unionised sectors of the economy.
- working together on campaigns where NUS Scotland and STUC have a shared interest, such as equality campaigns.

3.7 The STUC Youth Committee will invite NUS Scotland to the first meeting of the new committee annually to encourage discussion on joint strategies and areas of common interest.

4. Operational Support

4.1 NUS Scotland will encourage its constituent students' unions to assist trade union access to their students when approached and to support trade union campaigns to organise working students.

4.2 NUS Scotland will encourage its constituent members to use best practice in their employment practices and to recognise trade unions to represent their staff including working students.

4.3 NUS Scotland will also encourage students' association officers to work with campus trade unions in further and higher education.

4.4 The STUC will work with NUS Scotland to establish a programme to identify and recruit potential activists and to create a national network of students to build campaigns on campuses and in workplaces.

5 Consultation Arrangements

5.1 Both NUS Scotland and the STUC respect each other's independence, but both organisations also believe that the aims set out above can be best pursued through closer working between the STUC Youth Committee and NUS Scotland.

5.2 Under the terms of this agreement, therefore, NUS Scotland will be invited to send an observing delegation of representatives to the STUC Youth Conference.

5.3 The STUC will be invited to send a visiting delegation of representatives to NUS Scotland National Conference.

5.4 Each organisation will extend invitation to the other party to attend to their respective committees as and when appropriate

5.5 Where reserved business is under discussion in any STUC or NUS Scotland structure it is understood that observers may be asked to withdraw from those meetings for the duration of those items.

5.6 Where possible and appropriate NUS Scotland Liberation officers will conduct work with the STUC's equalities committees.

6 Parliamentary Activity

6.1 The STUC and NUS Scotland will identify opportunities for joint lobbying of the Scottish and Westminster Parliament re-enforcing the collective strength of both organisations.

7. Conclusion

7.1 This protocol represents a strengthening of the relationship between NUS Scotland and the STUC at a time when a growing number of students are coming into contact with the world of work. There is much that trade unions can do to support students in employment, and there is also a great deal that the student movement can contribute to the continuing development of a vibrant trade union movement in Scotland. The elements of this agreement symbolize a powerful association in favour of social justice, collective organisation and democratic participation on campuses in workplaces and within the wider community.

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