# Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Policy

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| **Title of the Policy** | **Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Policy** |
| **Created on** | **30-Aug-2023** |
| **Last reviewed on** | **28-Aug-2026** |

## 1. Purpose

Masters' Union recognises the labour rights of all employees and faculty, including women and international staff, including the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining as provided under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.

## 2. Policy Statement

Masters' Union recognises trade unions and employee representative bodies. All employees have the right to:

- form or join a trade union or employee association
- choose not to join any union or association
- elect or nominate representatives of their choice
- take part in lawful association activities
- raise workplace concerns through the appropriate channels
- seek recognition of a representative body
- engage with Masters' Union through authorised representatives, in accordance with applicable law

Employees exercise these rights free from interference, intimidation, coercion, discrimination or retaliation, within the conditions set out in section 6.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone directly employed by Masters' Union, at every level and in every function. That includes:

- faculty
- academic and research staff
- administrative, professional, technical and support staff
- full-time, part-time and fixed-term employees
- men, women and international employees

Its principles also apply to people engaged through third-party service providers who work on Masters' Union activities.

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## 4. Legal Framework

This policy complies with the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 and its rules, including the provisions on trade-union registration and recognition, negotiating unions and councils, unfair labour practices, non-discrimination and non-retaliation.

## 5. Freedom to Organise

Employees may:

- discuss common workplace concerns
- form, join or register a trade union or employee association
- take part in association activities
- decline membership or participation

Masters' Union will not:

- establish, fund or control any employee organisation
- influence the selection of employee representatives
- prevent or obstruct organising activity
- require employees to disclose union membership
- pressure employees to join or not to join an association
- treat employees more or less favourably because of association membership

## 6. Conduct of Union Activity

To protect teaching, student services and the safety of everyone on campus, union and association activity is carried out within the following conditions, consistent with the Masters' Union Code of Ethical Business Conduct:

- **Time.** Union meetings, canvassing for membership and collection of union dues take place outside working hours. Any such activity on Masters' Union premises or during working hours requires prior written permission from the reporting manager and Human Resources.
- **Premises and property.** Use of Masters' Union meeting rooms, notice boards, e-mail groups or other property for union activity, and distribution of union literature on Masters' Union premises, require prior permission from Human Resources, which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Masters' Union name and logo may not be used without approval.
- **Channels.** Workplace concerns are raised with the stakeholders they relate to, following the escalation matrix in the Code of Ethical Business Conduct. Concerns shared by a group of employees are raised through their recognised representatives or the consultation procedures agreed under section 7, and not by involving colleagues who are not concerned or through mass e-mails from group e-mail IDs.
- **Conduct.** Union activity must be lawful and peaceful. It must not disrupt teaching, student services or operations, and must not involve intimidation, coercion or harassment of any employee, student or visitor.
- **Confidentiality.** Confidential institutional information, student data and personal data may not be used or disclosed in union activity.
- **Political neutrality.** Canvassing for political parties, or collecting funds for them, on Masters' Union premises is not permitted.

- **Industrial action.** Any strike or other industrial action follows the notice and conciliation requirements of the Industrial Relations Code, 2020.

These conditions govern the manner in which union and association activity is carried out. A breach of these conditions is handled under the Code of Ethical Business Conduct.

## 7. Recognition of Unions and Representatives

When employees form a trade union or representative body, Masters' Union will recognise it in accordance with the Industrial Relations Code, 2020. Recognition will follow this process:

- written notification from the union or representative body
- verification of registration or representative authority
- confirmation of the employees represented
- identification of authorised employee and institutional representatives
- agreement on procedures for meetings, consultation and communication
- written documentation of the recognition arrangement

Human Resources will acknowledge a recognition request within 15 working days and conclude the process within 60 working days.

Masters' Union may also engage with the elected representatives of employee groups that are not registered as trade unions, for consultation on workplace matters. This does not limit employees' right to form or join a registered union.

## 8. Consultation and Dialogue

Where a union or representative body is recognised, Masters' Union engages with its authorised representatives in good faith, in accordance with the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, on matters such as:

- wages and benefits
- working hours, leave and attendance
- workplace safety and wellbeing
- terms and conditions of employment
- employee welfare
- grievance procedures
- organisational changes that affect employees
- other matters of mutual interest

## 9. Non-Discrimination and Non-Retaliation

No employee will be treated adversely for:

- forming or joining an employee organisation, or declining to join one
- serving as a representative
- supporting lawful organising activity
- taking part in consultation
- raising workplace concerns in good faith

- reporting interference with association rights

Association or representation activity has no bearing on recruitment, pay, performance assessment, promotion, training, work allocation, contract renewal, disciplinary action or termination.

## 10. Women and International Staff

These rights apply equally to women and international employees. Masters' Union ensures that:

- participation is not restricted based on gender or nationality
- women and international employees can stand for election as representatives
- consultation processes are inclusive and accessible
- issues that particularly affect women or international employees can be raised through representatives

## 11. Responsibilities

- **Senior Management:** upholds freedom of association and engages in good faith with recognised representatives.
- **Human Resources:** communicates this policy, processes recognition requests within the timelines above, facilitates consultation, maintains records, and investigates allegations of interference or retaliation.
- **Managers:** do not interfere with lawful organising activity, and do not treat employees adversely because of association or representation activity.
- **Employees and representatives:** exercise their rights lawfully and respect the rights of others.

## 12. Reporting Concerns

Employees can report the following to Human Resources, the Ethics Committee, or through the grievance process in the Code of Ethical Business Conduct:

- interference with freedom of association
- retaliation, intimidation or coercion
- discrimination based on union activity
- refusal to process a recognition request or to engage with representatives
- disclosure of union membership

All reports are confidential and are investigated. Retaliation against anyone who raises a concern in good faith is a disciplinary offence.

## 13. Training

HR staff, managers and institutional leaders receive training on freedom of association, non-interference, non-discrimination and non-retaliation, and recognition procedures.

## 14. Monitoring and Review

HR keeps a record of unions and associations formed, recognition requests and their outcomes, consultations held, and complaints and corrective actions.

This policy is reviewed every two years, or sooner if the law changes.