

# Further reading:

## Introduction to teacher - employer relations

Employee - employer relations is concerned with the relationship between employees and their employers. It covers the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, including:

- The terms and conditions offered by employers to their employees
- The organisations which represent employers and employees respectively and look after their interests
- The laws, acts, regulations and legal institutions that govern the relationship
- The mechanisms of communication between employers and employees and their representatives
- Negotiations on employment terms and conditions and other issues
- Grievances and rights of appeal.

In Sierra Leone's teaching service, teachers, school leaders, and school administrators are all employees while MBSSE, TSC, district authorities, and school proprietors are employers, with the Government as the overarching employer. Universities and TTCs operate separately using a different system.

Employer-employee relations within the teaching service adhere to Sierra Leone's current labour laws and other relevant legislation.

School leaders, SMC's and BoG's carry out some of the duties of employers as part of their regular HR responsibilities.

Teachers are represented by Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU) while the Trade Group Negotiation Council (TGNC) serves as a forum for negotiations between employers and employees in the teaching service. School leaders are represented by the National Council of Head Teachers (NACOHT) and Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (CPSS).

Traditionally, employees and their representatives negotiate for the best possible conditions in terms of salary, working hours, leave, etc. while the employer has an interest in cutting costs and maximising work efficiency.

In modern HR this conflict of interest is considered old-fashioned. Best practice now is to focus on common interests, i.e. a business thrives when its employees thrive and vice versa. If employees are motivated and committed, they will achieve more and the organisation will benefit, which again encourages the organisation to look after its employees, creating a positive circle of common interests and healthy cooperation.

This also applies to the teaching service where teachers and their employers share a common interest in the successful achievements of school children.

Terms and conditions associated with employer relations in the teaching service are wide ranging including wages, working hours, leave, benefits, pension, grievances, legal rights, etc. It could even incorporate matters such as smoking on school grounds and use of internet in the workplace.

## Who is responsible

- TSC, the Teacher-Employer Relations Department: Responsible for teacher-employer relations from an HR perspective.
- Sierra Leone Teachers' Union (SLTU): represents the interests of teachers and negotiates on their behalf.
- Trade Group Negotiation Council (TGNC): Includes all key stakeholders in teacher affairs and is a key negotiating body.
- Legal Aid Board: Provides legal aid for the poor.
- Ombudsman: An autonomous body with the power to deal with complaints relating to employee-employer relations.
- National Council of Head Teachers (NACOHT).
- Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (CPSS).

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