

## **Pakistani Society Tour Proposal Appeal**

Proposed by the OSC Chair

Seconded by the OSC Treasurer and Pakistani Chair

### **Background**

Pakistani Society submitted a tour proposal to CSB on 26<sup>th</sup> January, requesting to visit the Brecon Beacons in Wales over a weekend. They submitted the following description of their tour:

*“To go camping, horse-riding, trekking and rafting and at the same time discovering Wales. This will be a great change from our usual activities which are all based in London and have not involved getting to know other parts of this country.”*

I advised the society to expand on how their proposed tour would further their aims and objectives as outlined in the ‘Tours’ section of C&S policy which I have recapped here:

- *A tour is defined as being a period of (usually resident) time spent by members of a Club or Society away from the geographical locality of their mainstream club activities, supplementary to their normal practices.*
- *The purpose of a tour should be to further the aims and objects of the Club or Society, supporting their core activities beyond which can be achieved through usual day-to-day, week-to-week operations.*
- *The prime activity whilst “on tour” should be the Club or Society activity.*
- *Geographical locations of tours should be chosen to make use of opportunities that would normally be unavailable and not otherwise visited by the Club or Society.*
- *A tour should have a clear aim or objective against which success or failure can be measured.*
- *Travel is defined as being the travel, by any means, to, from and during a tour; to reach the geographical location in which the activity shall take place, rather than as part of the activity being undertaken.*

The subsequent email dialogue is listed in Appendix A. The proposal was presented by Alex Balikhin (OSC Treasurer), and he read out parts of the email conversation as required.

The Board decided to reject the proposal on the following grounds (based on the OSC Treasurer’s observations as the official minutes are not yet available):

- 1) Even though the club is achieving its aims and objectives, it isn't achieving its core aims and objectives (i.e. this tour could have been proposed by any OSC society and wasn't Pakistani specific)
- 2) Issues were raised because at the last Tours meeting the Pakistani Society chair mentioned that it was hard for your society to do events far away and outside of London, and at this tour event it was not specified how to overcome this.

### **Grounds for appeal**

#### Confusion over interpretation of C&S Policy - tours

I believe that there needs to be a further discussion on how one interprets C&S Tours policy, specific to non activity-based clubs such as cultural and social clubs i.e. OSC and SCC clubs. There is some ambiguity over how one defines ‘core aims and objectives’ in this context, as these clubs often aim to provide social events for its members with specific ‘lean’ on culture or some ideology.

Additionally it is arguable that Overseas societies may (should?) have as one of its core aims, to provide a forum for students of that nationality and country to experience culture of the host country where they are students. This is additional to the core aim of educating students about the culture of a particular country and it is for many OSC clubs at Imperial, its primary aim.

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This is the basis for Pakistani society's appeal – they have done some in-depth interpretation of the C&S Policy and they are still unclear how the club is not fulfilling its specific core aims and objectives.

A more detailed discussion based on email comments by the OSC Chair and Pakistani chair

I am under the understanding the Clubs and Societies Board did not receive paper printouts of those submitted in Appendix A and that there was not enough adequate discussion of whether the club is satisfying its core aims and objectives. Additionally, I sent a separate email to the DPCS and DPFS on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January with some discussion points where I raised issues on how exactly to definite core A&Os with respect to social/cultural clubs (see below). This appears not to have been passed on for CSB's consideration although I would have liked it to.

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**From:** OSC, Chair  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 25, 2009 2:01:50 AM  
**To:** ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham;  
ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter  
**Cc:** OSC, Treasurer  
**Subject:** Pakistan Tour Proposal  
**Auto forwarded by a Rule**

Hi guys,

I've replied to Zirgham strongly suggesting that he come to the meeting on Monday.

My interpretation FWIW

I don't buy his argument that he has done enough 'cultural fulfilling activities' during the term to balance the fact that this tour proposal is not Pakistani specific... because we are supposed to consider each tour proposal on its own merits independent of any other activity going on in the club.

However he does raise some good points re the interpretation of the 'furthering A&Os' part of C&S tours policy. There are lots of arguments that acitivity clubs cannot be funded for social tours so why should social clubs etc... but by interpreting the current C&S policy, it only refers specifically to furthering A&Os and being able to do things not supported within the normal geographic region/day-to-day activities. Thus on current policy it would be difficult to find good reasons to counter his claims for the reasonability of the tour proposal and I can see an appeal coming should a rejection take place. It is a clear example that a 'one-size-fits-all' policy cannot easily be fitted to all clubs and we may need to make it clearer under what circumstances OSC and social clubs shall qualify for a tour.

This is a somewhat marginal case and I'm not sure what sort of support it is likely to attract from the other members of CSB who have very concrete examples of how a club within their CSC/FU can qualify for a tour. The OSC do not have this luxury, due to its recent history and the ambiguity of its status as a club without real 'non-social' activities

If we want to keep OSC clubs on side with the Union and remove the stigma that the Union are difficult to work with, then consistently turning down a club officer keen to play by the book is not going to help.

Alex - you are free to make your own mind up over this, regardless of what I've said above.

Eugene

## **Decision Required**

I would like the Executive Committee to reconsider CSB's decision not to approve Pakistani Society's tour proposal, and to offer more specific advice on how social and cultural clubs might successfully apply for tours in the future.

## Appendix A – Correspondence between OSC Chair, Pakistani Chair and other interested parties

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**From:** Afridi, Zirgham  
**Sent:** 24 January 2009 22:54  
**To:** OSC, Chair; ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham  
**Cc:** ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter  
**Subject:** RE: Tour Budget (Pakistan soc)

Hello Eugene,

Don't worry, no offence taken. I understood your intention behind the email.

The reason I specifically mentioned the criteria regarding the duration and geographical location of the tour was because last term PakSoc's tour proposal was rejected for not fulfilling those grounds.

This time I made sure that those grounds are covered. As for the 'aims and objectives' of the Pakistani Society, our constitution contains six clauses in this regard. The proposed tour shall fulfill the following A&Os:

2.2 Provide social events for its members.

2.5 Encourage the support and welfare of Pakistani students during their stay at Imperial College, making their stay a comfortable, enjoyable and productive one.

2.6 A society for Pakistani students, both home and abroad, to form acquaintances.

It shall not be fulfilling the following:

2.1 Organise events to increase knowledge and understanding of Pakistani culture and society for its members.

2.4 Strive to promote the best of Pakistani culture in a collegiate and informal atmosphere.

2.3 Provide career guidance aimed specifically at Pakistani students.

I do not think any tour is expected to fulfill clause 2.3 therefore I shall not elaborate upon it. As far as clauses 2.1 and 2.2 are concerned, we have already organised a lot of events to increase the knowledge and understanding of Pakistani culture and society for our members. We've had an academic seminar on the Archaeological sites of Pakistan (for which I had also sent out an invitation to you guys), a lecture on a famous Pakistani Poet and another lecture on the current political situation in Pakistan. Towards the end of last term we also organised our annual charity dinner where we displayed a host of Pakistani performances and attracted members from various other OSC societies to attend. This year we are planning an Arts and Cultural exhibition whereby our fellow imperial college students will have another opportunity to learn more about our culture. Preceding it will be a Pakistani literary review group. In essence, the balance of the entire list of events we have already organised and will be organising has been heavily tilted towards the fulfilment of clauses 2.1 and 2.4.

The proposed tour will be fulfilling clauses 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6. Therefore, I cannot see how our proposed tour fails to comply with any of the conditions necessary for it to constitute as one. The example provided

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about a rugby society going on a trip only to go to a beach and play football does not compare to the nature of activities and the nature of A&O's of my society, an Overseas Society. It would be obvious that a sport society play the sport stipulated in its constitution during a tour but I ask you, what would be the obvious activity for an Overseas Society? Our tour fulfills half of our stated A&Os. Is that not sufficient? If the tour is expected to fulfill all of the A&Os, then what about clause 2.3?

I hope these points I have mentioned convince all those in the decision making process to accept the proposed tour to Wales. Having mentioned all of the above I do not think I can add anything more to my arguments by being present in the meeting on Monday. However, if you still feel that I should attend then kindly inform me. If not, and the proposal for the tour is rejected, then kindly let me know the exact grounds of the rejection so I may take it back to my committee and appeal against it if need be.

Thank you for looking out for PakSocs interests Eugene. Your assistance is much appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Zirgham Afridi.

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**From:** Chang, Eugene T Y on behalf of OSC, Chair  
**Sent:** Wed 1/21/2009 1:15 PM  
**To:** ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham; Afridi, Zirgham; OSC, Chair  
**Cc:** ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter  
**Subject:** RE: Tour Budget (Pakistan soc)

Hi Zirgham,

Sorry if my email caused any offence; I wanted to check with Lily what her own opinion was before submitting it for the Clubs and Societies Board's approval because I don't want you to waste your time if it is unlikely to pass.

Of course it will be considered next Monday but you should expand on how your tour will satisfy your core aims and objectives as that is a major deciding factor for whether or not a tour proposal is approved or not.

For example, rugby club going to Australia for a month to play tennis and surf on the beach would not fulfil their A&Os, whereas going to Australia for a month to play 12 games of rugby would.

Eugene

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**From:** ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham  
**Sent:** 21 January 2009 10:27  
**To:** Afridi, Zirgham; OSC, Chair  
**Cc:** ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter  
**Subject:** RE: Tour Budget (Pakistan soc)

Hi all,

I'm happy to accept this as a tour application - as you say, it's up to the committee to discuss and decide on whether they think it's a valid tour. I take your points Zirgham about distance and duration of tour, however, those two things are not the only factors which the committee will take into account when deciding whether it's a valid tour or not - as Eugene said, whether it is part of the core aims and objectives of a society is also very important, as are a number of points, all of which can be found here:

<http://www.union.ic.ac.uk/sac/handbook/index.php?title=Tours>.

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Regards

Lily Topham

Deputy President (Clubs & Societies)

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**From:** Afridi, Zirgham

**Sent:** 21 January 2009 08:11

**To:** OSC, Chair

**Cc:** ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham; ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter

**Subject:** RE: Tour Budget (Pakistan soc)

Hello All,

Are we not going to have a meeting similar to the one we had last year where those who submitted the tour budgets were present to try and justify why the budget should be approved.

I remember PakSoc's last budget was refused on the grounds of 'Geographical distance' and 'Duration of Tour'. This time I ensured that that would not be the case and hence our tour to Wales for the entire weekend.

While I agree to the grounds of the refusal of the previous tour budget, I cannot foresee any issues which would lead to this one being rejected.

Kindly feel free to discuss with me any issues upon which you seek any clarification.

Kind Regards,

Zirgham Afridi.

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**From:** Chang, Eugene T Y on behalf of OSC, Chair

**Sent:** Tue 1/20/2009 6:31 PM

**To:** Afridi, Zirgham

**Cc:** ICU Deputy President Clubs and Societies - Lily Topham; ICU Deputy President Finance and Services - Christian Carter

**Subject:** FW: Tour Budget (Pakistan soc)

Hi Zirgham,

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I'm not sure this would qualify as a tour because it would need to further your club's A&Os... Lily what's your take, before submitting to CSB?

However this is something that would need to be approved by Christian as the spend is over £1000.

Cheers

Eugene

**From:** Afridi, Zirgham  
**Sent:** 20 January 2009 13:22  
**To:** OSC, Chair  
**Subject:** Tour Budget

Hi Eugene,

Massive apologies for the late submission of this tour budget.

I hope it's not too late. I was waiting for information from the travel agent who only responded last night.

I hope this is accepted. I'm not too sure if this is the right document I filled out. I got it of the union website but don't remember if it's similar to the one I filled out last year.

Thanks Eugene.

Kind Regards,

Zirgham Afridi.