

## **Bye-law: Union Council**

**Approved: Trustee Board 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

### **Role and purpose**

1. Union Council is the supreme democratic decision making and policy creating body of the Union.
2. Union Council will be the working name for the Student Council, as defined in the Articles of Association.
3. Decisions made by Union Council may be overridden by referenda
4. The responsibility of Union Council will be as follows:
  - 4.1. To represent students
  - 4.2. To determine the policies of the Students' Union
  - 4.3. To hold representatives to account
  - 4.4. To oversee the running and budget of student groups and representatives
5. Union Council has the power to:
  - 5.1. Request and receive reports from the Trustee Board or any of its committees
  - 5.2. Enact policy on behalf of the Students' Union and its members
  - 5.3. Amend the Bye-Laws, provided such a decision is approved by a simple majority vote of Council and then ratified by the Trustees
  - 5.4. Request, receive and approve reports and minutes from representatives, Council committees or any other part of the Unions' democratic structures
  - 5.5. Make recommendations to the Trustees of USSU on strategy, governance and financial matters.
  - 5.6. Approve the appointment of Student Trustees nominated by the appointments committee of the Trustee Board, provided that such decision is approved by a simple majority of Union Council
  - 5.7. Remove Student Trustees by a motion of no confidence provided that such a motion is approved by a 2/3 majority of Union Council
  - 5.8. Scrutinise the appointment and re-appointment of External Trustees approved by the Trustee Board
  - 5.9. Make non-binding motions of no-confidence in appointed External Trustees;
  - 5.10. Review and scrutinise the decisions and actions of the Trustees of USSU;
  - 5.11. Reprimand or Censure any elected officer or other official Student Representative following the procedures laid out in the Bye-Laws
  - 5.12. Remove from Office, via No Confidence motion, any Elected Officer (except for Sabbatical Officers) or other official Student Representative Provided a no confidence motion is agreed by a 2/3 majority of Union Council.
  - 5.13. Remove from Office, via No Confidence motion a Sabbatical Officer by a 2/3 majority of Union Council only following a majority resolution of the Trustee Board taken in accordance with the bye-laws.
  - 5.14. Refer any No Confidence procedure to a vote of all students by a simple majority vote of Union Council, this includes Sabbatical Officers but will not apply to Student Trustees. A No Confidence vote requires 4.5% of members to vote to be valid and a simple majority in favour to pass.

	<p>5.15. Declare an opinion on any matter</p> <p>5.16. Admit and remove, Reciprocal, Life and Honorary Life Members of the Union.</p> <p>5.17. Devolve some of these powers to sub committees of Union Council</p> <p>5.18. Do anything else as may be jointly agreed with the Trustees</p> <p>5.19. Call a referendum on any issue by a 2/3 majority vote of Union Council .</p>
<b>Budgetary powers</b>	<p>6. Union Council shall have delegated authority from the Unions Trustee Board for the budget of Sports groups, Societies, student representatives, halls representatives and other student groups and representatives as shall be decided from time to time.</p> <p>7. Union Council will receive the designated funds from the Trustee Board, alongside a recommendation of how this money should be allocated.</p> <p>8. Union Council shall not have authority over Staffing budgets or other such budgets as determined by the Trustee Board from time to time.</p> <p>9. Union Council shall ensure, jointly with the Trustee Board that the procedure for allocating funding to groups and societies shall be fair, set down in writing and freely accessible to all students.</p> <p>10. Union Council may create Executive committees as sub committees of Union Council and devolve part of the budgetary allocation to these committees</p> <p>11. Union Council must not spend more than the allocated fund devolved to it by the Trustee Board.</p> <p>12. Any expenditure of the allocated funds must be in accordance with the Unions Policy and financial regulations as well as Charity law and any other relevant legislation.</p> <p>13. The Trustee Board, in their absolute discretion, and in accordance with Article 28 of the Articles of Association may override any decision made by Council or its subcommittees.</p> <p>14. On a yearly basis, in line with the Unions budget cycle, Union Council may request to the Trustee board that the allocation received is changed. Such recommendations must include a financial plan justifying any change.</p> <p>15. The Trustee Board do not have to agree to the recommendations put forward to them by Council but must set down in writing any reasons for not approving any requests.</p>
<b>Composition</b>	<p>16. The voting membership of the Union Council is as follows:</p> <p>16.1. The Sabbatical Officer Trustees</p> <p>16.2. The Voluntary Officers of each Student Executive</p> <p>16.3. Two members of each Student Executive, at least one of which should be a woman.</p> <p>16.4. A panel of 20 students randomly selected to be representative of the general student population in accordance with the guidance document of Union Council.</p> <p>17. Council members shall serve for one academic year in accordance with the guidance document of Union council. The student panel shall be created for each meeting of Council.</p> <p>18. Student and External Trustees of USSU may attend Union Council and have speaking rights but not voting rights.</p> <p>19. Student and External Trustees may not hold a position on Union Council.</p> <p>20. Meetings shall be open to all Full Members who shall be accorded speaking rights but not voting rights.</p>

<b>Clerk</b>	<p>21. There shall be a Clerk to Union Council who shall be a member of Union staff.</p> <p>22. The Clerk shall provide administrative support to Union Council and shall keep minutes of all proceedings to include the names of all persons present at each such meeting. Any such minute, if purported to be signed by the chair of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chair of the next succeeding meeting, shall be sufficient evidence of the proceedings.</p> <p>23. Students' Union core staff members may attend Union Council as appropriate and have the right to speak but not to vote</p>
<b>Sub Committees of Union Council</b>	<p>24. There shall be the following sub committees of Union Council</p> <p>24.1. Student Executives to include:</p> <p>24.1.1. Activities and Sports Executive</p> <p>24.1.2. Community and Wellbeing Executive</p> <p>24.1.3. LGBTQ+ Students Executive</p> <p>24.1.4. Women students Executive</p> <p>24.1.5. Black and Minority Ethnic Students Executive</p> <p>24.1.6. Students with disabilities Executive</p> <p>24.1.7. International Students Executive</p> <p>24.1.8. Academic Executive</p> <p>24.2. Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>24.3. NUS Committee</p> <p>25. New sub committees and executives may be created or removed by a simple majority vote of Union Council</p> <p>26. There will be a Union Executive, as defined in the bye-laws, which reports to Union Council but is not considered to be a sub-committee of it.</p> <p>27. The Union Executive and Student Executives may receive a budget allocation on a yearly basis from Council to conduct their work. Any such allocation must be spent in accordance with any relevant financial regulations.</p>
<b>Frequency of Meetings</b>	<p>28. There shall be a minimum of three meetings of Union Council held in each academic year.</p> <p>29. The last Union Council of the academic year should normally also be used as the unions Student Members meeting.</p>
<b>Regulation &amp; delegation</b>	<p>30. Union Council shall be regulated according to this Bye-Law and any Guidance &amp; Strategy made from time to time by Union Council.</p>
<b>Quorum</b>	<p>31. The quorum for a meeting of Union Council shall be 40% of the filled positions</p>
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	<p>32. The Chair of Union Council will be an impartial student recruited specifically to facilitate Union Council</p>
<b>Conflicts of interest</b>	<p>33. Whenever a person has a personal interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting they must:</p>

	<p>33.1. Declare an interest before discussion begins on the matter;</p> <p>33.2. Withdraw from that part of the meeting unless expressly invited to remain;</p> <p>33.3. In the case of personal interests not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting; and</p> <p>33.4. In the case of personal interests withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the matter.</p>
<b>Political accountability (no confidence, censure and reprimand)</b>	<p>34. All Union Council members are accountable to students through the Union Councils processes of reprimand, censure and no confidence.</p> <p>35. If a motion of reprimand is passed at Council, this shall be treated as a formal verbal warning by the Union and shall be kept on file for references for three months</p> <p>35.1. A simple majority is required to pass a motion of reprimand</p> <p>36. If a motion of censure is passed at Council, this shall be treated as a formal disciplinary written warning by the Union, and shall be kept on file for references for at least 2 years.</p> <p>36.1. A simple majority is required to pass a motion of censure</p> <p>37. If a motion of no confidence is passed at Council, this shall dismiss the Union Council member in question from their position with immediate effect. This does not apply to the Sabbatical Officers</p> <p>37.1. A 2/3 majority is required to pass a motion of no confidence.</p> <p>37.2. Union Council may propose a motion to put a Sabbatical Officer or any other Union Council member to an All Student No Confidence Vote. A motion calling for an All Student No Confidence vote will need a simple majority at Union Council to pass.</p> <p>37.3. No Confidence votes called in this way will be conducted in accordance with the bye-laws on referenda and elections.</p> <p>37.4. All student No Confidence Votes require a simple majority to pass provided 4.5% of members vote.</p> <p>38. A vote of no confidence shall have the following consequences:</p> <p>38.1. An Officer Trustee will be suspended on full pay from their employed position within the Union pending a decision as to whether they can continue as an employee of the organisation.</p>
<b>Employment measures and misconduct</b>	<p>39. Every Sabbatical Officer is an employee of the Union, and no Sabbatical Officer may continue in post should they have been dismissed as an employee of the organisation.</p> <p>39.1. Any case involving misconduct or gross misconduct by a Sabbatical Officer shall be handled in accordance with the Union's disciplinary procedures for employees.</p> <p>40. A Union Representative may be removed from their position for breaching the Member's Code of Conduct.</p> <p>41. A Union Representative must be a member of the Union for the duration of their term of office.</p> <p>Consequently:</p> <p>41.1. If through disciplinary action of the Union an Officer's status as a member of the Union is revoked, they shall be instantly dismissed as an Officer as if a vote of no confidence had been carried against them;</p> <p>41.2. In the case of other representatives, if the University revokes their student status they shall be instantly dismissed as an Officer as if a vote no confidence had been carried against them</p>

