

# **STAFFORD COLLEGE STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTION**

## **Introduction**

This Constitution shall take effect from 11 December 2003 and invalidates all former Constitutions of this Union.

The Corporation recognises Stafford College Students' Union as a democratically run organisation, committed to serving and representing the students of the college. The Corporation will endeavour to ensure that the activities of the Union do not contravene the college's equal opportunities policy nor bring the college into disrepute.

The Constitution is a legal document that sets out the activities and procedures of the Students' Union. This Constitution shall be subject to review by the Student Council and the Corporation at least every 5 years in accordance with the Education Act 1994.

## **1.0 Name and Status**

- 1.1 There shall be a Students' Union in the name of Stafford College Students' Union ('the Union'). The Union is an unincorporated association with exempt charitable status.

## **2.0 Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 To advance the education of its members and students of the college as a whole.
- 2.2 To represent the interests of its members and act as a channel of communication in dealing with the college and other bodies.
- 2.3 To promote and protect the welfare of its members.
- 2.4 To promote, encourage and co-ordinate student clubs, societies, sports and social activities.
- 2.5 These aims and objects shall be practiced without discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability or medical condition, except that action may be taken to promote equality of opportunity.
- 2.6 The Union shall practise the above aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious organisation.

## **3.0 Membership of the Union**

- 3.1 All students who are registered at the college, over the age of 16, shall be members of the Union unless they have decided to give up their membership according to the 'Opting Out' regulations, in Appendix Two of this Constitution.
- 3.2 Registered students of the college under the age of 16 shall not be members of the Union but may participate in certain activities, as agreed by the executive committee and any forum for students under the age of 16 and approved by student council. Students under the age of 16 will not be granted an NUS card or a card bearing the NUS logo.
- 3.4 All members shall be entitled to use the facilities of the Union and take part in its educational, social, sporting and cultural activities. Members shall be allowed to speak and vote at Union meetings, to nominate, to stand and to vote in Union elections, and to hold office in clubs and societies.

#### **4.0 Student Council**

4.1 The Student Council shall be the supreme decision making body of the Union, except for a decision that is made in a referendum. It shall also raise issues that are of concern to its members to the senior management team of the college.

4.2 The membership of Student Council shall be made up of the following categories:

- i) the executive committee
- ii) the course representatives
- iii) the student governor/s.
- iv) the Chair person will be the SU President

4.3 The functions of Student Council shall be to:

- i) set the policy of the Union
- ii) amend the Constitution and schedules as appropriate, subject to the approval of the Corporation
- iii) instruct and hold accountable the executive committee on their work
- iv) monitor and discuss the events and decisions of the formal college decision making bodies and to raise concerns of members to the student governor/s and members of the senior management team
- v) elect delegates to appropriate NUS conferences and councils
- vi) approve reports from committees, working parties and the executive committee
- vii) approve financial reports from the executive committee.

4.4 The first meeting of the Student Council shall be held in October. This meeting shall also:

- approve the Union's annual budget and accounts
- approve the Union's annual report
- confer recognition on clubs and societies.

4.5 An ordinary Student Council meeting shall be called at least once per term by the president.

4.6 An emergency Student Council meeting may be called to discuss a particular issue.

4.7 All Student Council shall be conducted according to Schedule Three (Meeting Regulations) of this Constitution.

#### **5.0 Executive Committee**

5.1 The executive committee of the Union shall run the Union on a day to day basis according to the terms of this Constitution, its schedules and appendices, relevant legislation and the decisions that have been made by Student Council and by referendum.

5.2 The executive committee shall be made up of the following major Union officers, elected by a secret ballot that is open to all members of the Union:

- i) the president
- ii) the vice-president
- iii) the finance officer
- iv) the welfare officer
- v) the student activities/entertainment's officer
- vi) women's officer
- vii) equal opportunities officer
- viii) campaigns officer

5.3 The executive committee officers shall be elected in March of each year according to the regulations contained in Schedule One (Election Regulations) of this Constitution. They will serve as members of the executive committee from July 1st of that year to June 30th of the following year allowing a changeover period during the summer term.

5.4 The role of the executive committee shall be to:

- i) carry out the decisions made by Student Council and by referendum
- ii) act in the absence of Student Council
- iii) act as a channel of communication between members of the Union, the college management, the corporation and other organisations
- iv) be responsible for the direction of the Union through the implementation and development of the Union strategic plan
- v) establish working groups, where relevant, and to receive any reports from working groups
- vi) liaise with and offer relevant support to any forum for students under the age of 16
- vii) fulfil specific responsibilities as laid down in Schedule Five (Job Descriptions) of this Constitution

5.5 Executive committee meetings shall be called by the president and shall meet at least once every ten college days. Further meetings may be called by a written request of a majority of committee members to the president. The chair will be the president or his/her nominee. The chair may only vote in the event of a tie.

5.6 Executive committee meetings shall only take place if there is at least 50% of serving executive committee members present throughout the meeting.

5.7 Any member of the executive committee who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the executive committee or Student Council without giving apologies to the president, and does not provide satisfactory reasons acceptable to the executive committee, shall be considered to have resigned.

## **6.0 Trustee Board**

6.1 The trustee board of the Union shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the Union and shall ensure that any money is spent in accordance with the charitable objects of the Union.

6.2 The trustee board of the Union shall be made up of all members of the executive committee over the age of 18. All members of the executive committee under 18 years of age shall be observers at any meetings of the trustee board.

6.3 The role of the trustee board shall be to:

- i) ensure that the Union finances operate efficiently and effectively

- ii) devise the Union budget, which will be subject to the approval of Student Council, and to ensure that financial reports are made to each ordinary Student Council meeting
  - iii) prepare the Union's annual report detailing the activities of the Union, the Union finances, including any donations made to external organisations, and any other information required under current legislation
  - iv) submit the Union budget, annual report and any other information required under current legislation to the Corporation for approval.
- 6.4 Trustee board meetings shall be called by the finance officer and shall meet at least once every ten college days (normally following each ordinary meeting of the executive committee). Further meetings may be called by a written request of a majority of committee members to the finance officer. The chair will normally be the finance officer or his/her nominee.
- 6.5 Trustee board meetings shall only take place if there are over 50% of eligible members present, or at least three trustees present, whichever is greater.
- 6.6 Any member of the trustee board who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving apologies to the president, and does not provide satisfactory reasons acceptable to the executive committee, shall be deemed to have resigned.

## **7.0 Clubs and Societies**

- 7.1 Clubs and societies may be recognised by the Student Council provided that they meet the requirements set out in Schedule Two (Clubs and Societies) of this Constitution and do not breach the Union's aims and objectives.

## **8.0 Affiliations to External Organisations**

- 8.1 Any proposal to affiliate to an external organisation shall be approved by Student Council.
- 8.2 The college and members of the Union shall be informed of all new affiliations to external organisations. The notice shall include the name of the organisation being affiliated to and the affiliation or subscription fee to be paid.
- 8.3 Details of all affiliations to external organizations, including the names of the organisations and each affiliation fee paid, shall be included in the Union's annual report which shall be made available to all members of the Union and to the Corporation.
- 8.4 In the event of an objection to a current affiliation to any particular external organisation, a petition signed by at least 200 members of the Union must be presented to the president. A referendum shall be held on the issue. The referendum shall be carried out in accordance with clause 14.0 (Referendum) of this Constitution. A further referendum on the same affiliation cannot be called in the same academic year.

## **9.0 Complaints Procedure**

- 9.1 Complaints about an individual officer, the executive committee or any member of student council shall be dealt with under the complaints procedure contained in Appendix Three (Code of Practice) of this Constitution.

## **10.0 Union Finance**

- 10.1 The Union shall receive appropriate funds from the College to enable it to effectively pursue its aims and objectives. This annual allocation of funding shall be decided by the Corporation at the last meeting of the financial year, on presentation of the Union's estimates for the forthcoming academic year.
- 10.2 The Union, acting through the **trustee board**, shall be empowered, in pursuit of its aims and objectives, to open bank accounts in the name of the Union, lend monies, invest monies, borrow monies, offer its material assets as security and do all other such things as are necessary for the prudent conduct of its financial affairs as though it were a legal person. The trustee board in exercising these rights shall be subject to no other restrictions except those contained in clause 6.0 and Schedule Four (Finance Regulations) of this Constitution and any which may be imposed by Student Council.
- 10.3 The **trustee board** shall supervise all Union finances and ensure that proper books of account are maintained and that these books shall be audited annually by a person qualified to undertake audited accounting.
- 10.4 The trustee board shall be responsible for ensuring that the annual budget, amendments to the budget, audited accounts and all other short-term financial reports and financial proposals are discussed and approved by the Student Council.
- 10.5 A copy of the Union's budget and the audited accounts shall be given promptly to the corporation each financial year for approval and be made available to all students.
- 10.6 The financial year of the Union shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- 10.7 The organisation of the Union's finances and systems of control shall be contained in Schedule Four (Finance Regulations) of this Constitution.

## **11.0 Minutes**

- 11.1 At all meetings of the Union, minutes shall be taken which shall be circulated and any necessary corrections made, at the next appropriate meeting. Confirmed minutes shall be filed and made available to all students.
- 11.2 A copy of the Constitution, including any amendments, a copy of the annual report and any plans for the Union's activities, including the budget, shall be made available to all students.
- 11.3 All meetings of the Union shall be considered open to all members of the Union. However, the members of the meeting may vote to hold a specific meeting or an item of a meeting as a closed session.
- 11.4 The regulations for the organisation of Union meetings shall be contained in Schedule Three (Meeting Regulations) of this Constitution.

## **12.0 Amendments**

- 12.1 The Student Council shall be the only body permitted to amend the Constitution and schedules. All amendments will be subject to the approval of the college corporation before they can be implemented.
- 12.2 All amendments to the Constitution or schedules shall require the support of a minimum of two-thirds of the members present and entitled to a vote at a quorate meeting of the Student Council.
- 12.3 The Constitution shall be reviewed by the Union at least every 5 years from the date of the current document's implementation and approved by the corporation.

## **13.0 Indemnity**

- 13.1 Every executive officer and person approved to make decisions of behalf of the Union shall be entitled to be indemnified out of the assets of the Union against all losses or liability which she/he may incur in or about the execution of his or her office or otherwise in relation thereto; and no officer, appointee or member of staff shall be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune which may happen to or be incurred by the Union in the execution of the duties of his or her office or in relation thereto; provided that nothing in this clause shall affect their liability for the consequences of any negligent or unlawful act on their part.

## **14.0 Referendum**

- 14.1 A referendum, in which all members will be allowed to vote, shall be held on any issue, if Student Council decides by a two thirds majority to call a referendum. The president shall call a referendum if they are handed a petition detailing the issue and containing the name, course, Union card number and signature of at least 200 students who are members.
- 14.2 The returning officer shall be responsible for deciding the wording of the question on the referendum ballot paper.
- 14.3 The referendum shall be supervised by the returning officer. Polling stations shall be open for 3 college days.
- 14.4 The arrangements for postal voting shall be the same as those for an election, as in Schedule One (Election Regulations) of this Constitution.
- 14.5 The result of a referendum will take priority over any existing Union policy on the same issue.

## **15.0 Code of Conduct**

- 15.1 The executive committee shall draw up a code of conduct which shall be approved and amended from time to time by Student Council.
- 15.2 All members of the Union shall be required to adhere to this code, particularly when on Union premises, or attending events organised by the Union or its clubs or societies.
- 15.3 The code of conduct may include restrictions up to and including the unlimited suspension of any or all of the rights of Union membership.

## **16.0 Interpretation**

- 16.1 In the event of a challenge to the interpretation of any part of this Constitution, the ruling of the president shall be sought.
- 16.2 In the event of a challenge to the president's ruling the decision shall be taken to the Student Council
- 16.3 If a member of the Union remains unsatisfied with the ruling of the Student Council they may appeal to the college corporation. The ruling of the college corporation shall be final.

## **Schedule one**

### **ELECTION REGULATIONS**

This schedule outlines what to do for all elections for all positions in the Union. It also outlines the procedure to follow if a vacancy occurs in any position.

#### **1.1 Returning Officer**

- i) The returning officer, who shall not be a full member of the Union, shall be appointed annually by Student Council, subject to the approval of the college corporation. The returning officer shall be responsible for the good conduct and administration of all Union elections and shall have the sole interpretation of the election regulations. They shall not be a full member of the Union. The returning officer may appoint assistants to support them in their duties.

#### **1.2 When elections should happen**

- i) The returning officer shall ensure that election of the executive committee takes place before the end of March each year. Once elected the members of the committee shall take office from July 1<sup>st</sup> of that year and shall serve for not more than 12 months.
- ii) The dates of elections for executive committee members, a copy of the election timetable and a copy of the election regulations shall be posted on the Union notice-boards at least 21 college days before the elections.

#### **1.3 Standing for election**

- i) The members of the executive committee shall be:
  - the president
  - the finance officer
  - the welfare officer
  - the student activities/entertainment's officer
  - mature students officer
  - equal opportunities officer
  - campaigns officer
- ii) All members of the Union are eligible to stand for any of the following executive committee positions:
  - the president
  - the finance officer
  - the welfare officer
  - the student activities/entertainment's officer
  - mature students officer
  - equal opportunities officer

No member who has opted out may stand for any position.

- iii) Only members of the Union registered at a specific centre shall be eligible to stand for the position of centre officer at that centre.
- iv) Reopen nominations (RON) shall be a candidate in all Union elections.

- v) Nomination forms will be available from the returning officer and shall be available from college reception, the college library and the Union office twenty college days before the election. The nomination form shall contain a copy of the description of the role of each position in the election. It shall also contain information on the facilities the Union will make available to each candidate.
- vi) Members of the Union may stand for election upon completion of a nomination form signed by the candidate and at least one proposer and one seconder.
- vii) Nomination forms must reach the returning officer or a person appointed by him/her not later than 5.00pm on the day, twelve college days before the date of the commencement of the ballot.

#### **1.4 Publicity about the election**

- i) The returning officer shall produce a list of candidates (together with the proposer and one seconder) which shall be displayed on the Union notice-boards within 48 hours of the close of nominations.
- ii) Candidates may produce a manifesto and a poster to a specification to be determined by the returning officer, which must be handed in with the completed nomination form.
- iii) On receipt of a valid nomination form the returning officer or a person appointed by him/her shall provide the candidate with an election campaign pack.
- iv) The contents of the election campaign pack shall be determined by the returning officer in conjunction with the executive committee.

#### **1.5 Campaigning**

- i) Candidates may commence campaigning at the close of nominations.
- ii) A 'question time' session shall be held on at least one main site, at a time and date to be determined by the returning officer. Any candidate absent from question time without apologies to the returning officer shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the election. The length of speeches and responses by candidates to questions shall be determined by the returning officer who shall also appoint a chair.
- iii) Candidates cannot use any communication materials that are not sanctioned by the election campaign pack.
- iv) There shall be no campaigning within the same room as any ballot box.
- v) The returning officer shall publicise the location and arrangements of the question times and voting stations, together with a list of candidates and manifestos, ten college days before voting.

#### **1.6 Voting procedures**

- i) The returning officer shall ensure that all members of the Union have access to vote no matter their place or time of study.
- ii) All members of the Union shall be able to vote for the positions as outlined in 1.3 (i) except the centre officers who shall be elected by the members registered at that centre and the women's officer who shall be elected by women members only.

- iii) All members of the Union may vote on production of a current Union membership card or appropriate identification as decided by the returning officer.
- iv) A voting paper will be issued to each voter, which shall bear the Union stamp. Votes will be cast in sealed ballot boxes. Voting papers shall bear the name of each candidate and the office being contested. There will be a facility for reopening nominations as outlined in clause 1.3 (v).
- v) Voting shall be by secret ballot and shall be conducted according to the most recently published edition of the rules for the operation of the single transferable voting (STV) system as set by the Electoral Reform Society.
- vi) A postal vote shall be granted to any full member of the Union who is unable to exercise their right to vote in person.
- vii) The returning officer shall publicise the arrangements for postal voting at the time of close of nominations.
- viii) The member must inform the returning officer in writing, at least 4 college days before the beginning of voting, that they wish to vote by post.
- ix) Postal votes will be accepted up until the close of ballot boxes, at the end of the voting period.

### **1.7 Counting and declaring votes**

- i) The returning officer shall inform the candidates of the time and venue of the count. The candidate or their appointed representative may, if they so wish, attend the counting of the votes as observers only.
- ii) The returning officer may be assisted in the count by a number of individuals appointed by them. The count shall be conducted according to the most recently published edition of the rules for the operation of the single transferable voting (STV) system as set by the Electoral Reform Society.
- iii) Once the votes have been counted they should be kept for a period of six months in case of appeals against the result.
- iv) Results of the elections shall be declared by the returning officer when the count for each post has been completed and any complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the returning officer.
- v) A list of successful candidates will normally be posted at each site within one college day of the declaration of results. The returning officer should send a copy of the result to student council, the college corporation and the college library.
- vi) The results will become official 48 hours after they have been posted provided that no complaint has been lodged with the returning officer within 48 hours. In the event of a complaint being received by the returning officer the results shall be suspended until the complaint has been resolved.

### **1.8 Complaints**

- i) Any challenge or complaint concerning the administration and good conduct of the election will be heard and determined by the returning officer within 48 hours of such a complaint being lodged by any full member or the candidate or their nominee.

- ii) Any complaint against the conduct or administration of the election should be received by the returning officer before the start of the count.
- iii) A challenge or complaint during or following the count, must only relate to the conduct of the count, and be lodged with the returning officer who shall resolve the complaint within 48 hours of it being lodged.
- iv) In determining a resolution to the complaint, the returning officer after hearing all the appropriate evidence may not uphold the complaint; or may halt elections for specified post(s) or disqualify specified candidate(s) if, in their view, a candidate(s) has breached election regulations. The ruling of the returning officer on any complaint shall be final, subject only to a successful appeal to the Clerk to the Corporation, in accordance with clause 3.9.4 of the complaints procedure, contained within the Code of Practice (Appendix Three) of this Constitution.

### **1.9 Election for members of Student Council/course representatives**

- i) Members of Student Council shall be elected by a meeting of the course representatives in each faculty before the end of October.
- ii) There shall be one representative for each year of study, for each faculty.

### **1.10 Vacancies for positions on the executive committee**

- i) If any post on the executive committee falls vacant then a by-election shall be arranged by the returning officer. Nominations shall open no later than three college days after confirmation of the vacancy arising. All other election regulations apply.

## **Schedule two**

### **CLUBS AND SOCIETIES**

**2.0** There shall be clubs and societies of the Union.

#### **2.1 Setting up a club or society**

- i) No club or society may receive funds from the Union or use Union facilities without recognition in each academic year by Student Council.
- ii) To be considered for recognition, the club or society shall lay before student council an acceptable Constitution, a plan of activities and a list of paid up prospective members in accordance with the clubs and societies schedule.
- iii) No club or society will be recognised if its objects conflict with those of the Union. However, this restriction shall not be interpreted so as to prevent the establishment of political, religious or ethnically based clubs and societies.
- iv) Any club or society that wishes to be recognised by the Union shall present to the student activities officer:
  - a list of 10 signatures of members
  - the proposed membership fee
  - a Constitution for the club or society to include:
    - a) the name of the club/society;
    - b) the aims and objects of the club/society (which shall not be contrary to those of the Union);
    - c) regulations relating to membership eligibility to the club/society;
    - d) provision for the election of a committee for the club/society to include as a minimum a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer;
    - e) the responsibilities of the committee;
    - f) provision for general meetings for all members of the club or society;
    - g) provision for an annual general meeting at which an income and expenditure account shall be presented and approved;
    - h) provision for the Union statement on equal opportunities.

#### **2.2 Money for clubs and societies**

- i) The Executive Committee shall earmark a sum in the Union budget which shall be for grant aid of recognised clubs and societies.
- ii) To receive funding an eligible club/society shall submit a budget proposal to the student activities officer. This should be submitted by the end of September.
- iii) The Executive Committee shall meet and allocate the funds. Allocations will be made on the basis of the level of activity in the club/society; the number of members it has and special equipment and travel considerations. A contingency fund shall be set aside, the value of which shall be determined by the trustee board.
- iv) The allocations shall be approved at the first meeting of Student Council of the new academic year.
- v) Any request for expenditure must be approved by the finance officer and paid by cheque.

### **2.3 Meetings of clubs and societies**

- i) The annual general meeting of each club and society shall be held before the end of October of each year. This meeting will elect the club or society committee.
- ii) The quorum of each club/society general meetings shall be 50% plus one of the club or society memberships.
- iii) The committee secretary is responsible for arranging the dates of meetings and must inform the members at least five college days in advance. Agendas should be available two days in advance of the meeting.
- iv) Changes to the Constitution of any club or society can only be made at a club or society's general meeting and must be ratified by the executive committee. In cases where the executive committee do not ratify the changes, the club or society may appeal to the Student Council.

### **2.4 Responsibilities of clubs and societies**

- i) No-one from a club or society may commit either the club or society or the Union to any expenditure without prior authorisation through the Union's budgetary control system.
- ii) The club or society shall be responsible for promoting itself during induction week to encourage new membership.
- iii) All clubs and societies' committees will produce an activities report and the treasurer will submit an income/expenditure sheet to the executive committee at the end of each term, following a request from the finance officer.
- iv) The club or society shall not hold its own bank account and all its finance will be administered through the Union.
- v) The club or society shall hold no funds whatsoever outside the Union accounts.
- vi) The chairperson of the club/society shall be responsible for the smooth running of any social events and activities and shall be responsible for convening of general meetings.
- vii) The secretary shall be responsible for publicising general meetings, providing agendas and taking minutes of the meetings.
- viii) The treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that all expenditure is legitimate and that it does not exceed the club or society allocation for that year. The treasurer shall also ensure that an accurate list of all equipment purchased is kept and all equipment is returned to the Union at the end of the academic year.
- ix) The treasurer shall ensure that all income received by the club or society is paid directly into the Union accounts and that no funds received by the club/society are withheld.
- x) The treasurer shall ensure that an income and expenditure account for the previous academic year is presented to the annual general meeting of the club or society and copies are sent to the finance officer of the Union.

- xi) Failure to abide by these regulations and the Union Constitution may result in suspension of the club or society by the executive committee.

## Schedule three

### MEETING REGULATIONS

Meeting regulations shall apply in full to all Student Council meetings. They shall apply to all committee meetings of the Union in terms of conduct of meetings.

#### 3.1 Student Council

- i) The business of Student Council shall be divided into two parts:
  - a) **College business:** to discuss any matters relating to members as students of the college associated with their education and other college issues.
  - b) **Union business:** to discuss all other issues of interest to members of the Union.

#### 3.2 Who can attend Student Council?

- i) All members of Student Council (see clause 4.2 of the articles of the Constitution) will be expected to attend all meetings of Student Council. Any member of Student Council who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving apologies to the chair, and does not provide satisfactory reasons acceptable to student council, shall be considered to have resigned.
- ii) Any full member of the Union may attend Student Council meetings in accordance with clause 3.4 of the articles of the Constitution. Any individual/s who are not members of the Union who wish to attend must receive permission from the meeting by submitting a request to the chair. The chair shall then take a vote on whether the individual/s may attend.

#### 3.3 Who may speak at Student Council?

- i) Any full member of Student Council may speak at Student Council.
- ii) Any full member of the Union may attend Student Council and speak with the permission of the meeting. Members of the college senior management team may attend and speak at the college business part of the meeting but will not be entitled to speak or attend the Union business part of the meeting unless expressly requested by the meeting. Any other individual may attend and speak as a guest, if invited to do so by either student council or the executive committee.
- iii) Any member wishing to speak must raise their hand. The chair of the meeting shall decide the order of speaking.

#### 3.4 Who may vote at Student Council?

- i) Only members of Student Council who are present at the meeting may vote.
- ii) The chair of Student Council may not vote unless the vote is tied, in which case they may have the casting vote.

### **3.5 How to get things done**

- i) All items for debate shall be submitted to the president five college days before the meeting. Proposals for amendments to the Constitution and schedules must be submitted seven college days before the start of the meeting.
- ii) All debates shall require the signatures of at least two full Union members. These shall be known as the proposer and the seconder(s).
- iii) The president shall be responsible for publication of details of all Student Council meetings ten college days before the meeting on Union notice boards and in available Union publications.
- iv) Proposals of changes to debates may be submitted by any full member of the Union. The changes require the signatures of at least two members and shall be submitted to the president two college days before the start of the meeting.

### **3.6 Who runs the meeting?**

- i) The president shall be responsible for the agenda and publicising the meeting.
- ii) The president shall take the chair of the first meeting of the academic year. There shall be an election for a chairperson and a deputy chairperson at this meeting.
- iii) In the event of any situation arising not being covered by meeting regulations then the chairperson shall rule on the procedure to be adopted. Such ruling shall be subject to the approval of Student Council.
- iv) In the event of the chair being in conflict or alleged to be in conflict with the item under discussion, the chair should be resigned for the duration of the item under discussion to the deputy chair.

### **3.7 What is talked about at meetings?**

- i) The agenda of meetings shall normally be taken in the following order:
  - a) College business:
    - Welcome from the chair
    - Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
    - Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
    - Reports from the senior management team
    - Management question time
    - Education issues
  - b) Union business:
    - Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
    - Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
    - Reports from the executive committee
    - Reports from the trustee board
    - Other reports
    - Executive question time
    - Debates
    - Discussion groups
    - Any other business

- ii) The meeting will have the right to table the following items collectively as a consent agenda provided that written reports and minutes are distributed in advance:
  - Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
  - Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
  - Reports from the executive committee
  - Reports from the trustee board
  -
- iii) Any member may request that any item be discussed in full, provided that notice is given in advance of the meeting.
- iv) All debates shall be run as follows:
  - the proposer of the debate shall make a speech
  - any changes to the debate will be raised according to clause 3.8 of these regulations
  - the chair will invite a speech against the debate
  - the chair shall balance the number of speeches for and against the debate
  - the chair shall invite any questions and statements relating to the debate
  - the proposer of the debate shall have the right to sum up
  - the vote shall be taken.

**3.8 Changes to the debate** shall be run as follows:

- any changes to the debate will be raised after the proposer has spoken
- the chair shall invite and take a speech against the changes
- the chair shall attempt to balance the number of speeches for and against the changes
- the chair shall leave time for questions and statements before the vote
- when all changes have been voted upon, the main debate shall be discussed and voted upon.

**3.9 General rules**

- i) Every debate shall have a proposer and a seconder.
- ii) Any motion may only be withdrawn with the consent of the meeting.
- iii) Debates shall require a simple majority to be decided except where otherwise specified in the Constitution.
- iv) Emergency debates may only be discussed if they deal with matters that have arisen since the date for submission of debates, and if a two thirds majority vote for the discussion of this debate. The debate should be submitted in writing to the chair before the start of the meeting.

## Schedule four

### FINANCE REGULATIONS

#### 4.1 Bank Accounts

- i) There shall be a bank account held in the name of the Union. There shall be four signatories to the account:
  - the president
  - the finance officer
  - the manager responsible for student services
  - the finance support person (a member of staff)
  -
- ii) Cheques shall be signed by either the president or the finance officer, **and** either the manager responsible for student services or the finance support person.
- iii) In the case of either the president or the finance officer not being over 18, the executive committee shall elect new signatories from amongst the members of the trustee board.

**4.2** The collection of all money due to the Union shall be the responsibility of the finance officer, under the supervision of the trustee board, which shall be notified promptly of all money due to or owed by the Union.

#### 4.3 Limits on payments

- i) All expenditure on student activities over £50 shall be approved by the trustee board. Any expenditure over £250 should be approved by the Student Council.
- ii) The finance officer (or, if under the age of 18, a member of the trustee board elected by the executive committee) shall have the power to authorise expenditure on activities, goods or services up to £50 provided that such expenditure is ratified subsequently by the trustee board.
- iii) The finance officer (or, if under the age of 18, a member of the trustee board elected by the executive committee) shall be responsible for the operation of the petty cash account and shall present a record of transactions once a month to the trustee board.
- iv) All invoices for sums over £50 must be approved by the finance committee before they can be paid.

#### 4.4 Contracts

- i) No financial agreement (e.g. a leasing contract) may be entered into which involves a financial commitment beyond the term of office of the executive committee and/or exceeds a total value of £250 unless authority is given by the Student Council.
- ii) All contracts shall have two signatories. Contracts shall normally be signed by the president and the finance officer. Any contracts exceeding a value of £250 shall be signed by either the president or the finance officer **and** either the manager responsible for student services or the finance support person.
- iii) No contract should be signed without the approval by the trustee board.

#### **4.5 Budgets and financial statements**

- i) Budgets shall be drawn up for all areas of proposed expenditure in June. These areas shall be determined by the trustee board, before final approval by the Student Council.
- ii) The finance officer, under the direction of the trustee board, shall provide the Student Council and the corporation with a financial statement once a year.

#### **4.6 Loan agreements**

- i) No loan agreement may be entered into which involves a financial commitment beyond the term of office of the executive committee and/or exceeds a total value of £250 unless authority is given by the Student Council.
- ii) All loan agreements shall have two signatories. Loan agreements shall normally be signed by the president and the finance officer. Any loan agreement exceeding a value of £250 shall be signed by either the president or the finance officer **and** either the student services manager or the finance support person.
- iii) No loan agreement should be signed without the approval of the trustee board.

#### **4.7 Security and insurance**

- i) The Union shall be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all stock, stores, furniture, equipment, cash etc, under its control.
- ii) The trustee board shall inform the executive committee in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.
- iii) The trustee board shall be responsible for ensuring that proper insurance cover is undertaken, including fire risks, theft, damage and loss etc. of property and employers' liability.

#### **4.8 Events**

- i) All events undertaken or provided by the Union must be costed and budgets prepared.
- ii) Annually, the entertainments officer, in consultation with the president and the finance officer and under the direction of trustee board, shall draw up a proposed entertainments budget, subject to ratification by the Student Council. This shall form the basis of all entertainments expenditure.
- iii) Records of all expenditure for events shall be kept. The finance officer shall advise the trustee board when the limits laid down in the budget set are likely to be exceeded. The entertainments officer is responsible, under the direction of the trustee board, for ensuring that agreed budgets are not exceeded, unless the necessary approval has been given before the proposed expenditure.

#### **4.9 Expenses to Union members**

- i) Any member of the executive committee may receive expenses for costs incurred whilst on Union business.

- ii) Any costs incurred for childcare whilst a member of the executive committee is on Union business inside or outside college shall be met by the Union.
- iii) Expenses must be authorised by a member of the trustee board, who shall not be the person claiming the expense.

#### **4.10 Petty cash**

- i) The petty cash limit shall be £50.00. The finance officer, under the direction of the trustee board, shall ensure that petty cash stays at or below this limit and that a record is kept of all advances and expenditure. A float of £250 will be made available to the Students' Union.

#### **4.11 Donations**

- i) The Union shall not make donations or affiliations to any organisation outside the aims and objectives of the Union. The Union may allow for its facilities to be used for special events which raise money for a specific charity or cause. Only the net profit from such events may be passed to the charity.

- 4.12** Any member of the executive committee under the age of 18 shall not sign any contract or financial agreement, authorise any expenditure, take responsibility for any budget, sign cheques or make any financial decisions.

## Schedule five

### JOB DESCRIPTIONS

#### 5.1 The PRESIDENT,

who shall be a member of the executive committee, shall:

- i) be the prime representative of the Union and seek to involve as many students in the Union as possible
- ii) attend the corporation and other relevant college committees, and report back to the Union
- iii) lead delegations to NUS annual conference, regional conferences and any area conference and report back to student council
- iv) be a cheque signatory to the Union bank account, if over the age of 18
- v) be the prime representative of the Union to liaise with the college over any matters affecting students
- vi) compile a report on his/her activities for consideration at student council
- vii) meet with the returning officer and ensure that elections happen in accordance with the Union Constitution; notify student council of the resignation of any Union officer and ensure the student council decides appropriate action
- viii) participate fully in executive committee meetings
- ix) maintain all legal documentation relating to the Union, including the Constitution, instrument and articles of government, the Union code of practice and all legal advice
- x) arrange training for the executive committee following their elections
- xi) ensure that all officers of the Union compile a written report for each meeting of student council and for wider circulation
- xii) ensure that a report is presented to the student council on the activities of the Union over the previous year. After approval this should be submitted to the college corporation and logged in the Union office and college library
- xiii) ensure that each officer compiles a report on upcoming activities for their centre over the next academic year. This should be presented by the outgoing president to the college corporation together with a budget for the activities
- xiv) be a member of student council and ensure that the decisions made are implemented
- xv) be responsible for publicising all executive committee and student council meetings, receiving debates and changes for discussion and circulating agendas and minutes to members of the meeting

- xvi) act reasonably and prudently in all matters, and in the best interests of the Union

## 5.2 The FINANCE OFFICER,

who shall be a member of the executive committee, shall, under the direction of the trustee board:

- i) regulate expenditure of the Union in such a way as to maximise Union activities
- ii) be responsible for ensuring that the Union draws up and approves an annual budget
- iii) be responsible for the gathering of information on discounts and promoting these to students
- iv) be responsible for petty cash, and present a record of petty cash transactions to each executive committee meeting
- v) present relevant reports to the executive committee
- vi) present an update of income and expenditure to each meeting of the student council
- vii) be a signatory to the Union account, if over the age 18
- viii) in conjunction with the president, ensure that all financial transactions are legitimate, and the necessary paper work and receipts are kept for all transactions
- ix) ensure that the Union accounts are audited annually, and that they are presented to the board of governors
- x) be responsible for the banking of any money received, and ensure that no more than £75 is kept in the Union office at any time
- xi) be responsible for paying bills promptly, and for sending out relevant invoices for money owed to the Union
- xii) in conjunction with the student activities officer, allocate grants to clubs and societies and monitor their expenditure
- xiii) provide guidelines to all budget holders on financial control and planning
- xiv) carry out other duties as laid down by the executive committee and student council.
- xv) be a member of student council, and present relevant reports
- xvi) act reasonably and prudently in all matters, and in the best interests of the Union

## **Appendix one**

### **OPTING OUT**

- 1.1 Every student shall be able to relinquish their right of membership of the Union.
- 1.2 A student who opts out of the Union shall not be able to participate in the democratic and decision-making function of the Union. This includes not being able to stand for any officer or representative position, including club and society committee members, as contained in the Union Constitution.
- 1.3 A student who opts out of the Union shall continue to have the right to attend Union run events and participate in the activities of clubs and societies.
- 1.4 A student wishing to opt out must indicate this within six weeks of the start of their course in writing to the Clerk to the Corporation.
- 1.5 A student who has opted out who wishes to become a member of the Union shall notify the clerk in writing. The clerk shall then inform the president. If the application falls within twenty college days of nominations opening for a Union election, the student will not be eligible to take up the full privileges of membership until the nomination period has closed.

## **Appendix two**

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

- 2.1 Clubs, societies and members of the Union shall be expected to abide by this Constitution and its schedules at all times, as well as the Union's equal opportunities policy.
- 2.2 The Union's disciplinary policy has authority over any premises managed by the Union, any Union activities, including the activities of any Union club or society, or any misconduct which takes place outside Union premises but is connected with the Union and is likely to affect the reputation of the Union.
- 2.3 If a student or club or society is deemed to have breached the rules of the Union their conduct shall be examined by a panel of three executive committee members known as the disciplinary committee.
- 2.4 The disciplinary committee shall be convened within seven college days of the alleged offence occurring. The student shall be given written notification of the time, date and place of the hearing, together with written notification of the alleged breach, at least three days before the hearing.
- 2.5 In cases involving the misuse of Union facilities or resources or behaviour likely to cause potential danger or offence to students, staff or other persons, the student or club or society may be suspended from the use of particular Union facilities or resources until the disciplinary committee has reached a decision.
- 2.6 No person shall sit on the Union disciplinary or appeals committees if they are a witness, potential witness, the complainant or directly connected with the student or club or society being charged.
- 2.7 The person bringing the charge or his/her representative shall call witnesses to give evidence as appropriate. They shall ask questions of the witnesses. The student or his/her representative may also ask questions of the witnesses.
- 2.8 The student or his/her representative may call their own witnesses to give evidence and present any relevant documents to the panel. They may ask questions of the witnesses. The person bringing the charge or his/her representative may also ask questions of the witnesses.
- 2.9 The committee may ask questions of any witnesses, the person bringing the charge or their representative, the student or club or society or their representative.
- 2.10 The disciplinary committee shall then deliberate on the matter and decide on the appropriate action to be taken. The committee shall base its decision on evidence presented and examined in the presence of the person bringing the charge and the student, club or society being charged. Evidence of any earlier misconduct shall not be presented until after the decision has been reached on the facts of the case, but then may be admitted and considered in deciding on any punishment. The ultimate sanction shall be the suspension of Union membership for a period of time.
- 2.11 The Union disciplinary committee may refer any matter to the college disciplinary committee.

- 2.12 The disciplinary committee must inform the person of their right of appeal and that any appeal should be made in writing to the chair of student council within five college days.
- 2.13 If the student is unhappy they may appeal to an appeals committee made up of three students appointed by the student council. The student shall be notified in writing at least five college days in advance of the meeting.
- 2.14 The appeals committee shall hear the reason for the appeal and the rationale behind the original decision. They shall also hear any new evidence that has emerged since the disciplinary meeting. The matter shall be put to the vote and the decision shall be final.
- 2.15 The hearing shall normally take place in private. However the subjects of any charge may request that the hearing is held in public. A record shall be kept for use in any appeal. The decision of the disciplinary or appeals committee will be posted on a Union notice board if requested by the subject of any charge.
- 2.16 The executive committee officers may be removed from office by:
- i) a two-thirds majority vote at a quorate meeting of student council
  - ii) a referendum of the members of the Union
  - iii) a breach of the college disciplinary regulations on the grounds of gross misconduct resulting in exclusion from the college
- 2.17 Course representatives can be removed from office by:
- i) a two-thirds majority vote at a quorate meeting of student council
  - ii) a breach of the college disciplinary regulations on the grounds of gross misconduct resulting in exclusion from the college
- 2.18 The regulations for a ballot to remove a member of the executive from office shall be determined by the returning officer, within the limits of this Constitution.
- 2.19 Any member of the student council or any other committee who has been absent from at least three successive ordinary meetings, without submitting apologies to the chair of the meeting, shall automatically be deemed to no longer hold office.
- 2.20 Any resignation must be in writing to the chair of student council. Resignations shall take effect immediately, and be reported to the student council.
- 2.21 in the case of any vacancy arising a by-election shall be held in accordance with Schedule One (Election Regulations) of this Constitution.

## **Appendix three**

### **STUDENTS' UNION CODE OF PRACTICE**

This code of practice is approved by the corporation in accordance with the requirements of clause 22(3) of the Education Act 1994 which requires that the corporation shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. The code of practice should be read in conjunction with the Constitution, schedules and appendices.

#### **3.1 Constitution**

3.1.1 The Union shall have a written Constitution, approved by the corporation and reviewed by the corporation at intervals of not more than five years. Any amendments to the Constitution shall be approved by the corporation.

#### **3.2 Elections**

3.2.1 Appointment to major Union offices shall be by election in a secret ballot in which all members of the Union are entitled to vote, in accordance with clause 5 and Schedule One (Election Regulations) of the Constitution.

3.2.2 The corporation shall agree the appointment of an independent returning officer to conduct the elections and shall satisfy itself that the elections to major Union offices are fairly and properly conducted.

#### **3.3 Sabbatical Officers**

3.3.1 No person shall hold sabbatical Union office, or paid elected Union office, for more than two years in total.

#### **3.4 Membership**

3.4.1 All registered students of the college, over the age of 16, shall be members of the Union unless they choose to relinquish their rights of membership in accordance with the opt-out regulations contained in Appendix 1 of the Constitution. Students shall be informed annually by the college of the opting-out procedure and of the consequences of so doing. A student opting-out of the Union shall not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise, by reason of their having done so.

3.4.2 The consequences of opting out of membership shall be:

- i) a student may not participate in any of the democratic processes of the Union
- ii) a student shall not hold office in any club and society of the Union
- iii) a student will not be represented by the Union

#### **3.5 Finances**

3.5.1 The financial affairs of the Union shall be properly conducted in accordance with clause 10 and Schedule Four (Financial Regulations) of the Constitution and include appropriate arrangements for the approval of the Union's budget and the monitoring of expenditure by the corporation.

3.5.2 The annual accounts of the Union shall be made available to the corporation and to all students.

### **3.6 Allocation of resources to clubs, societies and groups**

- 3.6.1 The procedure for allocating resources to clubs, societies and groups shall be fair in accordance with clause 7 and Schedule Two (Clubs and Societies) of the Constitution and shall be made available in writing to all students.

### **3.7 Affiliation to external organisations**

- 3.7.1 Any decision to affiliate to an external organisation shall be published, stating the name of the organisation and details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made to the organisation and any such notice shall be made available to all students, in accordance with clause 8 of the Constitution.
- 3.7.2 The Union shall, on an annual basis, publish a list of the external organisations to which the Union is currently affiliated and details of subscriptions or similar fees paid or donations made to such organisations in the past year, which shall be made available to the corporation and to all students.
- 3.7.3 Student Council shall approve annually the list of affiliations. At least 200 members of the Union may, at intervals of not less than one year, by a signed requisition delivered to the president, call for a secret ballot of all members on the continuation of affiliation to a particular organisation in accordance with clause 8.4 of the Constitution.

### **3.8 Freedom of speech**

- 3.8.1 The Union and its members are bound to observe the college's code of practice in relation to freedom of speech as required by section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act of 1986.

### **3.9 Complaints**

- 3.9.1 The following complaints procedure shall be made available to all students or groups of students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union or claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised their right to opt out of membership of the Union.
- 3.9.2 Any complaint about the Union shall be addressed to the president. In any circumstances where the complaint relates to the president, it shall be addressed to the finance officer.
- 3.9.3 The president shall make a written reply within ten college days.
- 3.9.4 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they may appeal to the Clerk to the Corporation. The clerk shall respond to the complainant within ten college days.
- 3.9.5 If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the response provided by the Clerk to the Corporation, the college shall appoint an independent person to consider and resolve the complaint.
- 3.9.6 Members who complain will also be referred to the mechanisms in this Constitution to remove officers and change the policy of the Union.