

Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct for Union Meetings

(Updated April 2024)

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- 2.1. This Code of Conduct is written with the intent of ensuring free and equal debate, and are to be interpreted in that spirit. 2.2
- 2.2. A speaker shall always address the Chair, who shall remain impartial. No-one may speak whilst the Chair is speaking.
- 2.3. A Chair and Deputy Chair for the meeting shall be elected by the voting representatives in attendance at the **first** meeting of the academic year, subject to clauses 81 to 82 of the Articles of Association. In their absence the meeting can elect its own Chair, who must be an Ordinary member of the Union, subject to Clauses 81 and 82 of the Articles of Association.
- 2.4. Subject only to a challenge, as provided in this Bye Law, the Chair's ruling on any question shall be final.
- 2.5. The Chair shall ensure that the meeting is in order and that remarks are relevant to the question under debate.
- 2.6. If any member causes a disturbance the Chair may record the offender's name in the minutes. If that member persists, they shall be expelled from that meeting, and may not return until an apology satisfactory to the meeting has been given in writing.
- 2.7. Meetings must be conducted in accordance with Bye Law 7: Staff Protocol.
- 2.8. No meeting of the Union, shall discuss the personal affairs of a member.
- 2.9. Meetings must include the following business items:
 - 2.9.1. Approval of minutes of the last meeting;
 - 2.9.2. matters arising from the minutes;
 - 2.9.3. Reports from relevant office holders or representatives of relevant committees;
 - 2.9.4. Formative open discussions on topics, presented as information and questions; the Student Officer Committee should determine the subjects for Open Discussion at each meeting following consultation with Councillors. If no sitting Student Officer Committee takes place between Council meetings, a vote is taken online with a range of discussion topics. If it is felt that 21 the time would best be spent discussing motions, then the open discussion section can be withdrawn.
 - 2.9.5. Summative motions on topics, presented as notes (facts), believes (opinions) and resolves (mandates on individual members of the Student Officer Committee, the Student Officer Committee as a whole or the Board of Trustees).

- 2.9.6. The approval of relevant societies through consideration of the recommendations of Societies Executive
- 2.10. Resolutions shall be submitted eight working days before the meeting to be circulated to Councillors for comment and discussion; the agenda shall close for other items four working days before the meeting and shall be published at least three working days before the meeting.
- 2.11. Emergency items can only be accepted for consideration with the approval of the voting representatives at the meeting.
- 2.12. Special or emergency meetings shall, where possible, give five working days' notice, and require a minimum of 48 hours' notice.
 - 2.12.1. Emergency Meetings of Council will be held in accordance with Bye-Law 2: Conduct of Union meetings, but clauses 2.9-2.11 will not apply.
- 2.13. A motion, amendment or any other item shall be ruled out of order if it:
 - 2.13.1. seeks to alter or rescind policy of higher bodies;
 - 2.13.2. seeks to commit the Trustees, the Student Officer Committee, Union Council, the Directors of the Union's subsidiary companies, the Union's staff or any other person to an illegal act, or seeks to commit Union resources to an illegal act;
 - 2.13.3. seeks to amend the Articles of Association unless it is a properly submitted Articles of Association amendment, or is in contravention to the terms of the Articles of Association and Byelaws, including Byelaw 7: Staff Protocol;
 - 2.13.4. makes a judgment about or includes a view on an individual, external organization or company that does not include robust evidence, and/or contain verifiable quotes and/or is defamatory.
- 2.14. The power and responsibility to exercise clause 2.13 shall rest with the chair, save that any such decision shall be able to be overturned by the Trustee Board (or Management Committee acting in lieu of Trustee Board). Any such overrule shall be reported to Council.
- 2.15. Items may be withdrawn by the proposer, but it shall then be open to the seconder or other member to propose that item, provided that it is done immediately after such withdrawal.
- 2.16. Unless agreed by the meeting, no item shall be discussed for more than sixty minutes. After sixty minutes, if the meeting agrees no further discussion on the item shall take place, there shall be a summing up speech by the proposer followed immediately by a vote.
- 2.17. If an amendment is accepted by the proposer of the original motion, it shall be included in the original motion.
- 2.18. An amendment to a motion may be proposed to the proposer and the Chair any time following the publication of the agenda until 48 hours before the meeting begins. Should the proposer reject such an amendment, it may be considered at the

meeting. No further amendments may be submitted, save for minor textual amendments.

- 2.19. Any further amendment to the original amendment may be considered at the Chair's discretion.
- 2.20. All debates will be structured as follows:
 - 2.20.1. a proposing speech (lasting up to 5 min),
 - 2.20.2. questions and clarifications,
 - 2.20.3. a speech against (lasting up to 5 min),
 - 2.20.4. a second proposing speech (lasting up to 3 min),
 - 2.20.5. a second speech against (lasting up to 3 min),
 - 2.20.6. a summation (lasting up to 2 min).
- 2.21. There shall be no summation if there has not been a speech against. Proposers may waive their right to a proposing speech and/or a summation if they wish.
- 2.22. At the start of a debate the proposer will be invited to make a proposing speech, and then all amendments will be debated in turn, with a proposing speech, a speech against, points and summation.
- 2.23. Extra rounds of speeches on motions or amendments, may be granted at the Chair's discretion based on indications from the floor. These rounds of speeches will be up to three minutes in length each.
- 2.24. Amended debates will always end with a balancing opposing speech on the substantive and a summation.
- 2.25. The allocation of the order and interrelationships of a motion and amendments to it shall be determined by the Chair at their absolute discretion following appropriate consultation with submitting Councillors.
- 2.26. A motion to remove the Chair of the meeting and elect another one shall be tabled in the same way as any other motion and shall force the resignation of the Chair on a simple majority of those present and voting support the motion.
- 2.27. Each member shall have one vote, and members may vote in person or electronically.
- 2.28. If there are an equal number of votes both for and against the Chair shall exercise the casting vote. The Chair shall not otherwise vote even if they have temporarily stepped out of the Chair, subject to Clauses 82 to 84 of the Articles of Association.
- 2.29. Except during voting a member may raise a point of order, as outlined below, by raising a hand and calling "order". The Chair shall immediately hear the point of order and rule on it. Points of order include:
 - 2.29.1. Call of quorum,
 - 2.29.2. Challenge of the Chair's ruling, which can be raised only on the grounds that it contravenes the Articles of Association, these Bye-Laws or Policy. When a challenge is made the Chair shall relinquish the role of Chair. The proposer of the challenge and the Chair shall have up to one minute to state their cases,

and the challenge shall then be put to the vote. A challenge shall be accepted by a simple majority of those present and voting.

- 2.29.3. Assertion that the matter under question contravenes the Articles of Association and to defer a decision until the Trustee Board has met to interpret the Articles of Association.
- 2.29.4. Clarification from or through the Chair.
- 2.29.5. Procedural Motions as outlined in this Bye-Law.
- 2.30. Procedural motions shall be, in order of precedence, that:
 - 2.30.1. Move to a vote on the item;
 - 2.30.2. Consider the item in parts;
 - 2.30.3. The number and duration of speeches be reduced;
 - 2.30.4. The item be considered by referendum, subject to terms outlined elsewhere in these Bye-Laws or the Articles of Association;
 - 2.30.5. The item be referred to a later meeting;
 - 2.30.6. The item be referred to a committee for examination and report, or referred back to a committee for re-examination and report; The item to not be considered; or
 - 2.30.7. The meeting be adjourned temporarily.
 - 2.30.8. The meeting be subject to a time guillotine to be decided by Council.
 - 2.30.9. The item be moved to the top of the agenda.
 - 2.30.10. That an item be referred to an assembly or caucus.
- 2.31. Meetings of council must ensure that when a vote takes place, it must be conducted through a method of secret voting, although all votes must subsequently published once the meeting has closed.
- 2.32. The process of society approval will be structured as follows:
 - 2.32.1. Proposed societies will be considered by Societies Executive before every Union Council, who will recommend whether they should be approved for creation by Council
 - 2.32.2. Proposed societies, alongside Society Executive's recommendation, the reasoning behind their decision, and the societies' constitutions, must be submitted to the chair of Union Council no later than five working days before each Union Council
 - 2.32.3. During Union Council, any councillor can choose to reject Society Executive's decision about a society, at which point Council shall move to a debate as outlined in Bye-Law 2.20, with the rejecting councillor having the right to the initial proposing speech, should they wish.
- 2.33. Amendments to the Articles of Association or these Bye-Laws may only be considered if they appear in full on the properly published agenda, under the heading 'Amendment to the Articles of Association' or 'Amendment to the Bye-Laws'. The amendment and section/paragraph to be amended must be stated clearly.

- 2.34. Any Union or University member of staff can attend council; however to speak they must be approved by the council via vote.
- 2.35. A cycle of business will be proposed by the Chair of Union Council, in collaboration with the Campaigns & Democracy Officer, at the first Union Council of the academic year to facilitate broad discussions in accordance with 2.9.4. Councillors may amend this discussion and submit any item for discussion, provided it does not contravene the Byelaws or Articles of Association, to the agenda of any meeting of Union Council.
- 2.36. Bye-Law 2 must be reviewed by the first Union Council alongside a broader review of democratic processes once a term on consideration of recommendations made by the Campaigns and Democracy Officer in collaboration with the Student Officer Committee and the Democratic Procedures Committee.