

9 Bye-Law 9: Student Opportunity Groups

(Passed November 2023)

- 9.1. The Union shall support the creation and running of voluntary Student Opportunity Groups. These will be categorised as: Clubs, Societies, Peer Support Groups and the Media Collective.
- 9.2. These groups shall carry out and organise sporting, personal development, cultural, academic, medical, charity and campaigns, games and hobbies, arts and performance, religion, media, political, and peer support groups.
- 9.3. The Union shall have Student Opportunity Group Collectives, coordinated by the relevant Union staff and elected Executives as empowered through bye-law 1. These shall coordinate specific subgroups and authorise funding to carry out specific activities. These subgroups are:
 - 9.3.1. Sports Club Collective, which will coordinate student Sports Clubs, referred to as 'Clubs'.
 - 9.3.2. Societies Collective, which will coordinate student Societies and Peer Support Groups.
 - 9.3.3. Media Collective, which will coordinate student media groups.
- 9.4. Members shall organise and run their Student Opportunity Groups as they see fit, in accordance with these Unions bye-laws and policies.
 - 9.4.1. In the event of a conflict over their organising model, the relevant Union Staff and relevant Union Full-Time Student Sabbatical Officer shall resolve.

CONSTITUTIONS Constitution of all Student Opportunity Groups

Formation of Constitution

- 9.5. Each Student Opportunity Group must have a constitution.
 - 9.5.1. This constitution must be completed using a standard template, which shall be requested from the relevant Union staff.
 - 9.5.2. The completed constitution shall be uploaded to the Union website when reasonably practicable.

Changes to Constitution

- 9.6. The most recent Student Opportunity Group Constitution which has been approved by the Student Opportunity Group Committee and Union Council shall be taken as the main Constitution for all decisions, unless updated by these bye-laws, Union Council or by the Ordinary Subscribing Members during a Group General Meeting.
- 9.7. Any change proposed by an Ordinary Subscribing Member as to change the Student Opportunity Groups Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting at a Student Opportunity Group General Group meeting.
- 9.7.1. This meeting must be convened and advertised in accordance with the Student Opportunity Group General Group Meeting bye-laws.
- 9.8. Any changes approved through the Student Opportunity Group General Group Meeting must be approved by Union Council, or by a body to which Union Council has delegated this power.

Failure to uphold constitution

- 9.9. If a Student Opportunity Group states that they perform activities within their Constitution, which they do not perform, the Activities & Opportunities Officer, relevant Collective or Union Council is able to request the Student Opportunity Group to re-write their Constitution or start performing the activities within the semester.
- 9.10. If a Student Opportunity Group performs activities in addition to their constitution, which is not ratified within their constitution, the Activities & Opportunities Officer, relevant Collective or Union Council is able to request the Student Opportunity Group to rewrite their Constitution or stop performing the activities within the semester.
- 9.11. If the Student Opportunity Group does not comply, the Union can withdraw any authorised grants that have been granted. If no grant has been granted, then the membership account may be frozen until the issue is resolved.

MEMBERSHIP Membership of Clubs, Societies and Media Collective

- 9.12. Membership of Clubs, Societies and the Media Collective shall be open to all Ordinary Members.

9.13. Membership of Clubs, Societies and the Media Collective shall be open to all Associate Members and Honorary Life Members at the discretion of the Committee.

9.14. Members shall be those that have paid the current Subscription Fee, which shall be determined by the Committee of the Student Opportunity Group, with the exception of the fee for Associate Membership.

9.14.1. Once members have purchased the subscription fee they are henceforth 'Subscribing Members.'

9.15. The fee for Associate Membership shall be determined by the Management Committee on the recommendation of the Club, Society and Media Collective. The subscription fee is subject to a minimum for Clubs, Societies and the Media Collective as set by relevant Union Staff.

9.16. When attendance at events of which may be of importance to Clubs, Societies and Media Collective members, but is restricted by certain legal requirements, the group will be able to stipulate that only members that fulfil these requirements shall be able to attend these events.

9.16.1. If the Club, Society or Media Collective holds events such as defined above, they will also be required to hold events which are open to all of its members and which do not have restricted attendance.

COMMITTEES Definition

9.17. All Student Opportunity Groups must have an elected Committee, who are the elected representatives of that group. Committee members shall be appointed to organise the running of the Student Opportunity Group in accordance with these byelaws and Union policies.

Committee Election General Rules

Designation of ERO and Disputes

9.18. The Student Opportunity Groups Election Returning Officer (ERO) shall be the Union Deputy Returning Officer.

9.18.1. The ERO is responsible for ensuring that there is a fair process for all Student Opportunity Group elections and that the regulations are publicised at least three days before each election commences.

- 9.19. In the case a dispute arises about the process or outcome of an election, the decision of the ERO can be challenged in the same way as Committee decisions are challenged as outlined in this bye-law, or a complaint can be made to a Full Time Student Officer who can start the process again if they find any problems with the process or outcome of any Student Opportunity Group election provided they are not voting in the election.
- 9.20. Each post must be voted on separately and the voting system used shall be the Single Transferable Vote.

Rules regarding holding multiple Committee positions

- 9.21. No Ordinary Member shall hold Presidency of more than one Student Opportunity Group.
- 9.22. No Ordinary Member shall hold more than one Signatory position in a single Student Opportunity Group.
- 9.22.1. A Signatory may hold more than one non-signatory Committee role alongside their Signatory role.
- 9.23. No Ordinary Member shall hold more than three elected Committee roles across all Student Opportunity Groups.

Committees of Clubs, Societies and Peer Support Groups

Committee Elections

- 9.24. All Committee members for Clubs, Societies and Peer Support Groups must be elected annually by all Ordinary Subscribing Members of the group.
- 9.25. All Committee members shall hold office for a period of one year unless they resign or are removed.
- 9.26. Committee Members can run on a slate consisting of two individual Ordinary Subscribing Members running for one position sharing the responsibilities of the role.
- 9.26.1. For the purpose of bye-law 9.26. a slate is defined as two candidates running together to be co-elected to a single position.
- 9.27. The Committee can hold internal elections for unfulfilled roles. These must meet the standards as outlined above in bye-law 5 and 9.

Committee Structure

- 9.28. For the accreditation of the group, they must have three signatory positions filled. These shall be collectively referred to as 'Signatories' and be elected as:
- 9.28.1. President (or similar implied role)
 - 9.28.2. Vice President (or similar implied role)
 - 9.28.3. Treasurer (or similar implied role)
- 9.29. The Committee shall have an elected Health and Safety Officer.
- 9.30. The Committee shall be required to have the roles of Equality and Diversity Officer, Union Council Representative, First Year Representative, and Welfare Officer filled.
- 9.30.1. These roles can be elected through an election open to all Ordinary Subscribing Members.
 - 9.30.2. If the Student Opportunity Group decide not to have these roles as elected positions, any existing Committee member must undertake the responsibilities, training and mantle of the role.
 - 9.30.3. One of the Committee members must be within their first year of University as an Undergraduate student, including foundation year students. This can be reserved as the role of First Year Representative.
- 9.31. Any or all of these requirements may be waived by the Union Council where the Student Opportunity Group is able to demonstrate that it may achieve the implied aims through a different mechanism.

MEETINGS

Committee Meetings

- 9.32. A Committee meeting shall be advertised five working days in advance with invitations and agenda sent out to all required Ordinary Subscribing Members.
- 9.32.1. It is the responsibility of the meeting organiser to ensure that the required attendees are made aware of the meeting.

9.33. The meeting must have minutes taken, a record of those in attendance and apologies sent to be considered as an official Committee meeting. These minutes should be sent to all Committee members after.

9.33.1. An apology for absence shall be considered valid if it is submitted in writing within 24 hours of the start of the meeting to any Signatory or the Committee Member responsible for calling the meeting.

9.34. Decisions at Committee meetings shall be reached by a simple majority of those present and voting. Quorum for a Committee meeting shall be one-half (50%) plus one of Committee members.

9.34.1. Any decision disagreed with by the Ordinary Subscribing Members can be overruled in a General Group Meeting.

General Group Meeting

9.35. For a General Group Meeting to be deemed official it must:

9.35.1. Be advertised to all Ordinary Subscribing Members five working days in advance.

9.35.2. Be held in term-time.

9.35.3. Be requested via petition to the Activities & Opportunities Officer through one quarter (25%) of Ordinary Subscribing members requesting the meeting.

9.35.3.1. The meeting shall take place within five working days of receipt of the petition.

9.36. Only Ordinary Subscribing Members may vote and be counted towards quorum in the meeting.

9.37. Decisions at General Group Meeting shall be reached by a simple majority of those present and voting. The quorum of the meeting shall be one quarter (25%) of the total membership of the Student Opportunity Group.

Removal of Elected Committee Members

9.38. A Committee member shall be removed if they are absent from two consecutive official Committee Meetings of their Student Opportunity Group organised in accordance with the rules above without having sent apologies for non-attendance through having

at the second meeting of non-attendance a vote of no confidence, meeting quorum of the Committee Members.

9.39. All or any of the Committee Members shall resign if a simple majority of the Student Opportunity Group members present and voting at a General Group Meeting vote in favour of a motion presented at that meeting demanding such resignations.

9.40. The removal of any member following a vote must be ratified and approved by the Activities & Opportunities Officer for it to come into effect.

GROUP SPECIFIC INFORMATION Society Collective Specific Information

Bye-laws relating to the Constitution, Committee and General Group Meetings can be found above. Below is specific bye-laws relating to the functioning of Societies and Peer Support Groups.

Societies Formation of Societies

9.41. The Union shall produce on the website the necessary information for any member or group of members who wish to form a student Society.

9.42. A Society can be formed around any issue, provided that Union Council approve their constitution and that it is not covered as a Club under their definition.

9.43. No Society should usually be accredited when the activity they wish to undertake is already directly provided by a current Student Opportunity Group.

9.43.1. If a Student Opportunity Groups aim is to regulate and support a group of students that wish to undertake that activity within a particular school, faculty or mode of study the Society can be approved and shall be classed as an Academic Society. Funding procedures and principles will reflect a priority on cross university activity.

Society Committee Responsibilities

9.44. The Committee shall:

9.44.1. Administer and organise the Society group activities, finances and rules.

9.44.2. Allocate specific responsibilities to Committee members.

- 9.44.3. Decide in conjunction with the membership the Society policies.
- 9.44.4. Ensure the Society abides by and fulfil their duties in accordance with these bye-laws, Constitution and Policy.
- 9.44.5. Attend the meetings relevant for the running of their Society.
- 9.44.6. Maintain sufficient contact with the Union.

Finances

- 9.45. The Society shall not hold a separate bank account and shall place all its funds within the Union.
- 9.46. All income to the Society must be paid into the Society subscriptions account. Expenses must not be deducted from income before depositing with the Union.
- 9.47. All expenditures put through Union finance requires the authorisation of two Signatories and sufficient documentation.
 - 9.47.1. In emergency or exceptional circumstances as determined by the Union, one Signatory and one Trustee or Union Staff Member can authorise payment.
- 9.48. Expenditure in excess of £100 should be notified to the relevant Union staff before it is spent. The relevant form should be sent alongside the authorisation statement from two signatory members, or in cases requiring urgent payment one signatory member and one trustee or one trustee and one Union staff member.
- 9.49. Any Society which incurs expenditure of more than £100 without first notifying the Union may incur a fine of 10% of the total expenditure.
- 9.50. All Society equipment purchased shall remain the property of the Union.

Peer Support Groups Formation

- 9.51. A Peer Support Group can be formed by a group of Ordinary Members for the sole purpose of supporting their peers, provided that Union Council approve their constitution.

Membership

9.52. Peer Support Groups shall have no financial entry requirements and are not required to be recorded Subscribing Members.

9.52.1. Committee Members must be Ordinary Subscribing Members of the Peer Support Group.

9.53. Membership shall be open to all Ordinary Members. Membership shall be open to Associate Members and Honorary Life Members at the Committees discretion.

Peer Support Group Committee Responsibilities

9.54. The Committee shall:

9.54.1. Undertake the representative and providing function of the Peer Support Group.

9.54.2. Administer and organise the Peer Support Group activities and rules.

9.54.3. Allocate specific responsibilities to Committee members.

9.54.4. Decide in conjunction with the membership the Peer Support Group policies.

9.54.5. Ensure the Peer Support Group abides by and fulfil their duties in accordance with these bye-laws, Constitution and Policy.

9.54.6. Attend the meetings relevant for the running of their Peer Support Group.

9.54.7. Maintain sufficient contact with the Union.

Finance

9.55. A Peer Support Group shall not hold a separate bank account and shall place all its funds within the Union.

9.56. All income to the Peer Support Group must be paid into their subscriptions account. Expenses must not be deducted from income before depositing with the Union.

9.57. All expenditures put through Union finance require the authorisation of two Signatories and sufficient documentation. In

emergency or exceptional circumstances, one Signatory and one Trustee or Union Staff Member can authorise payment.

9.58. Expenditure in excess of £100 should be notified to the relevant Union staff before it is spent. The relevant form should be sent alongside the authorisation statement from two signatory members, or in cases requiring urgent payment one signatory member and one trustee or one trustee and one Union staff member.

9.59. Any Peer Support Group which incurs expenditure of more than £100 without first notifying the Union may incur a fine of 10% of the total expenditure.

9.60. All Peer Support Group equipment purchased shall remain the property of the Union.

Society and Peer Support Group Archival and Deletion

9.61. Should a Society or Peer Support Group not fill all Signatory Roles within the first round of elections they shall receive two further notices to fill the roles or be archived.

9.62. Union Council shall set a minimum number of members for a both Clubs and Societies. Groups failing to recruit sufficient members shall not be accredited.

9.63. Should a Society or Peer Support be archived their subscription account funds shall be archived for a period of two full years from the date of archival and will subsequently revert to the property of the Union following the approval from the Trustee Board or delegated sub-Committee, unless the Society is re-founded within these two years.

Sports Collective Club Specific Information

Bye-laws relating to the Constitution, Committee and General Group Meetings can be found above. Below is specific bye-laws relating to the functioning of Clubs.

9.64. The Union shall work in partnership with uea+sport to provide competitive sporting opportunities for students.

9.65. Clubs shall abide by any further agreements or obligations as agreed on by the Union and uea+sport.

Formation

9.66. A Club can be formed for any sport approved by Sport England that has a registered National Governing Body, provided that Union Council approve their Constitution. Clubs for sports not approved by Sport England or for sports without registered National Governing Bodies will not normally be accepted, but can exist with special permission from Union Council.

9.67. No Club should usually be accredited when the activity they wish to undertake is already directly provided by a current Student Opportunity Group.

9.67.1. If a Clubs aim is to regulate and support a group of students that wish to undertake that activity within a particular school, faculty or mode of study the Club can be approved. Funding procedures and principles will reflect a priority on cross university activity.

9.68. Any group wishing to become an accredited Club shall be required to be registered as a Union Society for at least one year, unless given exception by the Union in exceptional circumstances.

9.69. The creation of any Club shall follow the requirements as laid out by the Union and uea+sport.

Club Committee Responsibilities

9.70. The Club Committee shall:

9.70.1. Administer and organise the Club activities, finances and rules.

9.70.2. Allocate specific responsibilities to Committee members.

9.70.3. Decide in conjunction with the membership the Club policies.

9.70.4. Ensure the Club abides by and fulfil their duties in accordance with these bye-laws, Constitution and Policy.

9.70.5. Ensure the Club abides by the rules as outlined by uea+sport and British University and College Sports (BUCS).

9.70.6. Attend the meetings relevant for the running of their Club.

9.70.7. Complete the relevant documents required by uea+sport to operate.

9.70.8. Maintain sufficient contact with the Union and uea+sport to operate.

Finances

9.71. Clubs shall not hold a separate bank account and shall place all its members funds within the Union.

9.72. All student income to the Club must be paid into the Clubs subscriptions account. Expenses must not be deducted from income before depositing with the Union.

9.73. All expenditures put through Union finance require the authorisation of two Signatories and sufficient documentation. In emergency, one Signatory and one Trustee or Union Staff Member can authorise payment.

9.74. Expenditure in excess of £100 from the subscription account not pertaining to grant pot expenditure as decided by uea+sport should be notified to the relevant Union staff before it is spent. The relevant form should be sent alongside the authorisation statement from two signatory members, or in cases requiring urgent payment one signatory member and one trustee or one trustee and one Union staff member.

9.75. Any Club which incurs expenditure of more than £100 into its subscriptions account without notifying the Union shall be subject of a penalty of 10% of the value of the amount charged.

9.76. All Club equipment purchased with subscription account funds shall remain the property of the Union or uea+sport dependant upon the nature of the purchase as determined by relevant staff.

Ending and Archival of Clubs

9.77. Should a Club not fill all Signatory Roles within the first round of elections they shall receive two further notices to fill the roles or be archived. This will be decided on a joint decision between the Union and uea+sport.

9.78. A Club shall require at least 30 members each year to remain accredited as a Club.

9.79. Should a Club be archived their subscription account funds shall be archived for a period of two years from the date of archival and will subsequently revert to the property of the Union following the approval from the Trustee Board or delegated sub-Committee, unless the Club is re-founded within these two years.

EXECUTIVES Sports Collective and Society Collective Executives

Membership

- 9.80. The Sports Club Collective shall be coordinated by the Sports Executives, Activities & Opportunities Officer and any relevant Union staff.
- 9.81. The Societies Collective shall be coordinated by the Societies Executives, Activities & Opportunities Officer and any relevant Union staff.

Election

- 9.82. Clubs and Societies shall elect representatives based on the categories the individual Clubs and societies have been organised with to the role of '*Category Representative.*' These are collectively referred to as the Sports Executives and Society Executives.
- 9.83. The Sport and Society Executives shall be elected in accordance with bye-law 5.

Responsibilities of Sports Executives

- 9.84. The Sports Executives shall:
- 9.84.1. Recommend for approval the distribution of grant funding.
 - 9.84.2. To create guidance for implementation of sport policies as required.
 - 9.84.3. Communicate with their respective Clubs and help unite Clubs together.
 - 9.84.4. Bring forward concerns, queries and ideas from their respective Clubs to the Union and uea+sport.
 - 9.84.5. Follow and uphold Union and uea+sport guidelines and protocols.
 - 9.84.6. Attend all meetings required of them.

Responsibilities of Society Executives:

- 9.85. The Society Executive shall:

- 9.85.1. Approve distribution of delegated grant funding.
- 9.85.2. Review applications for new societies.
- 9.85.3. Communicate with their respective societies and help unite societies.
- 9.85.4. Bring forward concerns, queries and ideas from their respective Societies to the Union.
- 9.85.5. Follow and uphold Union guidelines and protocols.
- 9.85.6. Attend all meetings required of them.

Removal of Club and Society Executives

9.86. A Club or Society Executive shall be removed if they are absent from two consecutive official meetings as required from them within their responsibilities description above without having sent apologies for non-attendance.

9.86.1. This shall be administered through having at the second meeting of non-attendance a vote of no confidence, meeting quorum of the Sport or Society Executive members.

9.86.2. Apologies shall be sent to the meeting organiser or the Activities & Opportunities Officer with 24 hours notice.

9.86.3. The result of this vote may be appealed at Union Council.

9.87. If a Sport or Society Executive is absent for more than 60% of meetings in a semester, given no evidence of extenuating circumstances, the Executive may be subject to a vote of no confidence at the next available quorate meeting.

9.87.1. The result of this vote may be appealed at Union Council.

9.88. The removal of any member following a vote must be ratified and approved by the Activities & Opportunities Officer for it to come into effect.

Chairing of Meetings

9.89. The Sports Executive and Society Executive meeting shall be chaired by a member elected from their membership.

9.90. This chair shall be responsible for the running of the meeting in alignment of standard meeting chair practice.

9.91. This chair can be elected from any of the existing membership by majority vote during the first quorate meeting.

9.92. This chair shall be supported by the Activities & Opportunities Officer and relevant Union staff to ensure fairness of the meeting and equal representation of all members.

Media Collective Specific Information

Bye-laws relating to the Constitution, Committee Meetings and General Group Meetings can be found above. Below is specific bye-laws relating to the functioning of the Media Collective.

Collective Structure

9.93. The Media Collective shall be led by a body of:

9.93.1. The heads of each Media Group;

9.93.2. The relevant Union staff member;

9.93.3. The Activities & Opportunities Officer.

Formation

9.94. The formation of Media Collective groups shall follow the process for forming Societies with additional measures as determined by resource and risk requirements as outlined by relevant Union Staff.

Committee Election

9.95. Committee members for the Media Collective can be appointed via either election or interview. These appointments must be organised annually by Ordinary Subscribing Members of the group and be ratified by relevant Union Staff.

9.95.1. Election of Committee Members must be done following the general rules above and in accordance with bye-law 5.

9.95.2. Interviews must only be carried out only where an expertise is required for the specified role being appointed.

9.96. All Committee members shall hold office for a period of one year unless they resign or a removed.

9.97. In elections, Committee Members can run on a slate consisting of two individual Ordinary Subscribing Members running for one position.

9.97.1. For the purpose of above, a slate is defined as two candidates running together to be co-elected to a single position.

9.98. The Committee can hold internal elections for unfulfilled roles. These must meet the standards as outlined above in bye-law 5.

Committee Responsibilities

9.99. The Committee shall:

9.99.1. Undertake the representative function of the Media Collective.

9.99.2. Administer and organise the Media Collective activities and rules.

9.99.3. Allocate specific responsibilities to Committee members and undertake required training.

9.99.4. Decide in conjunction with the membership the Society policies.

9.99.5. Ensure the Society abides by and fulfil their duties in accordance with these bye-laws, Constitution and Policy.

9.99.6. Attend the meetings relevant for the running of their media group.

9.99.7. Maintain sufficient contact with the Union.

9.99.8. Uphold responsibilities of mitigating the additional risk that media collective outlets entail.

Finance

- 9.100. The Media Collective groups shall not hold a separate bank account and shall place all its funds within the Union.
- 9.101. All income to the Media Collective Groups must be paid into their respective subscriptions account. Expenses must not be deducted from income before depositing with the Union.
- 9.102. All expenditures put through Union finance require the authorisation of two Signatories and sufficient documentation. In emergency or exceptional circumstances, one Signatory and one Trustee or Union Staff Member can authorise payment.
- 9.103. Expenditure in excess of £100 should be notified to the relevant Union staff before it is spent. The relevant form should be sent alongside the authorisation statement from two signatory members, or in cases requiring urgent payment one signatory member and one trustee or one trustee and one Union staff member.
- 9.104. Any Media Collective Group which incurs expenditure of more than £100 without first notifying the Union may incur a fine of 10% of the total expenditure.
- 9.105. All Media Collective Group equipment purchased shall remain the property of the Union.