

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTIONAL RULES

Rule 8

CLUBS & SOCIETIES

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Students' Union shall recognise and support a range of student Clubs & Societies in the University that seek to foster a unity of spirit amongst its members and enhance relations between its members. The Students' Union shall promote participation in student Clubs & Societies to its members.
- 1.2 No Club or Society shall be recognised if its aims or objectives are contrary to the Charter and Statutes of the University, or the Students' Union Constitution or Constitutional Rules. The Vice-Chancellor may determine that the aims or objectives of a Club or Society are contrary to the terms or spirit of the Students' Union Constitution. If such a determination is made, the Vice-Chancellor, pending the next meeting of the University Senate, may withhold or withdraw approval. The decision by the Vice-Chancellor shall be ratified or amended by the Senate.
- 1.3 The Students' Union Executive Management Committee shall have the power to impose such penalty or penalties as it deems necessary upon any recognised Club or Society which in its determination has acted in a manner contrary to the aims, objectives and terms of the Constitution and Rules, subject to a right of appeal to the Students' Union Council. The Students' Union Council may delegate authority for consideration of such appeals to a sub-committee of the Council. Any such imposed penalty shall be reported to the next meeting of the Students' Union Management Board and the next meeting of the Council.
- 1.4 The Students' Union Executive Management Committee shall have the power to refer a matter to the University authorities if, in the view of the Committee, the matter may constitute a breach of the University's Regulations. The Committee shall have the power to refer a matter to the relevant statutory authorities if, in the view of the Committee, the matter may constitute a potential criminal offence.
- 1.5 The Council shall have the power to establish, recognise, dissolve or withdraw recognition from any Club or Society by means of a motion carried by a simple majority vote of those present and voting at a meeting of the Council, providing that due notice of the motion has been given in accordance with the Rules.
- 1.6 A recognised Club or Society shall not have a separate legal entity to that of the Students' Union.
- 1.7 The Council may delegate responsibility for detailed consideration of recognition or dissolution of Clubs & Societies to a sub-committee of the Council. Such a sub-committee shall only have power of recommendation to Council regarding the recognition or dissolution of Clubs & Societies.
- 1.8 All recognised Clubs & Societies shall have a constitution. The Council shall approve the constitutions of all Clubs & Societies and any subsequent amendments to these constitutions. The Council shall consider approval of all amendments to Club & Society constitutions, as agreed by a Club or Society in accordance with the Rules. The Council may propose and approve amendments to the Constitution of a Club or Society, having

consulted with the Club or Society. The Council may delegate authority for consideration of Club or Society constitutions to a sub-committee of the Council.

- 1.9 The Students' Union shall maintain a register of constitutions of all Clubs & Societies. The constitution of a Club or Society shall be made available to any Student Member on request.
- 1.10 Each Club or Society shall be recognised, based on its aims and objectives, in one of the following categories:
 - 1.10.1 General Interest
 - 1.10.2 Academic
 - 1.10.3 Cultural
 - 1.10.4 Religious
 - 1.10.5 Political
 - 1.10.6 Charitable
 - 1.10.7 Sporting Club

Any amendment to the categorisation of a Club or Society shall require the approval of the Council.

The Students' Union shall maintain, and publish, a register of all recognised Clubs & Societies and the categorisation of each recognised Club or Society.

- 1.11 The Students' Union shall have processes, procedures and requirements to which all Clubs & Societies must comply. These shall be collated in a Clubs & Societies Committee Handbook which shall be published by the Students' Union and available to all Student Members. The Executive Management Committee shall approve amendments to the Committee Handbook.
- 1.12 All recognised Clubs & Societies and their members must comply with the Constitution and Rules and the processes, procedures and requirements stated in the Clubs & Societies Committee Handbook and other such codes of practice and policies as approved by the University and the Students' Union. This shall include all provisions governing grant allocation and financial regulation. All recognised Clubs & Societies shall produce reports as required by the Students' Union.
- 1.13 It is the responsibility Club and Society Executive Committee members to ensure that their Club and Society members are fully aware of, and comply with, all processes, procedures, requirements, codes of practice and policies. Clubs & Societies committee members are required to attend mandatory training arranged by the Students' Union.
- 1.14 Any ruling by the Vice President Student Activities regarding the Constitution Club or Society shall be final, subject to the right of appeal to the Council. Any such ruling shall be reported to the next meeting of the Council. The Council may delegate responsibility for receiving such reports to a sub-committee of the Council.
- 1.15 A Club or Society shall not make any public statement (which shall include any statement on the worldwide web or social media) on behalf of the Club or Society, unless such a statement complies with the terms and spirit of the Students' Union Constitution.

- 1.16 Neither the Union President nor the Students' Union shall be responsible for the actions or opinions of any Club or Society.
- 1.17 The Management Board shall be responsible for the implementation of these regulations.

2 PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNITION OF A CLUB OR SOCIETY

- 2.1 Any two Student Members of the Students' Union shall have the right to make an application to the Council for recognition of a Club or Society, through an application process approved by the Students' Union.
- 2.2 An application for recognition shall include the following, in a form/template specified by the Students' Union:
 - 2.2.1 The names and student numbers of the Student Members submitting the application.
 - 2.2.2 A draft constitution for the proposed Club or Society.
 - 2.2.3 A development plan (including a proposed budget) for the Club or Society.
 - 2.2.4 The names and student numbers of fifteen registered students of the University who support recognition of the Club or Society.
- 2.3 One of the Student Members making an application must be available to attend the meeting of Council, or the sub-committee of Council, at which their application for recognition shall be considered. The Student Member shall be expected to provide clarifications and answer any questions that may arise concerning their application.
- 2.4 The Council shall not grant recognition to any Club or Society if its:
 - 2.4.1 Aims or objectives are contrary to the Charter and Statutes of the University, or the Students' Union Constitution or Constitutional Rules
 - 2.4.2 Aims or objectives are similar in nature to an existing Club or Society
- 2.5 A decision by the Council on recognition of a Club or Society shall be final. An unsuccessful applicant may request that Council give further consideration to their application at a future meeting of the Council.
- 2.6 A decision by the Council on recognition of a Club or Society shall be communicated to applicants.
- 2.7 On recognition, both Student Members responsible for an application shall be required to attend a Club & Society induction meeting organised by the Students' Union. A Club & Society shall not obtain any of the rights, privileges or benefits of recognition until a Club & Society induction process has been completed.

3 MAINTAINING RECOGNISED CLUB OR SOCIETY STATUS

- 3.1 Subject to the provisions of Section One of this Rule, a recognised Club or Society shall continue to be recognised by the Students' Union provided that the Club or Society

operates in accordance with the provisions of the Students' Union Constitution and its Rules and it maintains a minimum level of activity as prescribed in the Rules.

3.2 The minimum level of activity shall require:

3.2.1 The President, Treasurer and Secretary of a Club or Society to have formally registered with the Students' Union (normally via the Clubs and Societies Finance Office) and authorised the required documentation with an original signature.

3.2.2 A Club or Society to submit a full list of all Student Members and Associate Members to the Students' Union (normally to the Clubs and Societies Office) before the end of each semester, by a date specified by the Students' Union. The list shall identify new memberships received in each semester.

3.2.3 A Club or Society to have a minimum of fifteen Student Members.

3.2.4 A Club or Society, if it charges a membership fee, to submit all membership fees received to the Students' Union (normally via the Clubs and Societies Finance Office) before the end of the semester in which the membership fees were collected, by a date specified by the Students' Union.

3.3 Any Club or Society failing to maintain the required minimum level of activity shall no longer be authorised to undertake financial transactions, to apply for funding, to use the facilities of the Students' Union or avail of the rights, privileges or benefits of recognition until such time as the Club or Society meets the requirements for minimum level of activity.

3.4 Any Club or Society that fails to meet the minimum level of activity for two consecutive academic years shall be deemed to be dissolved and have their recognition automatically withdrawn. The Council shall be informed of the withdrawal of recognition of any Society or Club at the next meeting of the Council.

3.5 On dissolution, all of the assets (including financial assets) of a Club or Society shall remain the property of the Students' Union and may be allocated to Students' Union general funds.

4 MEMBERSHIP AND COMMITTEES

4.1 Any registered Queen's University Student shall be eligible to join any Recognised Club or Society as a Student member, upon completion of registration with the Club or Society. This includes payment of the agreed membership fee, if such a fee is levied.

4.2 A non-student or student of another institution shall be eligible, at the discretion of the Students' Union, to join a recognised Club or Society as an Associate Member. An Associate Member may only join Clubs and Societies upon completion of registration with the Club or Society. This includes payment of the agreed membership fee, if such a fee is levied. On completion of registration, the Associate Member has agreed by association to be governed by all policies of Queen's University Belfast Students' Union. Students of INTO Queen's University Belfast shall be considered to be Associate Members.

4.3 A Club or Society Committee may award honorary membership. Honorary membership shall be titular only and provide no additional benefits to a member.

- 4.4 The minimum membership fee for Student member and Associate members shall be set by the Students' Union Executive Management Committee. A Club or Society may, with the approval of the Executive Management Committee, waive the levying of a membership fee on its members or may set a separate membership fee for Student members and Associate members.
- 4.5 The Club or Society committee positions of President (or Chairperson or Captain), Secretary and Treasurer shall be considered to be Executive Committee positions. Only registered Student members may hold Executive Committee positions.
- 4.6 Associate Members are not permitted to vote in any Club or Society elections or vote at general meetings or hold Executive Committee positions.
- 4.7 Each Club or Society may also establish Ordinary Committee positions, consisting of committee positions that are deemed to be necessary to carry out the work of the Club or Society. Such positions shall be provided for within the constitution of the Club or Society. These positions can be held by Student Members or Associate Members. An Ordinary Committee position shall be non-voting if the position is held by an Associate Member.
- 4.8 All Student Members and Associate Members shall agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of membership of Clubs and Societies as approved by the Students' Union.
- 4.9 No member of the Students' Union Executive Management Committee shall be a member of any committee of any Club or Society.
- 4.10 Committee members shall serve a one year term of office and may seek re-election. Committee members shall serve no more than two terms of office in Club or Society Executive Committee positions. The role of a committee member begins on election at an AGM until the following year's AGM.

5 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS AND EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

- 5.1 Each Club or Society shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at which the committee of the Club or Society shall be elected. The AGM shall take place within a time period specified by the Executive Management Committee. The Executive Management Committee may grant a Club or Society permission to conduct an AGM outside of the specified time period.
- 5.2 All Club and Society elections shall be carried out by secret ballot, either by using the 'first past the post' relative majority system or the single transferable vote system. The voting system to be used shall be determined by the Constitution of the Club or Society, or by the Executive Management Committee if not specified in the Constitution.
- 5.3 A Club or Society shall be responsible for the conducting their AGM. A returning officer, usually an outgoing Executive committee member, will be appointed to oversee the election of the new committee. Guidance on how an AGM should be conducted shall be available within the Clubs and Societies Committee Member Handbook. Any complaints concerning the conducting of elections at an AGM shall be considered in accordance with the Rule 6, Section 6.
- 5.4 The Executive Committee of a Club or Society shall provide at least seven days' notice to the membership in advance of an AGM. The date of the meeting and list of positions to be elected shall be emailed to all registered members and published on the website of the Club or Society.

- 5.5 Nominations for committee positions shall normally be received at the AGM, with each candidate being proposed and seconded by full Student Members of the Club or Society. Associate Members may not propose or second candidates.
- 5.6 The committee of a Club or Society must provide a full list of the Club or Society members to the returning officer prior to an AGM being called. No new members may be accepted by the Club or Society during the period between the calling of the AGM and the AGM taking place.
- 5.7 A Club or Society constitution may only be amended or updated by a vote of Student Members at an AGM.
- 5.8 Any proposed amendments to the constitution of a Club or Society shall require the support of two-thirds of those present and voting at a duly convened AGM. All approved amendments must be reported to the Students' Union Council, who shall have the final power of approval of amendments.
- 5.9 The minutes of the AGM, including amendments to the constitution, must be communicated to the relevant Students' Union staff member within seven days of the AGM taking place.
- 5.10 If a Club or Society Executive Committee Member or Ordinary Committee Member steps down during their term of office, or such a position becomes vacant, the Club or Society must conduct an Extraordinary General Meeting to fill the vacancy. The Executive Management Committee may waive the requirement to conduct an EGM if a Club or Society has scheduled an AGM to take place within a reasonable period. An EGM shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions for conducting an AGM.

6 ELECTION COURT

- 6.1 Any member of a Society who has reason to believe that there was any irregularity of any kind regarding the conduct of a Society election shall have the right to lodge an Election Petition with the Director of the Students' Union within 72 hours of the alleged irregularity, or within 72 hours of the alleged irregularity becoming known.
- 6.2 An Election Petition shall only be valid if its purpose is to challenge or appeal a decision of the Returning Officer, or if there is valid reason that prevented the irregularity being presented to the Returning Officer for a ruling prior to the close of polling.
- 6.3 The Election Court shall consist of the following members:
 - 6.3.1 the Students' Union Speaker, who shall act as the Chair. If the Union Speaker is unavailable, they may then nominate a member of the Standing Committee take their place.
 - 6.3.2 the Director of the Students' Union (or their nominee) who shall act as Secretary.
 - 6.3.3 the Union President, or another Student Officer if the Union President is unavailable or is involved in any incident that is under consideration.
- 6.4 The Election Court shall operate under the procedures outlined within Rule 2 of the Students' Union Constitution.

7 GRANTS / FUNDING

- 7.1 Any Recognised Club or Society shall have the right to make applications for funds to the Students' Union in accordance with the processes, procedures and deadlines as determined by the Students' Union.
- 7.2 The following categories of grant shall be available to Clubs and Societies:
 - 7.2.1 General Grant
 - 7.2.2 Capital Grant
 - 7.2.3 Hosting Grant
 - 7.2.4 Special Fund / Grant
- 7.3 The following categories of Club and Society may not apply for grant funding from the Students' Union:
 - 7.3.1 Religious
 - 7.3.2 Political
 - 7.3.3 Charitable
- 7.3.4 Clubs and Societies for which less than six months has passed since the date on which Student Members have attended a Club & Society induction meeting organised by the Students' Union.
- 7.4 The Students' Union may, from time to time, make other occasional funding available to Clubs and Societies.
- 7.5 All recognised Clubs & Societies and their members must comply with the provisions governing grant allocation and financial regulation as approved by the University and the Students' Union.

8. CONDUCT AND COMPLAINTS

- 8.1 Any formal complaints concerning the activity of a Club or Society, or concerning the activity of a committee member, or other authorised officer of a Club or Society representing that Club or Society, shall be made to the Director of the Students' Union. The General Club and Society Complaints procedure shall be out in the Clubs and Societies Committee Handbook.

9 MEMBER RELATIONS ISSUES

- 9.1 Club/Society Member Complaints Procedure
 - 9.1.1 There shall be a Club and Society Member Complaints Procedure, which shall be set out in the Clubs and Societies Committee Handbook.
 - 9.1.2 There shall be Club and Society Complaints Procedure, which shall be set out in the Clubs and Societies Committee Handbook.

- 9.1.3 There shall be Club and Society Member Conduct Procedure, which shall be set out in the Clubs and Societies Committee Handbook.
- 9.1.4 Student members and associate members should raise internal complaints and disputes through the Club and Society Member Complaints Procedure.
- 9.2 Bullying and Harassment
 - 9.2.1 The principles of the University's Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, and any successor policy, apply to all members.
 - 9.2.2 Student members who feel that they are being bullied or harassed should follow the procedures set out in the Student Complaints Procedure.
 - 9.2.3 Complaints from, or about, associate members should be raised through the internal Club and Society Complaints Procedure.
- 9.3 Equality and Diversity
 - 9.3.1 The principles of the Students' Union's and University's Equality and Diversity policies apply to all members.
 - 9.3.2 Student members should raise any matters through the Student Complaints Procedure.
 - 9.3.3 Complaints from or about associate members should be raised through the internal Club and Society Complaints Procedure.
- 9.4 Club and Society Member Conduct Procedure
 - 9.4.1 The Club and Society Member Conduct Procedures should be used to address all internal club or society conduct issues.
 - 9.4.2 The University's Conduct Regulations apply to all student members. The Students' Union will follow the principles therein to deal with conduct issues relating to associate members.
- 9.5 Sources of Guidance
 - 9.5.1 Members can contact the appropriate Students' Union staff member for guidance on the application of the procedures.