

Oxford University Student Union

Company no. 07314850 Charity no. 1140687

RULES OF COUNCIL

Approved by Council HT23

1 Interpretation

- 1.1 In these Rules, unless the context requires otherwise—
'Governing Documents' means the Articles of Association, Bye-Laws, Regulations, and these Rules;
'Election' means an election by members of Council;
'improper' means *ultra vires*, in contradiction to the Governing Documents, of considerable organisational risk to the Student Union, or unlawful;
'Full Member' means a member of Council,
'shall' confers an obligation, and
terms defined in other Governing Documents have the same meaning.
- 1.2 Questions of interpretation of these Rules shall be decided by the ruling of the Chair.

2 Offices of Council

- 2.1 The Returning Officer shall administer elections in Council.
- 2.2 Elections in Council shall
(a) use the single transferable vote system; and
(b) include an option to re-open nominations.
- 2.3 Only Full Members may vote in elections in Council.
- 2.4 Elections in Council shall comprise—
(a) hustings, conducted by the Returning Officer at the allotted meeting,
(b) polling, conducted using an online secret ballot for a period of at least 24 hours commencing no more than 24 hours after the meeting, and
(c) the approval of the results by the Returning Officer.
- 2.5 When a vacancy arises in an office elected in Council and candidates are nominated, a bye-election shall be held at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council.
- 2.6 The procedure for bye-elections shall follow that for ordinary elections, provided that
(a) a person elected at a bye-election shall hold office for the remainder of the term a person elected at the originally scheduled election would have served, and
(b) no bye-election shall coincide with a scheduled election for the same office.
- 2.7 The Chair of Council shall be elected in the last Ordinary Meeting of each Term, and serve for the following Term.
- 2.8 When the Chair is vacant or unavailable, the—
(a) Returning Officer, or
(b) if they are unavailable, a Sabbatical Trustee
shall assume the chair.
- 2.9 The non-executive Student Members of the Steering Committee under Bye-Law 9.5 shall be elected in Council in the last Ordinary Meeting of each Term, and serve for the following Term.

- 2.10 The Scrutiny Committee shall comprise two Student Members, elected in Michaelmas Term, to serve until the election of their successors.

3 Vacancies in the post of Returning Officer

- 3.1 When a vacancy has arisen in the post of Returning Officer, a bye-election shall be held at the next meeting of Council and advertised.
- 3.2 Until a successor is elected, an Acting Returning Officer shall discharge the duties of the post.
- 3.3 The Sabbatical Trustees may appoint an Acting Returning Officer from amongst their number.
- 3.4 Otherwise, the Trustee Board shall appoint a member of staff as Acting Returning Officer.

4 Agenda and convocation of meetings

- 4.1 In or before the 0th week of Full Term, Steering Committee shall set and publish the schedule of the four Ordinary Meetings of Council for that Term. Steering Committee may alter this schedule in exceptional circumstances. The schedule shall include
- (a) the date and time of each Ordinary Meeting, and
 - (b) which Campaign, Project and Divisional Board Representative reports must be tabled at each Ordinary Meeting.
- 4.2 Steering Committee shall not schedule an Ordinary Meeting between 09:00 and 17:00 on a weekday.
- 4.3 Motions for Ordinary Meetings must be submitted no later than 13:00 five days before the meeting, except that
- (a) Steering Committee may accept motions submitted after this deadline but before the agenda is distributed, and
 - (b) the Chair may accept emergency motions, which concern matters substantially arising after the deadline, no fewer than three hours before the meeting, unless the motion is a motion of no confidence, to suspend or remove student membership, or to amend a Governing Document.
- 4.4 Motions—
- (a) to make policy shall state the policy's wording *verbatim*; and
 - (b) to make, amend, or renew mandates shall state an expiry date within three years of the academic year in which the motion is moved.
- 4.5 Motions, amendments and procedural motions shall require a named and present Proposer, and in the case of motions for resolution a named and present Seconder. A Proposer or Seconder may withdraw their support for a motion at any time, but the motion shall fail only if they are not replaced by a volunteering and present Student Member.¹
- 4.6 The Chair shall give members seven days' notice of each Ordinary Meeting of Council, detailing the time and place of the meeting, any scheduled elections and the deadline and procedure for submitting motions and election nominations.

¹ If the required Proposer/Seconder is not present, and no-one volunteers to replace them, the motion will fail.

- 4.7 For each Ordinary Meeting, Steering Committee must set, order, and circulate the agenda to members by 17:00 four days before the meeting, and in doing so shall—
- (a) mark motions it deems to be uncontroversial below-the-line,
 - (b) at its discretion, refer motions to another committee of Council,
 - (c) consult the Board on any proposed change to the Bye-Laws or Regulations,
 - (d) strike motions it deems to be improper, having consulted the relevant officials if necessary,
 - (e) defer any motion to the next Ordinary Meeting if necessary under (c) or (d) above, save that this power must be exercised only once for any motion,
 - (f) list all other motions,
 - (g) issue trigger warnings as appropriate, and
 - (h) give notice of all elections in Council.
- 4.8 The Steering Committee, in discharging its duties for the compilation of the agenda, may—
- (a) strike any part, or the whole, of any item from the agenda if
 - (i) doing so would not alter the sense of any particular phrase, and
 - (ii) the item would otherwise be improper;
 - (b) correct minor grammatical or formatting issues with any agenda item; and
 - (c) amend any agenda item without limitation providing
 - (i) they do so prior to distributing the agenda to Council members, and
 - (ii) they have the express and informed consent of the proposer of the item.
- 4.9 The Steering Committee shall determine its own procedure, save that
- (a) proposed items shall be circulated to all Steering Committee members within 1 working day of being received, and
 - (b) Steering Committee may not make a decision unless all members are afforded reasonable opportunity to discuss said decision.
- 4.10 The Returning Officer shall accept nominations in an election until three hours before the relevant meeting. They shall accept no such nominations after this point.
- 4.11 An extraordinary meeting may be requisitioned by—
- (a) any five Constituent Organisations;
 - (b) a hundred Student Members;
 - (c) a procedural motion; and
 - (d) the Executive.
- 4.12 Only items listed in the requisition of an extraordinary meeting shall be discussed.
- 4.13 On receipt of a requisition for an extraordinary meeting, the Chair shall—
- (a) within seventy-two hours, circulate the agenda and the time and place of the meeting; and
 - (b) ensure that the extraordinary meeting is convoked within five working days.
- 4.14 Procedure for extraordinary meetings shall otherwise be as in ordinary meetings.
- 5 Conduct of debate and votes**
- 5.1 Motions shall be carried only by a two-thirds majority of Full Members present and voting, unless otherwise provided.
- 5.2 Every Student Member may attend, speak, and propose or second motions.
- 5.3 Every Student Member may, during debate on a motion, move relevant amendments to the motion. Amendments shall be—

- (a) debated in the same manner as a motion; and
 - (b) carried on the same basis as a motion, but by simple majority.
- 5.4 Employees may attend, and speak only on factual matters.
- 5.5 The Returning Officer shall—
- (a) conduct votes as they see fair and proper;
 - (b) only permit present Full Members to vote except on a motion put to all Full Members;
 - (c) ignore abstentions in the reckoning of majorities; and
 - (d) furnish a list of votes to the Chair for publication in the minutes.
- 5.6 Votes shall be taken on the conclusion of debate.
- 5.7 Unless the Chair rules otherwise, speeches—
- (a) initially proposing or opposing a motion shall not exceed three minutes' length; and
 - (b) otherwise shall not exceed ninety seconds' length.
- 5.8 The Chair may—
- (a) rule remarks out of order, if of the opinion that they are defamatory or irrelevant to the item under discussion;
 - (b) conduct debate as they see fit, in accordance with the Governing Documents;
 - (c) permit motions, procedural motions, and amendments to be carried without a vote where there is no opposition; and
 - (d) where a motion requiring a two-thirds majority is not carried but is supported by at least a third of Full Members voting, if of the opinion that it could be passed or rejected after further debate or amendments, extend debate.
- 5.9 The Chair shall—
- (a) rule motions affecting the working conditions of staff out of order;
 - (b) remind members of trigger warnings attached to the agenda;
 - (c) in exercising any casting vote, vote to extend debate if possible, but otherwise to maintain the *status quo*.
- 5.10 A motion below the line shall not be discussed and shall be carried at the conclusion of the meeting.

6 Order and questions of procedure

- 6.1 It shall be disorderly to—
- (a) interrupt, except on a point of order; or
 - (b) act in an intimidating or offensive manner.
- 6.2 The Chair may move to expel a member for disorderly behaviour or contravention of the Governing Documents.
- 6.3 The Chair may rule on procedure, at their discretion, where—
- (a) the Governing Documents make no provision, and
 - (b) proceedings would otherwise be unfair or improper.
- 6.4 A Full Member may rise on a point of order—
- (a) during a speech or vote to which it relates; and
 - (b) between speeches and votes.
- 6.5 A point of order shall—
- (a) propose a procedural motion; or

- (b) request a ruling on a question of procedure.
- 6.6 A procedural motion carried by a quarter of votes may—
 - (a) reverse the designation of an item as *below the line*;
 - (b) order a quorum count;
 - (c) order a secret ballot;
 - (d) adjourn the meeting for a period not exceeding half an hour;
 - (e) order a recount, if moved immediately after a vote; and
 - (f) put a motion to a vote by all Full Members.
- 6.7 A procedural motion carried by simple majority may—
 - (a) direct voting in separate parts on a motion;
 - (b) defer a motion or part thereof to a future meeting;
 - (c) refer a motion to a committee of Council;
 - (d) call an extraordinary meeting; and
 - (e) permit a person to attend or speak.
- 6.8 A procedural motion carried by two-thirds majority may—
 - (a) immediately put the question;
 - (b) exercise the right under Bye-Law 28 to move no confidence in the Chair, following which the proposer shall speak; and
 - (c) overturn a ruling of the Chair.
- 6.9 When a procedural motion is moved, the Chair shall permit—
 - (a) questions to the Chair; and
 - (b) only one speech in proposition and opposition.

7 Censures, commendations, and accountability

- 7.1 At each Ordinary Meeting each Sabbatical Trustee shall table a written report, if possible attend and make a verbal report, and otherwise tender apologies to the Chair.
- 7.2 Every Full Term at an Ordinary Meeting designated by Steering Committee, each Divisional Board Representative must table a written report, if possible attend and make a verbal report, and otherwise tender apologies to the Chair.
- 7.3 The Scrutiny Committee shall move a motion of censure in a Sabbatical Trustee who fails to fulfil that duty at two ordinary meetings, absent exceptional circumstances.
- 7.4 Any Student Member may bring a motion to censure or commend a Sabbatical Trustee. Such motions shall contain a justification related to the Sabbatical Trustee's work.

8 Records and Operations

- 8.1 The Returning Officer shall maintain a list of all members of Council, available to all Student Members, and record the date of each member's addition to the list and the organisation or role by virtue of which they are a member.
- 8.2 At the beginning of each Term, the Returning Officer shall ask the Chairs of each Campaign and the President (or equivalent) of each Constituent Organisation for any updates to or renewals of entries in the list.
- 8.3 Each member may, in writing to the Returning Officer, nominate a Student Member who is not otherwise a Full Member as proxy for a single meeting of Council, who for

the purposes of proceedings in that meeting and not in votes following shall have the rights of that member.

- 8.4 Full Membership of an individual shall lapse after twelve months unless it is explicitly renewed.
- 8.5 Each committee and each person who holds an individual office elected in Council shall maintain an up-to-date handover document, which shall be stored by the SU and provided to any person subsequently exercising the duties or powers of the office. The document shall record
 - (a) the nature and extent of any delegation of their responsibilities to SU staff,
 - (b) the day-to-day procedure involved in their role,
 - (c) a brief summary of the relevant rules and responsibilities, and
 - (d) any other information they wish to document.
- 8.6 The Chair shall arrange for minutes to be taken of each meeting of Council, which shall record
 - (a) any motion or amendment, procedural or otherwise, moved in Council and the result of any vote, or lack thereof as the case may be, taken at the meeting,
 - (b) the attendance, or lack thereof, of any person or people due to give a report at each meeting and any apologies received by the Chair,
 - (c) quorum counts and their results, and
 - (d) may record any other information about the business transacted at the meeting.
- 8.7 The draft minutes of each meeting and result of any vote taken subsequent to the meeting shall be distributed to all members within seven days of the meeting. Draft minutes may be amended on the basis of accuracy, with the consent of the Steering Committee, prior to approval at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council. Minutes may not be altered after approval.
- 8.8 All agendas, papers, reports and minutes of Council shall be published on the website for a minimum of three years and shall be available on request to Student Members indefinitely.