

Bye-Law 6 – Representative Committees (RepComs)



FUNCTIONS

- 6.1. The Conference of Common Rooms shall convene Representative Committees (RepComs).
- 6.2. RepComs are a forum for representatives of communities to deal with matters of shared interest and common purpose, ensuring representation of those groups at all levels of the University & its constituent colleges
- 6.3. RepComs shall provide a democratic space to:
 - 6.3.1. Gather the views of students within a particular community and determine positions deemed to be representative of those students at the University of Oxford
 - 6.3.2. Provide student-led direction for the students' union work
 - 6.3.3. Formulate a majority view among representatives of communities and form agreement amongst common rooms that a particular course of action shall be undertaken by all common rooms and Officers of the Students' Union in relation to that community
 - 6.3.4. Receive reports on and discuss the representative work of the Officers of the Students' Union (as defined by Bye-Law 3) and the wider Trustee Board
 - 6.3.5. Facilitate informed and transparent debate over collegiate and university issues affecting Communities

MEMBERSHIP

- 6.4. The voting membership of the RepComs shall consist of:
 - 6.4.1. One relevant representative of each Common Room, nominated by each of the common rooms, normally, the Common Room Role Holder elected to represent that community
- 6.5. Any student who self-defines with that community may attend, observe and speak at the Chair's discretion at a RepCom meeting but may not vote.

CONVENING AND CLOSING A REPCOM

- 6.6. The current list of RepComs is as follows:
 - 6.6.1. Class RepCom
 - 6.6.2. Disabled Students RepCom
 - 6.6.3. International Students' RepCom
 - 6.6.4. LGBTQ+ RepCom
 - 6.6.5. Wom*n's RepCom
 - 6.6.6. Students of Colour RepCom
 - 6.6.7. Suspended Students' RepCom
- 6.7. The process for convening or reconvening a RepCom shall be by submission of a motion to the Conference of Common Room in accordance with Bye-Law XXX

POSTHOLDERS

- 6.8. A Chair shall be elected from within the RepCom
- 6.9. The Deputy Chair shall be the relevant Part-Time Officer



- 6.10. The Deputy Chair may act on behalf of the Chairs in their absence
- 6.11. Each RepCom may create further Postholders as required to support the representation of those with intersectional or minority groups within each community
- 6.12. The Postholders shall be responsible for chairing the RepCom meetings and ensuring that decisions are taken in line with these Bye-Laws
- 6.13. Postholders may support equality impact assessments of motions from Conference of Common Rooms without necessitating a full meeting of the RepCom

OFFICERS OF THE STUDENTS' UNION

- 6.14. Officers of the students' union shall not be voting members of RepComs.
- 6.15. Relevant Equity Officers of the students' union (as described in Bye-Law 3) shall be in attendance as Executive Members at RepComs.
- 6.16. Each Equity Officer shall be required to provide a report to each meeting in relation to matters arising and any RepCom Mandates.
- 6.17. Officers of the students' union may submit agenda items and motions subject to the normal process as outlined in Bye-Law (XXX) below.
- 6.18. Individual staff of Oxford SU who are not Officers of the Students' Union must not be referenced in motions policy, debate or discussion.
- 6.19. Co-CEOs of the Union may be invited by the Chair to speak at a RepCom, but must be given 5 working days notice

MEETINGS

- 6.20. RepComs shall meet once a term; the dates for each academic year shall be decided by the prior Trinity meeting
- 6.21. Oxford SU shall provide staff resource and support for RepCom meetings including minute taking and providing advice and guidance on decision-making and adherence to the Bye-Laws and Articles of Association.
- 6.22. Oxford SU shall ensure that meeting minutes are published on the Oxford SU website and shall include a record of RepCom member votes.
- 6.23. An extraordinary RepCom meeting of may be called at the discretion of the Chair if a request is received, in writing, by five RepCom members. There shall be no more than 1 extraordinary meeting per term, however working groups and organising meetings can be held as required.
- 6.24. The date of any meeting must be published to all students with at least 7 days' notice.

DECISION MAKING

- 6.25. When making decisions, a RepCom may make any of the following types of decision:
 - 6.25.1. **RepCom Policy** – Setting a **position** which should be deemed to be representative of that community of students, but which does not require any specific action to be taken. Such a decision shall require a two-thirds majority vote.



- 6.25.1.1. RepCom Policy may include a political position or matter of policy but may not include the attribution of students' union resources towards that position.
- 6.25.2. **RepCom Mandate (CM)** – A decision which **directs** the students' union and its Officers to take a specific action. Such a decision shall require a simple majority vote.
 - 6.25.2.1. RepCom Mandate may request the use of SU resources, both financial and otherwise, towards a particular action. As such, a RepCom Mandate must only refer resources to issues which relate to students as students. Bye-Law [XXX] allows the Trustee Board to reject such a mandate where this threshold is not met.
- 6.25.3. **RepCom Collective Action (CCA)** – An agreement across common rooms that a particular course of **action** shall be undertaken by all RepCom members and Officers of the Students' Union. Such a decision shall require consensus.
 - 6.25.3.1. RepComs may require individual common rooms to provide evidence that they have delivered the collective action and may hold those who do not accountable in whichever way the RepCom determines.
 - 6.25.3.2. Consensus shall be achieved by amending motions until such a time as all Conference members vote in favour of the motion.
- 6.25.4. **Accountability Action (AA)**. There will be two types of Accountability Action – a motion of censure or a motion of no confidence.
 - 6.25.4.1. A motion of censure may be passed in relation to any RepCom Postholder. Such a motion shall be submitted in accordance with Bye-Law (XXX) and shall require a two-thirds majority vote of RepCom members.
 - 6.25.4.2. A motion of no confidence may be passed in any RepCom Postholder. Such a motion shall be submitted in accordance with Bye-Law (XXX) and shall require a two-thirds majority vote of RepCom members.
- 6.26. Each RepCom member shall have 1 vote
- 6.27. Quoracy shall be 50% of all RepCom members; RepCom members who choose to abstain from votes shall be counted towards quorum, but their vote will be considered neutral.
- 6.28. Any decision taken by a RepCom shall normally be considered to have lapsed after three years or where it is superseded by an alternative decision.
- 6.29. For the avoidance of doubt, any decision or policy passed by a RepCom shall only be considered a Conference decision, and by extension the policy of the wider Students' Union where it is also passed by Conference itself

SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS

- 6.30. Any RepCom member may submit a motion to RepCom on the required online form.
- 6.31. Officers of the students' union may submit motions, but these must be proposed and seconded by other 5 members of the RepCom or other Officers of the Students' Union.
- 6.32. Motions must be submitted with 10 working days' notice of any meeting



- 6.33. Oxford SU shall provide a risk assessment including assessment of any financial, legal or reputational risks on behalf of the Oxford SU Trustee Board. This shall normally be provided within 5 working days of the motion being submitted, however the Trustee Board reserves the right to extend this timeline where necessary.
- 6.34. In line with [Article XX] the Trustee Board or nominee may request changes to or prohibit any motion where it can demonstrate that it may result in legal, reputational or financial detriment to the students' union. This may include where the motion relates to Officers of the Union, particularly those who are also employees.
- 6.35. In all circumstances, where the Oxford SU Trustee Board prohibits a motion or is unable to deliver or enact a motion for whatever reason, the sabbatical officer trustees shall be required to provide a written response to Conference of Common Rooms as soon as practicable.

RULES OF DEBATE

- 6.36. The Chair shall ask the proposer of the motion to present their motion.
- 6.37. The Chair shall invite any other Conference member or Officer of the students' union to speak against the motion. Non-members shall be invited to speak at the Chair's discretion.
- 6.38. The Chair may continue to allow speakers for and against the motion, ensuring an equal and balanced debate
- 6.39. Each motion shall have a maximum of 30 minutes allotted time.
- 6.40. Votes shall normally be taken in the room and counted by a member of staff provided by Oxford SU.
- 6.41. Where a vote is required to be taken online, an appropriate system shall be used; in all cases votes shall be made public

REFERENDA

- 6.42. RepComs may call a referendum in relation to any decision and following the procedure set out in accordance with Bye-Law (XX)
- 6.43. RepComs may restrict voting in RepCom referenda called by a RepCom to members of the students' union who self-define within that group
- 6.44. Quoracy for RepCom referenda is 5% of all eligible voters
- 6.45. RepCom Referenda require a simple majority vote.
- 6.46. Referenda will only be considered valid if conducted through the Oxford SU voting system (see Bye-Law XXX – elections).
- 6.47. RepCom Referenda outcomes only apply to that RepCom and are not considered to be Students' Union policy unless also passed by Conference of Common Rooms