

CONFERENCE OF
COMMON ROOMS

Conference of Common Rooms Guide 2026/27

Oxford SU

WHAT IS OXFORD SU?

Oxford SU exists to represent **students' academic interests** while studying at the University of Oxford. We advocate for both **the academic and wider student life experiences of the student body** at the highest levels of the University, ensuring the student voice is heard on all issues affecting **students as students.**

We champion **student voice** - meaning we influence University decisions and work to improve the student experience.

We do this by:

- Being the recognised representative channel between students and the University of Oxford
- Promoting the interests and welfare of all students
- Supporting and advising individual students through our dedicated Advice Service
- Providing social & cultural activities, such as Fresher's Fair
- Ensuring that marginalised student voices are represented and prioritised in University policy discussions

This is what we call our **'primary purpose',** and everything we do should contribute to achieving it.

Oxford SU is **smaller** than many other Russell Group and non-Russell Group University students' unions. We do not run societies or commercial services; instead, we focus on providing support for our Sabbatical Officers and other student representatives to deliver **high-quality, evidence-based representation to University leaders and on senior decision-making bodies.** With a small staff team and limited resources, it is **crucial** that both our financial and human resources deliver value for money and directly support the **SU's primary purpose activities.**

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

If you're a student at the University of Oxford, you're automatically a member of Oxford SU. **Membership is free!** You can opt out if you wish - but even if you do, you'll still be able to access our services and support.

Some students, such as visiting or exchange students, can choose to become associate members - this gives access to more services, but does not include voting rights.

The more you engage with Oxford SU, the more you'll get out of it! You can stay up-to-date with what's going on at Oxford SU by following our Instagram page, reading our weekly email updates, or attending a Conference of Common Rooms meeting. You can also get in touch with our Officers **anytime via email** - we're here to represent you.

HOW OXFORD SU WORKS

Oxford SU is a **student-led** organisation. This means that students are involved in key decisions including around our policy and providing student direction in our work. Students also play a key role in selecting the student leaders that will go on to work on your behalf and represent you in decision-making within the SU and within the wider University.

Most of our representative positions are **elected by students.** These leaders are students themselves, including four full-time Sabbatical Officers taking a year out of their studies to work full-time. Students propose and vote on policies that shape what the SU campaigns for and how it works.

Spaces like the **Conference of Common Rooms (CCR)** and **RepComs** allow student reps to make decisions on behalf of their peers, and support the SU to ensure that its work is representative of the student body and that we are working on the things that matter most to you.

THE TRUSTEE BOARD

The **Trustee Board** provides oversight of Oxford SU to ensure **all decisions are legal, financially responsible, and made in the best interests of both students and the organisation.** It includes Sabbatical Officers, as well as Student and External Trustees (who give their time on a voluntary basis). It handles big-picture stuff like finances, staff, and long-term plans.

The Trustee Board respects student-led decision making and democracy, but it must always act in the best interests of the organisation. This means that occasionally the Board might need to **amend or prohibit** a decision.

OFFICERS OF THE UNION

Your representative Officers are elected students who lead the SU.

They include:

- **Four Sabbatical Officers**, who are employed by Oxford SU for a year during or after their studies to represent students on a range of issues across the whole collegiate university. Our four Sabbatical Officers are:
  - *President for Undergraduates*
  - *President for Postgraduates*
  - *President for Welfare, Equity & Inclusion*
  - *President for Communities & Common Rooms*
- **Equity Officers**, who represent specific communities like LGBTQ+ or Disabled students.
- **Community Officers**, who work with other representatives across the university in areas such as sports, volunteering or societies.
- **Divisional Reps**, who are linked to academic divisions, and who work with Course Reps within their Divisions.

Equity and Community Officers, and Divisional Reps are all student volunteers, and are collectively referred to as **Part-Time Officers**.

We also work closely with **Common Room committees.** Each Common Room (MCR, JCR or GCR) will have a different structure, and if you're a member of a Common Room you can ask them for more information about how to get involved.

Common Room committees represent you *within your college and support community building,* and the SU Officers are elected to represent you *to the University of Oxford.*

ELECTIONS

Oxford SU elections are how students choose the people who lead the SU and represent them, notably our Part-Time and Sabbatical Officers.

For the roles of **Community, Equity, and Sabbatical Officers,** these are usually elected in Hilary Term with nominations open from 0th week through to the end of 2nd week. Campaigning and voting the takes place in weeks 3 and 4 of Hilary Term.

All voting is done online using **Single Transferable Voting** (a ranked-choice system), and every election includes the option to vote 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON). If there's a vacancy or a particular need to, we might also hold elections in other terms.

If you're interested in running for a position now or in the future, email **studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk.**

Divisional Reps

Divisional Reps are selected slightly differently, rather than elected they are appointed following.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Research Reps are typically appointed in **Trinity Term** ahead of the summer vacation, while Postgraduate Taught Reps are appointed in **Michaelmas Term.**

If you are interested in a Divisional Rep position, please get in touch with **academicrepresentation@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk.**

CONFERENCE OF COMMON ROOMS

We are a **student-led** organisation, which means that we work with networks of representatives to ensure that student voices are heard across the whole institution. Our main decision making forum is **Conference of Common Rooms (CCR).**

In **weeks 3 and 7 of each term**, CCR brings together Common Room representatives (typically Presidents) and our Part-Time and Sabbatical Officers to discuss shared interests and common purpose, and is how students can input into SU decision-making, representation, and policy development.

Any student can attend and speak at CCR, however **voting is reserved for Common Room Representatives**. You can see your Common Room's **voting record** for past motions on our website.

HOW DOES CCR WORK?

The CCR meetings are **Chaired by a Sabbatical Officer**, typically the incumbent Communities & Common Rooms Officer. This is to make sure that there is a clear connection between CCR, the Board and the SU's representative/primary purpose functions.

Two Deputy Chairs are elected from within the Conference of Common Room Members. One **MCR** representative and one **JCR** representative. They can serve as Deputy Chair for three terms; if they resign or are no longer a student for any reason, a new election will be held.

The Chair & Deputy Chairs will work through the proposals that have been submitted, giving people an opportunity to ask questions about, and to speak for or against the proposal. Our Bye-Laws put a limit on discussion of **30 minutes** to try and keep the meeting productive and on time.

CCR VOTING & OUTCOMES

CCR can make three types of decisions on behalf of students:

1. **Conference Policy**: A shared stance on an issue that students care about. These sorts of decisions need full agreement (consensus of attending members) to pass.
2. **Conference Mandate**: These decisions ask the SU Officers to take action on something. These types of decisions need a simple majority vote of members (which will be done online).
3. **Accountability Action**: These can be used to hold an Officer of the SU or a postholder of Conference of Common Rooms accountable for a position that they've taken on something which doesn't align with Conference Policy or Mandates.

In the case of setting Conference Policy, the decision is by consensus of CCR members. This means that through the discussions, the Chair & Deputy Chairs might ask attending members to vote on amendments (by simple majority vote) one after the other until there is a consensus of attending members on the final proposal. The Chair may ask to see a show of hands to determine whether consensus has been achieved.

In the case of any other decision, voting will take place online, and available for voting within the 48 hours after each meeting; voting will be live for one week. We will publish the results of the votes online and circulate by email to Common Rooms.

HOW CAN I GET SOMETHING ON THE AGENDA?

The best way to get something on the agenda for CCR is to first talk to your **Common Room Committee or one of the Officers of the SU.**

To submit a motion to the Conference of Common Rooms (CCR), it must either:

- Have been passed at a Common Room meeting or RepCom, or
- Be proposed and seconded by 5 Common Room Presidents or SU Officers.

SU Officers can also submit motions directly to CCR, provided they are proposed and seconded by 2 SU Officers.

If you are a Common Room representative or an Officer of the SU, you can submit your proposal **via the SU website.** Proposals need to come with an **Equality Impact Assessment** (guidance for this is available on our website), and it must be submitted **at least 10 working days** before a meeting of Conference to give the SU enough time to review the proposal and work with the Trustee Board to conduct a risk assessment.

The Board's risk assessment will focus on the legal, reputational, financial, and representative impact of any motion and if there's ever any disagreement, the Sabbatical and Student Trustees will meet with Conference of Common Rooms to discuss the issue openly and transparently, and hopefully come to an agreement.

Important: To support our primary purpose, motions which mandate any action will only be considered/progressed where they represent matters which affect **'students as students'**. Put simply, the SU is here to represent students on issues which impact them as students here at the University of Oxford.

CONSULTING YOUR MEMBERS

Motions and agendas are normally published **five working days** ahead of each Conference meeting, this period is your best opportunity to engage with your student members, gauging their collective voice to help **inform** how you might engage with items at Conference or to propose amendments.

How you consult with your students is up to you, you might choose to coordinate **public meetings** around this period, you may send around **surveys**, or you may do something else entirely!

Remember, Conference of Common Rooms is **open to all** Oxford University students to attend and speak at, so if you find that one or more of your members has a particularly strong feeling about a motion, **invite them along** to participate in the discussion!

If you ever need any further detail about, or help to discuss motions with your members, please reach out to **studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**.

AMENDMENT PROCESS

Once motions and agendas have been published, you can submit amendments up until 10am the day before the relevant Conference meeting. Both Conference members (Common Room representatives) and Officers of the SU can submit amendments.

Once you have submitted your amendment, the Chair & Deputy Chairs of Conference, in collaboration with the SU Trustee Board will review the amendments and can make a number of different decisions:

1. They can simply accept clarifying and 'friendly' amendments - things which make the motion easier to understand or implement
2. They can reject amendments which increase the risk profile of the motion or change the purpose of the motion completely
3. They can postpone the hearing of a motion if lots of amendments are submitted and further consultation is needed

The Chair and Deputy Chairs will then determine the order in which any amendments will be voted upon within the meeting. If you submit an amendment you might be asked to present your reasons for the amendment at the meeting, so make sure that you are available.

Amendments are voted on by Conference members during the meeting. This shall normally be done online, to ensure accurate voting records. Once all amendments have been considered, the updated motion shall be published for voting purposes within 48 hours of the meeting.

INDICATIVE VOTES PROCESS

Conference of Common Rooms has two different participation thresholds that determine whether decisions can be made and whether they're binding. We must have at least 30% of Common Rooms present at the meeting for any decisions to be made at all, and at least 40% of all Common Rooms to vote for the result to be binding on the SU.

When fewer than 40% of Common Rooms vote on a motion, a specific sequence of events automatically happens. First, the Officers of the SU, working with the Chair and Deputy Chairs, may treat the outcome as an indicative position, meaning they can choose whether or not to act on the results but they're not required to follow through.

Next, the motion automatically gets placed "below the line" at the following meeting, which means it won’t be debated unless requested, but gets a second chance for a proper vote. If you submitted the original motion, you should make sure to encourage more Common Rooms to participate the second time around.

Finally, if the motion fails to meet the 40% voting threshold a second time, it gets dismissed entirely. The Chair then has discretion to reject any substantially similar motions for the next 12 months, unless the new motion adds something significant to the original proposal. This means if your motion gets dismissed due to low turnout, you'll normally need to wait a year before trying again with the same idea.

REPCOMS (REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEES)

RepComs are spaces for marginalised or specific student communities to come together, organise, and propose policy for Conference of Common Rooms. The RepComs match roles that exist within Common Rooms and work by bringing those reps together to identify common collegiate issues affecting that particular group of students. **The current list of RepComs are:**

- Class RepCom
- Disabled Students' RepCom
- LGBTQ+ RepCom
- International Students' RepCom
- Black and Ethnic Minorities Student RepCom
- Suspended Students' RepCom
- Women*s RepCom

RepCom meetings follow a similar pattern to Conference of Common Rooms. RepComs meet formally **once a term** (but can meet more often to work together on projects or to plan).

Motions or proposals to the CCR, from a RepCom, must be submitted **at least 10 working days** in advance of the meeting **via the SU website.** Proposals need to come with an **Equality Impact Assessment** (guidance for this will be available on our website), and will be risk assessed by the Board of Trustees against the same criteria as motions from Common Rooms.

The meetings are **Chaired** by the relevant **Equity Officer** (as outlined in Bye-Law 3) and a **Deputy Chair** is elected from within the other reps. Common Room reps hold voting rights, but - similar to CCR - any student who self-identifies as part of that community is welcome to attend, contribute to discussions, and share their views (though they cannot vote).

RepComs can make the following decisions:

- Create **RepCom Policy**, which is a representative position for their community
- Submit **RepCom Mandates**, which suggest actions the SU could take in the interest of their community
- Hold Officers or RepCom Postholders accountable through **Accountability Actions**

Important: RepCom policies only become full SU policy if also passed by the **Conference of Common Rooms.**

REFERENDUMS

Referendums are where ALL student members across Oxford SU are given the opportunity to vote on a binary issue.

A **referendum** can be triggered by the Conference of Common Rooms through **motions**, the **Trustee Board** (in conversation with CCR), and if **2% of students vote** for a referendum using the **Student Ideas** function on the website.

A referendum is deemed to have passed if a **simple majority** decides the result, if **5%** of all students vote.

CHANGING THE RULES

There might be occasions where we need to make changes to our Bye-Laws, there are two ways this may come about:

Trustee Board Proposes Changes: If the Board identifies a need to amend a Bye-Law, the Trustees will inform the postholders of CCR in advance. After any necessary discussion, one of the Student or Sabbatical Trustees will submit a motion to CCR which will be voted on in the normal way.

Students Propose Changes: If students or CCR identify a need to amend the Bye-Laws, they can submit a motion to CCR in the normal way. A Trustee will be invited to discuss the amendments at the CCR meeting, but the vote will happen in the normal way.

Changes to the Bye-Laws need a **two-thirds** majority vote to pass and changes cannot break the law, conflict with the Articles, or create significant risk to the organisation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conference of Common Rooms was trialled throughout the 2025/26 academic year after considerable consultation and collaboration with students. We would like to convey our sincere thanks to every student who engaged in this work, particularly those who were involved in the development of the democratic model and drafting of the Bye-Laws. This was a truly collaborative project between the SU and the wider student body, and we look forward to continuing this partnership for a long time to come.

Oxford SU



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