

# RULES OF STUDENT COUNCIL

## 1 Chair of Student Council – election, powers

- 1.1 The Chair of Student Council shall be elected in 7<sup>th</sup> week Student Council, to serve for the following Term.
- 1.2 In the event of a vacancy<sup>1</sup>, or in any other circumstances where the Chair of Council cannot chair the meeting, the duties and powers of the Chair of Council shall be assumed by the Returning Officer. If the Returning Officer is unable, a Sabbatical Trustee shall assume these.
- 1.3 Where there is no provision in the Bye-Laws or in these Rules, the Chair of Council may make rulings to ensure Student Council can operate fairly and properly, including:
  - (a) the power to rule out of order any remarks that the Chair of Council considers either defamatory or irrelevant to the current debate;
  - (b) with the consent of a 2/3 majority of Student Council, the power to expel any person from the remainder of that meeting for not complying with the Articles, Bye-Laws or these Rules.

## 2 Returning Officer – vacancies

- 2.1 Pursuant to Regulation 4.2, if there is a vacancy in the role of Returning Officer, a Returning Officer shall be appointed in the following order of succession:
  - (a) a Sabbatical Trustee chosen from among their own, except where all Sabbatical Trustees are intending to campaign in an upcoming or ongoing Referendum;
  - (b) where 2.1(a) does not apply an appropriate Oxford SU staff member shall be appointed as Returning Officer by the Trustee Board.
- 2.2 Where an appointment is made under Rule 2.1, Student Council shall continue to advertise the vacancy, and where a candidate is elected, the temporary appointment under Rule 2.1 shall cease.

## 3 Steering Committee – election, powers

- 3.1 The membership of Steering Committee is as follows:
  - (a) The Chair of Council;
  - (b) The Returning Officer;
  - (c) Oxford SU President;
  - (d) Two Student Members elected in 7<sup>th</sup> week Student Council to serve for the following term.
- 3.2 The Steering Committee is responsible for:
  - (a) their duties under Bye-Law 3.2(b), 3.3 and 9.5;

---

<sup>1</sup> The position will be advertised for an Election in Council as soon as a vacancy occurs.

- (b) Setting and ordering the agenda for Student Council; including;
  - (i) marking motions considered to be uncontroversial *below the line* and therefore not for discussion,
  - (ii) when the Steering Committee consider it beneficial, referring motions to another committee for further discussion,
  - (iii) ensuring that nothing which could be considered ultra vires, in contradiction to superseding governance, of considerable organisational risk to Oxford SU or of an illegal nature is added to the agenda, and;
  - (iv) in consultation with the appropriate elected officers, issuing trigger warnings against agenda items.
- (c) Organising All-Student Consultations, in accordance with Rules 13.2 to 14.1.

#### **4 Scrutiny Committee – election, purpose**

- 4.1 The membership of Scrutiny Committee is two student members elected in Michaelmas term to serve for the academic year.
- 4.2 The objectives of Scrutiny Committee are:
  - (a) To communicate clearly with the membership the work of the Sabbatical Trustees;
  - (b) To carry out an in-depth analysis of the work of Sabbatical Trustees, coordinating with all other forms of scrutiny utilised by Oxford SU;
  - (c) To produce feedback with constructive criticism to guide the work of the Sabbatical Trustees, and;
  - (d) To hold Sabbaticals to account for their work and, where appropriate, bring censures, commendations or Motions of No Confidence to Student Council
- 4.3 Scrutiny Committee must bring a motion of censure against a Sabbatical Trustee if, in the absence of exceptional circumstances, they fail to fulfil their duties under Rule 11.1 at two Ordinary Meetings of Student Council.

#### **5 Organisation of Ordinary Meetings of Student Council**

- 5.1 Ordinary meetings of Student Council shall not be held between the hours of 09:00 to 17:00, Monday to Friday.
- 5.2 The agenda must include all motions validly submitted according to Rules 5.3(b) or 5.3(f), except any motions referred under Rule 3.2(b)ii. It may include other items at the discretion of either the Steering Committee or of the Chair of Council.
- 5.3 Ordinary Meetings shall follow this timetable:<sup>2</sup>
  - (a) Student Members must be notified of an upcoming Student Council at least seven clear days before;
  - (b) Motions to Student Council must be submitted by 13:00 five clear days before; except if, at their discretion, the Steering Committee accept motions after this day but only before the agenda has been distributed.
  - (c) The Steering Committee must have met by 18:00 four clear days before;
  - (d) The agenda, including notice of any Elections in Council, must be distributed by 13:00 three clear days before;

---

<sup>2</sup> In this Rule, 'clear days' exclude both the notification, submission or committee meeting day, and the Ordinary Meeting day.

- (e) Elections nominations must be submitted by 13:00 the day before; unless the Returning Officer, with good reason, accepts a nomination after this time.
- (f) Emergency motions must be submitted by 14:00 on the day of Student Council; although the Chair of Council may only accept these where they are satisfied that the matter has substantially arisen after the motions deadline.

## 6 Organisation of other meetings of Student Council

- 6.1 An Extraordinary Meeting of Student Council must be called if requested by: at least five Constituent Organisations; at least 100 Student Members; a simple majority present and voting in Student Council; or the Executive.
- 6.2 An Extraordinary Meeting shall operate like an Ordinary Meeting, except:
  - (a) the Meeting will only discuss items listed in the request;
  - (b) Steering Committee is not required to meet beforehand, and;
  - (c) the Chair of Council shall ensure that the agenda is distributed within 72 hours of receipt of the request, and the meeting held within five open days.<sup>3</sup>

## 7 Elections in Council

- 7.1 Elections in Council will use the Single Transferable Vote system and include Re-Open Nominations as a candidate<sup>4</sup>. Only members of Student Council can vote.
- 7.2 The Returning Officer may conduct elections as they see fair and proper but must allow hustings if a position is contested or if a person present at Student Council requests this.

## 8 Attendance and speaking rights

- 8.1 All Student Members<sup>5</sup> have the right to attend, speak at, and propose or second motions or amendments at, Student Council meetings. Any employee of Oxford SU has the right to attend meetings but may only speak to provide points of information.
- 8.2 Any person present at Student Council must not talk while another person, including the Chair, is speaking (except under Rule 9.5), and must not act in an intimidating or offensive manner.

## 9 Conduct of meetings

- 9.1 Unless otherwise specified in these rules motions require a 2/3 majority of present and voting Student Council members to pass.
- 9.2 Subject to these Rules, the Chair of Council may:
  - (a) conduct debate as they see fit<sup>6</sup>;
  - (b) permit a motion, procedural motion or amendment to pass without a vote where:
    - (i) there is no opposition, or;
    - (ii) the motion is *below the line* and is not raised for discussion.

<sup>3</sup> In this Rule, 'open days' exclude Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

<sup>4</sup> If Re-Open Nominations is elected, a vacancy is declared.

<sup>5</sup> By Trustee Board agreement, Associate Members may also attend and speak at Student Council.

<sup>6</sup> The Chair of Council has a general duty under the Bye-Laws to ensure democratic debate and good order.

- 9.3 The Chair of Council must:
- (a) rule any motion out of order when part of the motion would affect the working conditions of non-elected Oxford SU employees, and;
  - (b) issue trigger warnings for potentially upsetting topics at the beginning of Student Council, so as to give enough time for students to prepare themselves or to leave.
- 9.4 Voting shall be conducted as the Returning Officer sees fair and proper, provided that:
- (a) only members of Student Council are permitted to vote, and;
  - (b) abstentions are ignored in the counting of votes.
- 9.5 A member of Student Council may make a point of order to the Chair about the conduct of the meeting at any time, although this may not occur during a speech or vote unless it relates to that speech or vote. A point of order may include a procedural motion under Rules 10.1 to 10.3.
- 9.6 Unless the Chair of Council rules otherwise, or it is stated otherwise in these Rule, speeches should be no longer than 3 minutes for an initial speech in proposition or opposition, or 90 seconds for any other speech.
- 9.7 Relevant amendments may be proposed to any motion. These are debated similarly to a motion but only require a simple majority of Student Council to be passed.

## 10 Procedural Motions

- 10.1 A member of Student Council may call a Procedural Motion, which requires 1/4 vote to pass, to:
- (a) discuss an item marked by Steering Committee as *below the line*;
  - (b) hold a quorum count;
  - (c) hold a recorded vote for a certain vote;
    - (i) is overruled if a procedural motion to hold a secret ballot on the same vote is passed;
  - (d) hold a secret ballot for a certain vote;
    - (i) overrules a procedural motion to hold a recorded vote if passed on the same vote;
  - (e) adjourn the meeting for a period not exceeding half an hour;
  - (f) request a recount immediately after a vote.
- 10.2 A member of Student Council may call a Procedural Motion, which requires a simple majority to pass, to:
- (a) vote on a motion in separate parts;
  - (b) move a motion (or a part thereof) to a future meeting of Student Council;
  - (c) refer a motion to a given committee or to an All-Student Consultation for discussion;
  - (d) give attendance or speaking rights to a person who does not have these.
- 10.3 A member of Student Council may call a Procedural Motion, which requires a 2/3 majority to pass, to:
- (a) have no confidence in the Chair;
    - (i) requires a speech in proposition, and;
    - (ii) would constitute a Motion of No Confidence under Bye-Law 28;

- (b) overturn a ruling of the Chair;
  - (c) end debate and move to a vote.
- 10.4 The Chair of Council must permit only one speech in favour of a procedural motion and one against. Questions to the Chair are also permitted.

## 11 Censures, Commendations and Accountability

- 11.1 For every Ordinary Meeting of Student Council all Sabbatical Trustees must:
- (a) provide a written report, or where possible a verbal report, and;
  - (b) attend or send apologies.
- 11.2 For every Ordinary Meeting of Student Council all Divisional Board Representatives should:
- (a) provide a written report and;
  - (b) attend or send apologies.
- 11.3 A motion of censure;
- (a) may be brought against a Sabbatical Trustee;
  - (b) should be justified in relation to their work, and;
  - (c) requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
- 11.4 Should a Sabbatical Trustee be censured three times, an automatic Motion of No Confidence must be added to the following Student Council agenda by the Steering Committee<sup>7</sup>.
- 11.5 A motion of commendation;
- (a) may be brought to commend a Sabbatical Trustee;
  - (b) be justified in relation to their work, and;
  - (c) requires a 2/3 majority to pass.

## 12 Policy and Mandates

- 12.1 A motion to make Policy must state the wording of the Policy verbatim.
- 12.2 Mandates must have a stated expiry date which is no later than three academic years following the end of the academic year in which it is made, amended, or renewed under Bye-Law 15.2(b).

## 13 All-Student Consultation(s)

- 13.1 Subject to Rules 13.2 and 13.3, the Steering Committee must organise a Consultation<sup>8</sup> if:
- (a) required to do so by a procedural motion under Rule 10.2(c), or;
  - (b) a motion requiring a 2/3 majority receives more than 1/3 but not 2/3.
- 13.2 If Rule 13.1(b) applies, the Chair of Council may extend debate following a vote where they believe a motion could be passed or rejected following further debate or amendments.
- 13.3 A Consultation must not be held on a:

---

<sup>7</sup> A Motion of No Confidence must be carried out in accordance with Article 20

<sup>8</sup> An All-Student Consultation is not a Referendum, is not binding on Student Council, and does not make Policy.

- (a) Procedural motion;
- (b) motion of No Confidence;
- (c) motion of commendation;
- (d) motion of censure;
- (e) motion to amend the Bye-Laws or Regulations;
- (f) motion to affiliate (or stop affiliating) to an External Organisation;
- (g) request for a General Meeting;
- (h) motion to hold a Referendum;
- (i) matter which, the Steering Committee considers too similar to a matter referred to a Consultation in the last two years, or;
- (j) matter which, in the opinion of the Steering Committee, would benefit from further debate in Student Council.

13.4 Where a Consultation is required, the Steering Committee shall meet within 12 open days<sup>9</sup> of the Student Council meeting to decide the rules that will govern the Consultation including;

- (a) a timeline, and;
- (b) the questions and answers to be proposed in the Consultation.

13.5 The Returning Officer shall oversee any Consultation as they see fit, in accordance with any rules made by the Steering Committee, but must:

- (a) publicise the consultation to all Student Members, and;
- (b) ensure that the Consultation is conducted fairly and properly.

13.6 Following a Consultation, the Steering Committee must put the consulted motion on the agenda for the next Ordinary Meeting, where it requires only a simple majority to pass.

## **14 Miscellaneous**

14.1 Terms defined in the Articles and Bye-Laws have the same meaning in these Rules.

14.2 Student Council may amend these Rules by passing a motion to that effect by a 2/3 majority. Any proposal must contain wording for any proposed amendments.

14.3 Student Council may create, or receive reports from, a maximum of four Projects and two Campaigns per Ordinary Meeting.

---

<sup>9</sup> In this Rule, 'open days' exclude Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.