

Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct for Union Meetings

2. This code of conduct is written with the intent of ensuring free and equal debate, and is to be interpreted in that spirit.

2.1 University of Suffolk Students' Union Student Council meetings shall by default be 'hybrid meetings', in which a physical meeting is held with the option for participants to join remotely if they wish, subject to bye-law 2.30.

2.1.1 Hybrid meetings shall follow the rules laid out in the rest of bye-law 2. The participation of those joining a hybrid meeting virtually shall be governed by the 'online meetings' portion of bye-law 2, with the exception that the Chair shall order speakers on motions and reports according to bye-law 2.1.2

2.1.2 All those entitled to attend the particular democratic meeting shall be given the usual notice period, with details of how to join both physically and virtually. Attendees will be able to choose to join virtually or physically, but they may not attempt to join via both of these ways at once.

2.1.3 As much as possible meetings will run in such a way as to enable equal participation between those attending physically and those virtually.

2.1.4 Voting for the online portion of a hybrid meeting shall be through the mechanisms laid out in bye-law 2.37 – voting in the physical meeting shall be by show of hands. These two votes will then be combined to give the overall vote of the meeting.

2.2 A speaker shall always address the Chair, who shall remain impartial. No-one may speak whilst the Chair is speaking.

2.3 A Chair and Deputy Chair for the meeting shall be elected by the voting representatives in attendance at the first meeting of the academic year. In their absence the meeting can elect its own Chair, who must be a member of the Union.

2.4 Subject only to a challenge, as provided in this Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct for Union Meetings, the Chair's ruling on any question shall be final.

2.5 The Chair shall ensure that the meeting is in order and that remarks are relevant to the question under debate.

2.6 If any member causes a disturbance, the Chair may record the Offender's name in the minutes. If that member persists they shall be expelled from the meeting, and may not return until an apology satisfactory to the meeting has been given in writing.

2.7 No meeting of the Union shall discuss the personal affairs of a member or name any staff member at the Students' Union.

2.8 Meetings must include the following business items:

- 2.8.1 Approval of minutes of the last meeting;
- 2.8.2 Matters arising from the minutes;
- 2.8.3 Reports from relevant office holders or representatives or relevant committees
- 2.8.4 Updates from sports clubs and societies
- 2.8.5 Formative open discussions on topics, presented as information and questions;
- 2.8.6 Summative motions on topics, as notes (facts), believe (opinions) and resolves (mandates on student officers).

2.9 The agenda will be published at least three working days before the meeting.

2.10 Emergency items can only be accepted for consideration with the approval of the voting representatives at the meeting.

2.11 Emergency Meetings of Council will be held in the accordance with Bye-Law 2: Code of Conduct for Union Meetings and a minimum of 48 hours' notice must be given to members.

Motions, Amendments and Making Policy

2.12 Policies are guidelines or rules for the SU to follow or carry out.

2.13 A motion should be proposed to Council via either electronic or paper copy.

2.14 Proposals must:

2.14.1 Be submitted to the Chair, or to the relevant staff member;

2.14.2 Include the text to be put to the democratic body, written in the form of 'University of Suffolk Students' Union notes... University of Suffolk Students' Union believes....University of Suffolk Students' Union resolves....'

2.14.3 This motion will be voted on, which the chair will pass or fail on the account of majority 'For... Against... Abstain...'

2.15 A motion, amendment or any other item shall be ruled out of order if it:

2.15.1 Seeks to alter or rescind policy of higher bodies;

2.15.2 Seeks to commit the Trustees, Student Officer Team, Union Council, or any other staff or student member to an illegal act, or seeks to commit union resources to an illegal act;

2.16 The power and responsibility to exercise this Bye-Law shall rest with the chair, save that any such decision shall be able to be overturned by the Trustee Board and any such overrule shall be reported to Council.

2.17 Items may be withdrawn by the proposer, but it shall then be open to the seconder or other member to propose that item, provided that it is done immediately after such withdrawal.

2.18 Except where waived, all debates will consist of a proposing speech, a speech against, a second proposing speech, a second speech against, questions and clarifications, and a summation.

2.19 Proposing speeches and speeches against may be up to five minutes in length, second proposing speeches and second speeches against may be up to three minutes in length and a summation may be up to two minutes in length.

2.20 At the start of a debate the proposer will be invited to make a proposing speech, and then all amendments will be debated in turn, with a proposing speech, a speech against, points and summation.

2.21 Extra rounds of speeches on motions or amendments may be granted at the Chair's discretion based on indication from the floor. These rounds of speeches will be up to three minutes in length each.

2.22 A motion to remove the Chair of the meeting and elect another one shall be tabled in the same way as any other motion and shall force the resignation of the Chair on a simple majority of those present and voting. This is shown in the minutes as a 'vote of no-confidence in the Chair.'

2.23 A motion of Censure or Commendation shall be tabled in the same way as any other motion, and shall be passed by a simple majority of those present and voting.

2.24 Each member shall have one vote, and members may vote in person or electronically.

2.25 If there are an equal number of votes both for and against, the Chair shall exercise the casting vote. The Chair shall not otherwise vote even if they have temporarily stepped out of the Chair.

2.26 Except during voting a member may raise a point of order, as outlined below, by raising a hand and calling "order". The Chair shall immediately hear the point of order and rule on it. Points of order include:

2.26.1 Call of Quorum

2.26.2 Challenge of the Chair's ruling, which shall be raised only on the grounds that it contravenes the Articles of Association, these Bye-Laws or Union Policy. When a challenge is made the Chair shall relinquish the role of Chair. The proposer of the challenge and the Chair shall have up to one minute to state their cases, and the challenge shall then be put to the vote. A challenge shall be accepted by a simple majority.

2.26.3 Assertion that the matter under question contravenes the Articles of Association and to defer a decision until the Trustee Board has met to interpret the Articles of Association.

2.26.4 Clarification from or through the Chair.

2.26.5 Procedural motions as outlined in this Bye-Law.

2.27 Procedural motions shall be, in order of precedence;

2.27.1 Moving to a vote on the item;

2.27.2 Considering the item in parts;

2.27.3 The number and duration of speeches be reduced;

2.27.4 The item be considered by referendum, subject to terms outlined elsewhere in these Bye-Laws or the Articles of Association;

2.27.5 The item be referred to a later meeting;

2.27.6 The item be referred to a committee for examination and report, or referred back to a committee for re-examination and report;

2.27.7 The item to not be considered; or

2.27.8 The meeting be adjourned temporarily;

2.27.9 That an item be referred to an assembly or caucus.

2.28 Any Union staff member can attend and speak at Union meetings with the permission of the Chair.

2.29 Bye-Law: Code of Conduct at Union Meetings must be reviewed by the first Union Council alongside a broader review of democratic processes once a term on consideration of recommendations made by the Student Representation Coordinator.

Online meetings

2.30 Any student or officer meeting referenced in the Articles or the bye-laws may be held entirely online if:

2.30.1 The trustees deem it necessary

2.30.2 In the case of Student Council, 20 or more councillors email the Chair at least 7 working days prior to the meeting requesting it happen online

2.31 Notice shall be given to the student body, via the SU website, that a meeting has changed to an online format at least 5 working days prior to the meeting, except where there is a pressing health and safety need for the meeting to be held online, to be determined by Chair of the Trustees and Chair of Council

2.32 These meetings shall happen via the most efficient and accessible software available, to be determined and periodically reviewed by the relevant SU staff member and in consultation with the trustees and the Council Chair.

2.33 All issues relating to quoracy, the chairing of the meetings, notification of meetings and receipt of papers, the agenda and running and conduct of meetings shall proceed following the same rules for in-person meetings, as outlined in these bye-laws, unless special provision is noted in the this bye-law.

2.34 All meetings held in such a way will be minuted and also recorded – notice will be given at the start of each meeting that this will be happening, so any participant not wishing to appear on camera can switch theirs off. They will still be able to participate via the chat option in the call.

2.35 All participants will keep their mike and camera muted and off until called upon to speak by the Chair. If a participant attempts to speak out of turn, the Chair may direct SU staff to mute this participant and switch off their video. If the participant continues to be disruptive, through any means, then the Chair shall have the right to direct SU staff to remove the participant from the call.

2.36 If, during such an online meeting, a member wishes to speak they will indicate this to an SU staff member in the call (this nominated staff member will be made clear at the start of the meeting by the Chair). They will have the option of either typing out their question/speech, which will then be read out by the Chair, or requesting to speak in the chat, in which case they will be added to the queue of speakers and unmuted at the right moment by the Chair. Procedural motions will be raised in the same manner, given priority by the Chair.

2.37 Voting shall be via the 'polls function' on Zoom or similar equivalent on other platforms. All voting in an online meeting will be subject to verification of all attendees attending the meeting being eligible to vote, and therefore vote results will be announced within 48 hours of the end of a meeting. These will be placed on the SU website by the Student Representation Coordinator within 48 hours of the meeting ending.

2.38 Amendments to policies or bye-law changes going to an online meeting shall be made in writing to the Chair up to one hour before the meeting starts.

2.39 Participants may make comments and discuss agenda points in the chat bar, but this is to be kept relevant to the agenda item being discussed at the time.

2.40 If an individual proposing or speaking against a motion drops out of the call, the Chair may, at their discretion, postpone the agenda item and move onto the next item until said individual can return to the call and finish their point.

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