

# Student Union Constitution

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## **1. FSB Student Union Constitution**

This constitution shall take effect from 1 September 2015 and invalidates all former constitutions of this union.

This constitution shall be subject to review by union Council and the School at least every three years, in accordance with the Education Act 1994.

As a college under the Education Act 1994, FSB has a statutory duty to ensure that the Union operated in a fair and democratic manner and is held to proper account. The Union therefore will operate in a manner that ensures that the affairs of the union are properly conducted and that the educational and welfare needs of the union's members are met.

## **2. What is a constitution?**

A constitution is a legal document that sets out the activities and procedures of student union. Constitution is made so that the union is recognised by other bodies – particularly College governors and National Student Union (NUS). The constitution makes sure that the rules and procedures used by FSB's student union are efficient, transparent and accountable to the members.

### **2.1 The constitution:**

- provides the framework for the operation of the union;
- outlines where and how union members can air their concerns;
- shows how the executive committee can act on behalf of members;
- defines what the union can or cannot do.

### **2.2 Name**

The name of the student union is FSB Student Union.

### **2.3 The Mission Statement**

The mission of the FSB student union is:

We aim to develop and maintain meaningful, imaginative, reciprocal and sustainable relationships with our students in and out of the classroom in an effort to engage students, enable a free and independent student voice, contribute towards their educational journey whilst in the college and foster success during their studies and beyond.

## **2.3 . Constitution Sections:**

The constitution is made up of three sections:

### **3.1 – Aims and Objectives**

This section defines the aims and objectives of the union as well as setting out what can or cannot be done.

The union is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its members, and to represent the will of students.

The objectives of the Union will be:

- To enrich and enhance the educational experience of its members as people as well as intellects, and in particular to provide opportunities for members to develop their personal maturity, leadership, and communications and other skills.
- To be the principal body representing its members' views and interests within their Institutions.
- To develop the student community through the provision of entertainment, media, social and other services, and support for a wide variety of student led cultural, recreational and sporting groups.
- To provide help to students encountering problems with student life and to minimise the likelihood of such problems occurring. This work centres on advice services but also extends to the provision of facilities for students with special needs and the induction of students.
- The Union aims to do this through an open and democratic structure, effective communication with our membership, with emphasis on continual improvement to all our services. Fulfilment of these objectives will thereby enhance the reputation of the institutions with prospective students, potential employers and the local community.
- These objectives should be pursued without regard to age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin, religion or creed and independent of any party political organisation or religious body.

#### **3.1.1. Membership Composition**

- All members shall be entitled to use the facilities of the union and take part in its educational, social, sporting and cultural activities. Members shall be allowed to speak and vote at union meetings, to nominate, to stand and to vote in union elections, and to hold office in clubs and societies.

- All students who are registered at the School, over the age of 16, shall be members of the union unless they have decided to give up their membership according to the 'Opting Out' regulations, in this constitution.

### **3.1.2 Union Council**

- The Union Council will be the supreme decision making body of the union.
- The Union Council will be made up of the following categories:
  - Student Union Coordinator (FSB employee);
  - President (Student);
  - Vice President (Student);
  - Secretary (Student);
  - Class Representatives from every class in the college (Students).
- The functions of Student Union Council will be to:
  - setting the policy of the union
  - amending the constitution and schedules as appropriate
  - monitor and discuss the events and decisions
  - approve financial reports
  - An emergency Union Council meeting may be called to discuss a particular issue.
  - All Union Council meetings will be conducted according to (Meeting Arrangements) of this constitution.

### **3.1.3 Affiliation to External Organisations**

- Any proposal to affiliate to an external organisation shall be approved by Union.
- The college and members of the Union will be informed of all new affiliations to external organisations including subscription fee to be paid.
- Details of all affiliations to external organizations, including the names of the organisations and each affiliation fee paid, will be included in the Union's annual report which will be made available to all members of the union and to the corporation.

### **3.1.4 Complaints Procedure**

Complaints about anyone in the Union will be dealt according to complaints procedure contained in (Student Code of Conduct & Disciplinary procedures) in this constitution.

### **3.1.5 Union Finance**

- The union will receive appropriate funds from the school after approval from higher authorities to enable it to effectively pursue its aims and objectives.
- This annual allocation of funding will be decided by the school at the last meeting of the financial year, on presentation of the union's estimates for the forthcoming academic year.
- A copy of the Union's budget and the audited accounts will be given promptly to the corporation each financial year.
- The financial year of the Union will run from 1 September to 31 August of every academic year.
- The organisation of the Union's finances and systems of control shall be contained in (Finance Management) of this constitution.

### **3.1.6 Minutes**

- Minutes will be taken in all meeting of the Union and circulated to every member present in meeting. After doing the corrections confirmed minutes will be filed and made available to the school.
- A copy of the constitution, including any amendments, a copy of the annual report and any plans for the Union's activities, including the budget, will be made available to the school.
- The regulations for the organisation of union meetings will be contained in (Meeting Arrangements) of this constitution.

### **3.1.7 Amendments to Constitution**

- Only the Union will be permitted to amend the constitution and schedules. All amendments will be subject to the approval of the council before they can be implemented.

- All amendments to the constitution or schedules will require the support of a minimum of two-thirds of the members present and entitled to a vote at meeting of the Union Council.
- The constitution will be reviewed by the Union at least every one year from the date of the current document's implementation and approved by the corporation.

### **3.1.8 Code of Conduct**

- The code of conduct may include restrictions including unlimited suspension of any member and all of the rights of union membership.
- The official and only language of the Union is English and all members are expected to respect that.
- Council meetings and discussion shall remain confidential until approve by the Council to be publicised.
- Respect of other Council members is expected during discussions and any cross conversations is not permitted.
- The code of conduct may include restrictions up to and including the unlimited suspension of any or all of the rights of Union membership.

### **3.1.9 Beneficiary Addendum**

Should this organization cease to exist, our funds will be donated to the **FSB**.

## **4. Section 2 – Operational Information**

This section gives further operational details that how things get done.

### **4.1 Election Regulations**



### **4.1.1 Student Union Coordinator**

The Student Union Coordinator will be responsible for the good conduct and administration of all union elections and shall have the sole interpretation of the election regulations. The Student Union Coordinator may appoint assistants to support them in their duties.

### **4.1.2 Election Dates**

The Union Council will decide when election will take place and dates will be announced according to the existing members leaving dates.

### **4.1.3 Members for Election**

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Course Representative
- Event's Organiser

### **4.1.4 Publicity about the Election**

- The Student Union Coordinator will produce a list of candidates which will be displayed on the Union notice-boards within 48 hours of the close of nominations.
- Candidates may produce a manifesto and a poster to a specification to be determined by the officer, which must be handed in with the completed nomination form.

### **4.1.5 Campaigning**

- Candidates may commence campaigning at the close of nominations
- The length of speeches and responses by candidates to questions shall be determined by the officer who will also appoint a chair.

### **4.1.6 Voting procedures**

- All members of the Union and students have access to vote no matter their place or time of study.

- All members of the Student Union may vote on production of their FSB student ID Card.
- Voting will be done by secret ballots.

#### **4.1.7 Declaration of Votes**

- The Student Union Coordinator will inform the candidates of the time and venue of the count. The candidate or their appointed representative may, if they so wish, attend the counting of the votes as observers only.
- Once the votes have been counted they would be kept for a period of six months in case of appeals against the result.
- Results of the elections will be declared by the Student Union Coordinator when the count for each post has been completed and any complaint has been resolved to the satisfaction of the officer.

#### **4.1.8 Meeting Arrangements**

- The president shall be responsible for the agenda and publicising the meeting.
- Meetings will be held weekly and are open to all officers and members. All executive officers and 1/3 of the active membership will constitute a quorum.
- An emergency union meeting may be called to discuss a particular issue.
- The brief description of the meeting will be send with the agenda of the meeting.

#### **4.1.9 Meeting Agenda**

The agenda of the meeting will take place in the following order:

- Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
- Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
- Education issues
- Discussion groups
- Any other issues

#### **4.1.10 Minutes**

At all meetings of the union, minutes will be taken which will be circulated at the next appropriate meeting. Confirmed minutes will be filed and made available to students if it is related to them.

### **4.2 Finance Management**

#### **4.2.1 Bank Account**

There will be a bank account held in the name of the Union Council. There will be three signatories to the account:

- The academic office administrator and the Student Union Coordinator
- The president
- The finance manager

Cheques will be signed by the finance manager.

#### **4.2.2 Limits on Payment**

All amounts have to be approved by the Union Council and there is a minimum of £50.

#### **4.2.3 Budgets**

Budgets will be drawn up for all areas of proposed expenditure. These areas will be determined by the Union Council.

#### **4.2.4 Security**

The union will be responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all stock, equipment, cash etc., under its control.

#### **4.2.5 Job Descriptions**

#### **4.2.6 President**

The **President's** duties will be as follows:

- Preside over all executive and membership meetings
- Externally represent FSB and its members at all times
- Be a member of union and ensure that the decisions made are implemented

- Ensure that all officers of the union compile a written report after served tenure
- Oversee the actions and duties of all other officers
- Act reasonably in all matters, and in the best interests of the union
- Maintain all legal documentation relating to the Union, including the constitution, the union code of practice and all legal advice
- Be responsible for publicising all Union Council meetings and changes for discussion and circulating agendas and minutes to members of the meeting

#### **4.2.7 Vice President**

The VPs duties will be as follows:

- Deputise for the president in their absence
- Take the lead in understanding and representing the student experience (s) of the student union's members.
- Set the direction for the student union strategic plan and be responsible for the delivery of improvements.
- Act reasonably and prudently in all matters, and in the best interests of the union.
- Briefing to the Course Representatives
- Dealing with all the matters related to student life

#### **4.2.8 Secretary**

The Secretary's duties will be as follows:

- Keep accurate history and records of organization activities and meetings
- Write and distribute meeting minutes for each meeting
- Keep records of communications and correspondences
- Up to date information from every member of the Union

#### **4.2.9 Course Representative**

The course representative duties will be as follows:

- Attending the union meeting
- Passing the information to the students after confirming from union and it should be in a written form so all students will get it and no one has a conflict on it.
- Raise students issues and problems regarding studies or college
- Solving out the problems of students by consulting the union.

#### **4.2.10 Events Coordinator**

The duties of the events coordinator will be as follows:

- Attend Event Planning Workshop
- Recruit volunteers to work Events

### **5. Section3: Regulations to follow**

The constitution will be reviewed by the Union at least every one year from the date of the current document's implementation and approved by the corporation.

This section includes regulations which union has to follow.

#### **5.1 Opting Out**

- A student who opts out of the union will not be able to participate in the democratic and decision-making function of the union. This includes not being able to stand for any officer or representative position.
- A student who opts out of the union will continue to have the right to attend union run events and participate in the activities.
- A student wishing to opt out must indicate this within six weeks of the start of their course in writing to the Student Union Coordinator.

#### **5.2 Disciplinary Procedures**

- The union's disciplinary policy has authority over any premises managed by the union, any union activities, including the activities of any union or any misconduct which takes place outside union premises but is connected with the union and is likely to affect the reputation of the union.
- If a member is deemed to have breached the rules of the union their conduct will be examined by Union Council.
- In cases involving the misuse of union facilities or resources or behaviour likely to cause potential danger or offence to students, staff or other persons, the student may be suspended from the use of particular union facilities or resources until the disciplinary committee has reached a decision.
- Any member of the union council or any other committee who has been absent from at least three successive ordinary meetings, without submitting a reason to the council will automatically be deemed to no longer hold office.

- Any resignation must be in writing to the Student Union Coordinator. Resignations will take effect immediately after an emergency election has been held and the position if filled.

### **5.3. Code of Practice**

This code of practice is approved by the FSB Executive Committee in accordance with its Student Union Code of Practice, pursuant to the requirements of clause 22(3) of the Education Act 1994 which requires that the governing body of FSB shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that the union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. The code of practice should be read in conjunction with the constitution, schedules and appendices.

### **5.4 Constitution**

The Union will have a written constitution, approved by the corporation and reviewed by the corporation at intervals of not more than three years. Any amendments to the constitution will be approved by the corporation.

### **5.5 Election**

The corporation will agree the appointment of an independent officer to conduct the elections and will satisfy itself that the elections to major union offices are fairly and properly conducted.

### **5.6 Membership**

All registered students of the college will be a part of Student Union

The consequences of opting out of membership shall be:

- a student may not participate in any of the democratic processes of the union
- a student will not be represented by the Union

### **5.7 Finances**

- The financial affairs of the union will be properly conducted by the council and this also includes appropriate arrangements for the approval of the union's budget and the monitoring of expenditure by the school.
- The annual accounts of the union will be made available to the school and to all students.
- Should the annual turnover of the union exceed £100,000, the union shall register as charity with the Charities commission, and shall be regulated by the Charities Commission.

## **5.8 Affiliation to external organisations**

- Any decision to affiliate to an external organisation will be published, stating the name of the organisation and details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid.
- The Union Council will approve annually the list of affiliations

## **5.9 Freedom of Speech**

The union and its members are bound to observe the college's code of practice in relation to freedom of speech as required by section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act of 1986.

## **5.10 Complaints**

- The following complaints procedure will be made available to all students or groups of students who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the union or claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised their right to opt out of membership of the union.
- Any complaint about the union will be addressed to the president. In any circumstances where the complaint relates to the president, it will be addressed to the Student Union Coordinator.
- The president will make a written reply within ten working days.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they may appeal to the Student Union Coordinator. The Student Union Coordinator shall respond to the complainant within ten working days.
- If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the response provided by the Student Union Coordinator, the school shall appoint an independent person to consider and resolve the complaint.
- Members who complain will also be referred to the mechanisms in this constitution to remove officers and change the policy of the union