

Rule 2 – Decision Making

The Articles of Association describe the various decision making bodies of the Union. This Rule gives more detail to how they will work.

Note: remaining references in this Rule to “Council” should be interpreted as references to Union Senate, and will be amended in due course.

1. Mass votes

- 1.1 Article 15 makes provision for mass votes.
- 1.2 A Zone Committee may call a Student Vote relating to an area of their work. A decision of a Zone Committee to call a Student Vote shall not have effect unless approved by Democracy Zone Committee.
- 1.3 A mass vote may use the First-Past-The-Post system, in the case of a yes/no question, or the Single Transferable Vote system, in the case of a question with multiple answers, or such other electoral system as Democracy Zone Committee may provide.
- 1.4 The question specified for a mass vote must be approved by Democracy Zone Committee.
- 1.5 Democracy Zone Committee may make further provision for the conduct and timing of mass votes.
- 1.6 Amendments submitted at meetings calling for a mass vote may not change the subject of the vote.

2. General Meeting

- 2.1 Authorities and responsibility of General Meetings shall be in line with articles 10-14 of the Articles of Association. The following shall also apply:
 - (a) General Meetings may decide Union Policy by considering a written resolution described in article 13.
 - (a) The Annual General Meeting will receive the Annual Report of the current year.
 - (b) The Annual General Meeting will receive the Annual Accounts and Report of the Trustees for the previous year,
 - (c) A list of Union affiliations to external organisations shall be included within the annual accounts for approval. The decision to continue affiliation to or discontinue affiliation from a particular body may be considered following a call for an All-Student Vote on the matter no more than once each year. It shall be binding with effect from the date of renewal of any such affiliation.
 - (d) The Order of Business at a General Meeting shall be determined by the

Democracy Zone which will generally give priority to motions received from Full Members over those received from Union Councillors and Student Leaders.

2.2 All Full Members have the right to attend and vote in a General Meeting.

2.3 Frequency of General Meetings and how to call them:

- (a) The Annual General Meeting (AGM) must be held each year and no more than 15 months may elapse between successive AGMs.
- (b) A General Meeting may be called for by a petition of 100 Full Members, a motion at Council or a meeting of the Trustees.
- (c) If the call for a General Meeting concerns a Council decision, it must be submitted within three clear working days of the Council meeting.
- (d) If the nature of the meeting has been clearly stated by the group calling it and the topic is urgent, the timescales may be shortened by the Trustees.

2.4 The following timetable shall apply for General Meetings:

- (a) Notice for calling a General Meeting is described in article 11 of the Articles of Association.
- (b) Reports, must be submitted at least 5 clear working days before the meeting
- (c) A detailed agenda shall be published with the notice of the meeting

2.5 Quorum for all General Meetings shall be 250 Full Members of the Union. The guidelines for dealing with an inquorate meeting are contained in article 12.3.

2.6 Decisions of a General Meeting will take precedence over those of other Union meetings, except an All-Student Vote (provided it does not overturn an existing General Meeting decision) or in the case of SUSU Trustee Board acting in line with their role as Trustees.

3. Open Council Meetings

3.1 Authorities and responsibility of the Annual Open Council Meetings shall be in line with Article 16.6, in addition to the following business:

- (a) Decide Union Policy
- (b) Carry out elections and by-elections of officers if necessary

3.2 All Full Members have the right to attend and vote in an Open Council Meeting.

3.3 Frequency of Open Council meetings and how to call them:

The annual Open Council meeting shall take place adjacent to the Annual General Meeting of the Union

Open Council Meetings shall abide by the timescales of Union Council Meetings

An Emergency Open Council Meeting may be called for by a petition of 100 Full Members, a motion at Council or a meeting of the Trustees.

3.4 Quorum for Open Council Meetings shall be 250 Full Members of the Union

If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Chair will decide the best course of action between continuing or stopping the meeting. Any business transacted whilst the meeting is inquorate must be referred to the next meeting of Union Council for ratification.

3.5 Decisions of an Open Council Meeting will take precedence over those of other Union meetings, except an All-Student Vote, General Meeting, or in the case of the SUSU Trustee Board acting in line with their role as trustees.

4. Union Senate

4.1 Article 16 makes provision for Union Senate.

4.2 Senate shall be responsible for overseeing the political direction of the Union. It will discharge this duty by:

4.2.1 deciding Union Policy:

(a) in relation to areas of work that fall outside the Zones,

(b) in relation to areas of work that fall across more than one Zone and cannot be appropriately decided by one Zone, or

(c) where a decision of a Zone is called-in in accordance with the following provisions of this Rule;

4.2.2 ensuring that Trustee Board, Zone Committees and Officers are implementing decisions and abiding by Union Policy,

4.2.3 receiving and approving plans from Sabbatical Officers and strategies from Zone Committees at the first Senate meeting of each academic year,

4.2.4 monitoring the performance of Sabbatical Officers and Zone Committees against their plans, and taking appropriate action as necessary,

4.2.5 monitoring expenditure by the Union, and calling-in expenditure in accordance with the following provisions of this Rule,

4.2.6 carrying out elections and occasional by-elections of Officers where required.

4.3 Union Senate shall consist of:

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- 4.3.1 the Chair of Senate,
 - 4.3.2 the Sabbatical Officers,
 - 4.3.3 one representative of each Zone Committee, elected by that Committee (who may not be a Sabbatical Officer),
 - 4.3.4 eight Union Senators elected to better reflect the membership of the Union:
 - (a) two post-graduate taught students,
 - (b) one post-graduate research student,
 - (c) one part-time student,
 - (d) one mature undergraduate student,
 - (e) one student with disabilities,
 - (f) one student from the European Union,
 - (g) one International student.
- 4.4 Extraordinary and Emergency meetings of Senate may be called for by a decision of Senate, the Trustees or a petition of one-third of the members of Senate. Emergency Meetings should be convened within three clear working days of the written request, so the timetable below does not apply. Extraordinary and Emergency meetings will only discuss the matter(s) for which they were called.
- 4.5 The following timetable shall apply for meetings of Senate:

Item	Deadline
Meeting time, date and venue to be published	Two weeks before the meeting
Proposals and reports to be submitted	Five clear working days before the meeting
Agenda and papers to be published	Three clear working days before the meeting
Emergency Proposals	Three hours before the start of the meeting, or closer at the discretion of the Chair
Amendments to Proposals	Three hours before the start of the meeting, or closer at the discretion of the Chair

A proposal is an Emergency Proposal if it relates to a matter which arose after the agenda closed, and must be dealt with before the next meeting.

Amendments to Proposals submitted to Open Union Senate may be submitted up to 72 hours before the start of the Meeting, or closer at the discretion of the Chair.

- 4.6 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Chair will decide the best course of action between continuing or stopping the

meeting. Any business transacted whilst the meeting is inquorate must be ratified by Senate before having effect.

4.7 The Chair shall ensure that:

4.7.1 the Actions and Decisions of each meeting of Senate are published as soon as reasonably practicable following each meeting, and in any case within five clear working days, and

4.7.2 the minutes of each meeting of Senate are published within three weeks of each meeting.

4.8 Democracy Zone shall issue guidance on the creation, maintenance and updating of an Action Log for Union Senate.

4.9 Decisions of Senate will take precedence over those of other Union meetings, except a General Meeting, Trustee Board or All-Student Vote.

5. Union Policy

5.1 Union Policy can be set by mass vote, General Meeting, Union Senate, the Zones or Trustee Board.

5.2 The Zones are primarily responsible for Policy relevant to their areas of work. They set, review and amend Policy in accordance with the Articles and the Rules.

5.3 Senate is primarily responsible for Policy relevant to areas of work that fall outside the Zones, or that falls across more than one Zone. They set, review and amend Policy in accordance with the Articles and the Rules.

5.4 In the case of Trustee Board, this policy must only relate to administrative and operational matters, not statements of a political nature and will remain in place until amended by Trustees.

6. Relationship between the Zones and Senate

6.1 Decisions made by the Zones may be called in by the members of Senate if they believe:

6.1.1 the Zone should not have made the decision, because it related to an area of work that does not fall within that Zone, or affects more than one Zone,

6.1.2 the Zone made the decision without having properly considered all relevant information, or

6.1.3 the decision is of such significance to the Union that it should be made by Senate instead.

6.2 A request to call-in a decision must be made within five clear days of the decision being publicised.

- 6.3 A request to call-in a decision must be supported by at least one-third of the members of Senate, which shall be communicated through a system provided on the Union website.
- 6.4 Where a request to call-in a decision has been made, Senate shall, at its next meeting, consider a motion in the terms “That the decision of [Zone Committee] of [date] in relation to [subject matter] be annulled”.
- 6.5 If a decision is annulled, the Senate may:
- 6.5.1 refer the decision back to the Zone for further consideration,
 - 6.5.2 refer the decision to another Zone or Zones for further consideration,
 - 6.5.3 make the decision itself instead, or
 - 6.5.4 take no further action with the decision.

7. Oversight of contracts and expenditure

- 7.1 Trustee Board must publish any decision to approve a contract or expenditure over the amount set by the Financial Schedule (in accordance with Rule 3 (Trustee Board), section 2.4(f)) within five clear days of that decision being made.
- 7.2 A request to call-in such a decision must be made within five clear days of the decision being publicised.
- 7.3 A request to call-in such a decision must be supported by at least one-third of the members of Senate, which shall be communicated through a system provided on the Union website.
- 7.4 Where a request to call-in a decision has been made, Senate shall, at its next meeting, consider a motion in the terms “That the decision of Trustee Board of [date] in relation to [subject matter] be annulled”.
- 7.5 If a decision is annulled, the Senate may:
- 7.5.1 refer the decision back to Trustee Board for further information,
 - 7.5.2 refer the decision back to Trustee Board for further consideration,
 - 7.5.3 make the decision itself instead, or
 - 7.5.4 take no further action with the decision.

8. Policy-making process

- 8.1 The creation of Policy will follow a two-stage process. In the first stage, any member or Zone Committee may propose an Idea.
- 8.2 An Idea sets out a proposed stance on an issue.
- 8.3 Ideas shall be submitted via the Union website, and shall be published for discussion for a period of at least one week. This does not affect the ability of an

Officer to take action where they would otherwise have the ability to do so.

8.4 Following the discussion period, the Sabbatical Team shall propose to the submitter of the Idea the most suitable way of dealing with the Idea. An Idea may be:

8.4.1 taken no further,

8.4.2 referred to a Sabbatical Officer or Student Leader to action,

8.4.3 referred to a Zone, Senate, Trustee Board or Facilities and Services Advisory Forum for discussion,

8.4.4 referred to a Zone or Senate with a suggestion to call a mass vote,

8.5 Where an Idea is discussed and agreed (by a Zone or Senate), the relevant Sabbatical Officer shall conduct such research and consultation as they consider appropriate, and propose an Action Plan at the next meeting (or another meeting, as may be agreed). The Sabbatical Officer shall do this in conjunction with such other Officers as may be agreed, or as they consider appropriate.

8.6 An Action Plan sets out a proposed course of action to be taken by the Union to achieve the Idea.

8.7 The Action Plans form the Policy of the Union and shall be owned by the body that originally passed them, or may be shared between bodies where appropriate.

8.8 Democracy Zone shall make further provision for the functioning of the Ideas and Action Plan system, which may include the format in which Ideas and Action Plans are to be submitted.

9. Review of Action Plans

9.1 Each Action Plan shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the body or bodies that own it.

9.2 The options available shall be:

9.2.1 to continue the Plan as it is,

9.2.2 to continue the Plan with minor amendments,

9.2.3 to continue the Plan with major amendments,

9.2.4 to repeal the Plan.

9.3 Where the body(s) decide to continue the plan with major amendments or to repeal the Plan, they shall first conduct such consultation as they consider appropriate.

9.4 Democracy Zone shall make further provision for the process for reviewing Plans.

10. General Provisions and Procedures for Meetings

10.1 Attendance

- (a) Full Members of the Union may attend, and contribute to any Union meeting, except those considered closed business (usually staffing and disciplinary issues, but others at the chair’s discretion).
- (b) All other members may attend any meeting as observers, but cannot play any active part in the meeting unless directly asked to by the chair.
- (c) Representatives of the public or media shall be admitted at the discretion of the Chair.

11. The Chair of Senate

11.1 The Chair will:

- (a) be responsible for publicising the date, time, location and agenda of meetings,
- (b) be responsible for the development of the agenda prior to Union Senate meetings,
- (c) chair all meetings of Union Senate and all General Meetings,
- (d) ensure the meetings are run smoothly and that they follow the Rules and By-laws,
- (e) be responsible for publicising the decisions and outcomes of Senate meetings.

11.2 The Chair is responsible for enabling Union Senate to ensure the implementation of Union policy by Sabbatical Officers, guaranteeing their accountability to Senate, and requiring Sabbatical Officers to explain their actions/inaction to Senate on specific policy issues.

11.3 During meetings, the Chair:

- (a) will step down when any matter concerning their work or any motion about them is being considered, and
- (b) will not vote unless the votes for and against are equal, in which case they shall have a casting vote.

11.4 Where the Chair is absent at any meeting, or where they have stepped down from the chair or been removed by a procedural motion, the President (or their nominee) shall take the chair.

11.5 Section 1 of Rule 6 (Student Leaders) applies to the Chair as though they were a Student Leader.

12. Transaction of business electronically

12.1 Subject to the following provisions of this section, the business of Union Senate, a

Zone Committee, a sub-committee of a Zone, Disciplinary Committee or Appeals Committee may be transacted electronically.

12.2 Electronically transacted business may be:

- 12.2.1 a ratification, where a decision or decisions have been provisionally taken by a body but the meeting at which the decision(s) was taken was not quorate.
- 12.2.2 an urgent decision, where a decision or decisions must be taken by a body before the next scheduled meeting of that body, and it is not reasonably practicable to call an earlier meeting.

12.3 Where the Chair of the body chooses to ratify a provisional decision(s), they shall:

- 12.3.1 circulate to every member of the body a summary of the decision(s) taken, including references to relevant papers where appropriate,
- 12.3.2 allow a reasonable period of time (of at least 48 hours) for the members of the body to cast their vote (which shall be to either ratify or not ratify the decisions taken together),
- 12.3.3 declare the result of the vote to the members of the body, and publically, as soon as reasonably practicable after the close of voting,
- 12.3.4 report the action taken to the next meeting of the body.

12.4 Where the Chair of the body chooses to make the urgent decision(s), they shall:

- 12.4.1 circulate to every member of the body an explanation of the decision(s) proposed to be taken, including relevant papers where appropriate,
- 12.4.2 publish an explanation of the decision(s) proposed to be taken, including relevant papers where appropriate,
- 12.4.3 allow a reasonable period of time (of at least 48 hours) for the members of the body to discuss the proposed decision(s), followed by;
- 12.4.4 allow a reasonable period of time (of at least 48 hours) for the members of the body to cast their vote(s),
- 12.4.5 declare the result of the vote(s) to the members of the body, and publically, as soon as reasonably practicable after the close of voting,
- 12.4.6 report the action taken to the next meeting of the body.