**Southampton Debating Union Constitution**

The Members of the Southampton Debating Union,

Conscious of our responsibility under the glare of history and in an attempt to adhere to our ideals and hopes for humanity;

Conscious of the ethnic, cultural, religious diversity, and desirous to build one union unified in solidarity of purpose;

Convinced that a union with respect for this diversity, and humbled by variety is prosperous for the progression of ideas and the zealous protection of the right to free speech;

With certainty of purpose in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure internal tranquillity, provide for the common defence of all members, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Southampton Debating Union.

1. Name: The name of the SDU shall be:

The Southampton Debating Union

hereinafter referred to as the “SDU”

1. **SDU type**: Political, Social Awareness and Campaigns.

(Categories: *Social / Political / Religious / Departmental / Performing Arts / International / Postgraduate / Medical*)

1. **Description of SDU**

Description-

The SDU is a forum for individuals to come to contribute and learn about a wide variety of topics by participating in or observing debates.

The SDU hosts a main practice session, as well as another event, every week.

The SDU also provides extra debating opportunities in Inter-Varsity Competitions and Opens.

Aims-

The SDU should be a forum for the University.

The SDU should put on competitions for other Universities.

The SDU should provide training to members.

The SDU should aim to engage and inform a wide audience.

The SDU should provide extra debating opportunities in Inter-Varsity Competitions and Opens.

1. **Membership**:
* Full membership is open to any registered student who is on the University of Southampton SDU register. An individual must be a full member to be eligible to compete in any competitions.
* A full member of the SDU, must have either been on the Committee of the SDU, or have attended a minimum of five events within the last year.
* Membership of the SDU shall not require the payment of a monetary membership, be that for full membership or associate membership.
* Associate or Temporary members of SUSU may become Associate members of the SDU at the committee’s discretion. Associate and Temporary members shall be entitled to full rights and privileges as members except that they may not:
1. Hold office
2. Nominate or vote in elections.
3. Speak or vote at meetings.

The Groups Officer must always be provided with an up to date copy of all member names and corresponding student numbers.

1. **Officers**: To be an Officer of the SDU an individual must be a member of the SDU. An individual shall not hold two positions at the same time. If an individual is elected for a second position they are deemed to have automatically resigned from the first. If the President relinquishes their post then, until a new President can be elected, the next in the order of succession becomes Acting President. A EGM to elect a new president must occur within two weeks of the Presidents’ resignation. The order of succession is found in Schedule 1. The Officers of the SDU shall be:

 **President:**

1. The President runs the SDU.
2. The President runs the weekly practice, and decides the motions. The committee should be consulted appropriately.
3. The President is responsible for any other tasks that do not come under the jurisdiction of other committee members.
4. The President is the chair for committee meetings and in the event of a tie possesses the deciding vote.
5. The President can delegate his powers to other Officers of the SDU. The delegation shall be revocable at the President’s discretion.
6. The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Vacation period of the University, by granting Commissions which shall expire 21 days after said period has ended

**Vice-President**

* 1. The Vice-President shall be responsible for no single task, but instead look after non-specific areas and manage the day-to-day running of the SDU.
	2. The Vice-President shall chair all meetings of the Committee where the President is unable to do so.
	3. The Vice-President may attend any sub-committee of the SDU, and will chair any sub-committees where a chair has not been specified.
	4. The Vice-President shall act as Health and Safety Officer for the SDU and Equity Officer in the event that the Equity Officer position is unfilled.

**Social Secretary**

1. The Social Secretary shall be responsible for any task pertaining to improving our engagement with our members, or increasing our membership.
2. The Social Secretary will be responsible for all intra-university advertising and publicity, they will coordinate with the Social Media and Publicity Officer in issues of internal strategy.
3. They will be responsible for any activity relating to SDU Socials, and for any other issue which may conceivably fall within their remit.
4. The Social Secretary is responsible for coordinating with the Social Media and Publicity Officer and any relevant Members with Portfolio.

**Speaker Coordination Officer**

1. The Speaker Coordination Officer will work with the President to coordinate the guest speaker programme.
2. The Speaker Coordination Officer is responsible for coordinating with any relevant Members with Portfolio.

**The Competitions Officer**

1. The Competitions Officer will be responsible for any task pertaining to improve the competitions within the SDU.
2. The Competitions Officer will both manage the competitions offered by the SDU (including the Open) and the SDU’s teams and attendance at Intervarsity Competitions. The Competitions Officer shall be responsible for taking teams to IVs.
3. The Competitions Officer is responsible for liaising with the President of the SDU, and coordinating with any relevant Members with Portfolio.

The Secretary

1. The Secretary shall keep minutes of SDU meetings which shall be available to all members of the SDU upon request and to the Societies Officer or VP Student Engagement if required.
2. It is the responsibility of Secretary to deal with the SDU email and the Committee Facebook page.
3. The Secretary shall produce and maintain a list of all members, including up to date contact details, which shall be available to SUSU.
4. The Secretary takes minutes at the Committee meetings, EGMs and the AGM.
5. The Secretary produces the agenda for meetings, in consultation with the committee.
6. The Secretary shall take the register at Committee meetings.
7. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to update the constitution when it has been amended by the procedure found in s.15(a)-(c).
8. The Secretary is the custodian of the Constitution and, along with the Societies Officer, shall retain a copy of the constitution.

**The Treasurer**

1. The Treasurer shall maintain the accounts of the SDU, which shall be available for examination at the AGM, by the Societies Officer or VP Student Engagement.
2. The Treasurer shall produce budgets for competitions and events.
3. The Treasurer shall advise the SDU on all financial matters.
4. The Treasurer shall also apply for funding from SUSU.
5. Any funds spent or applied for by the SDU must follow SUSU regulations and be authorised by the Treasurer and the President.
6. The Treasurer shall keep a record of all payments to or from the SDU.
7. The Treasurer must make sure the SDU obeys at all times the official funding policy of the SDU.
8. The Treasurer shall produce a termly budget for the SDU, which shall be subject to ratification by the committee
9. The Treasurer shall be responsible for negotiating sponsorship agreements for the SDU

The Social Media and Publicity (SMP) Officer

1. The SMP Officer promotes SDU events.
2. The SMP Officer runs the SDU's social networking activities.
3. It is the responsibility of the SMP Officer to deal with the Publicity Sub-Committee Facebook page (excluding the committee FB page).
4. The SMP Officer administers the SDU's website
5. The SMP Officer administers the SDU’s YouTube channel, and will be responsible for uploading videos to it.

**Chairperson**

a) The Chairperson shall act as a figurehead of the SDU

b) They shall advise the officers and committee on matters as directed by the President

c) The Chairperson shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the committee.

**Equity Officer**

a) The Equity Officer shall be responsible for recording and handling any equity complaints directed against the SDU or its members.

b) They shall act as Health & Safety Officer, ensuring that proper protocols are followed at SDU events.

**Member with Portfolio**

1. There shall be a maximum of N-1 Members without Portfolio, where N is the total number of officers of the SDU.
2. Portfolios shall be assigned by the President of the SDU, after discussion with the Committee as a whole.
3. **Committee**: The administration and management of the SDU shall be the responsibility of its committee. The committee shall consist of the Officers of the SDU and any Members with/without Portfolio. The Committee meetings are chaired by the President. The Secretary decides on the agenda, takes notes and also takes the register of committee members. The committee meetings must be quorum (that is 51% of the total committee). Any member of the society may attend a committee meeting as a non-voting member, if they wish to do so they should email the Secretary.
4. **Sub-Committees:** There is an Election Sub-Committee which is reactivated when an election takes place. The President may set up further subcommittees and designate their members, in consultation with the full committee. The sub-committee meetings must be quorum (that is 51% of the total sub-committee).

Elections Sub-Committee-

 The Elections Sub-Committee is reactivated upon the calling of an EGM or AGM by the procedure mentioned in Art.9 (b) or Art.9(c)(i). The Election Sub- Committee is chaired by the Secretary and they appoint the returning officer. After the election, the Sub-committee is deactivated. The purpose of the Sub- Committee is fivefold:

1. The booking of an appropriate venue for the EGM or AGM.
2. The advertising of the EGM or AGM to Union Members.
3. To decide on the running order of the EGM or AGM.
4. To appoint a returning officer, the officer must not be running in the EGM or AGM. The role will be deactivated following the conclusion of the EGM/AGM.

After the election the particular Sub-Committee for that election ceases to exist.

1. **SDU hand-over**: Upon election of a new officer, the outgoing officer is responsible for overseeing the handover of responsibilities for 2 university weeks following the elections.

The responsibilities of an outgoing officer are:

1. ***President***. The outgoing President must ensure that the e-mail list, computing file store, membership lists and contact details are transferred to the new owner. The President must produce a report noting the salient events that have occurred, this must be accessible to any member of the SDU who requests it.
2. ***Vice-President*** The outgoing Vice-President must ensure that hand over any materials they consider useful or relevant or will be of use to the incoming Vice-President. The Vice-President must produce a report noting the salient events that have occurred, this must be accessible to any member of the SDU who requests it.
3. ***Secretary***. The outgoing officer will transfer all minutes, a copy of the constitution and all other relevant documentation to the new officer.
4. ***Treasurer***. The outgoing officer must ensure that the SDU's finances areup to date and in line with SUSU regulations and that the new officer has all bank account details transferred to them, along with all relevant documentation. The Treasurer must produce a report noting the salient events that have occurred, this must be accessible to any member of the SDU who requests it.
5. ***Social Media and Publicity Officer.*** The outgoing Social Media and Publicity Officer will transfer: all templates, the passwords and all relevant information regarding any social media activities carried out in the name of the SDU, all publicity materials and the necessary contact details to the new officer.
6. ***Social Secretary.***The outgoing Social Secretary will transfer all necessary contact details for clubs, public houses and bars to the new officer.
7. ***Speaker Coordination Officer.*** The outgoing officer shall transfer all relevant documentation and contacts on to the new officer.
8. ***Competitions Officer.*** The outgoing officer shall transfer all relevant documentation and contacts on to the new officer.
9. **Meetings**:
10. Annual General Meeting (AGM)
11. The SDU AGM shall be held in the spring term.
12. Notice of the AGM shall be issued at least 10 clear days in advance and advertised to Union members.
13. Committee members shall be elected at the AGM. The Returning Officer shall invite nominations at least 10 days before the meeting.
14. Nominations must be given to the Returning Officer before the start of the meeting.
15. Each member of the Committee may be invited by the returning officer to make a short speech concerning his or her activities during the previous year. This speech must be compulsory for the Treasurer, who must also present the year's accounts for examination.
16. The Groups Officer shall be invited to the AGM.
17. Minutes of the AGM shall be made available at the start of the summer term.
18. Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)
19. An EGM can be called by the President of the SDU, or by written application to the SDU President of at least 33% of all members of the SDU, together with a written statement of the objects for which the meeting is being called.
20. A vote of no confidence in any officer of the society can be called by written application to the SDU President of at least 15 members of the SDU. The vote must take place within seven clear days of the President receiving the application.
21. At the EGM no business other than that specified in the written statement or the President's communication shall be discussed or voted upon.

1. At least 24 hours notice of an EGM shall be given. The meeting must be held within 7 days of the request being given to the SDU President.
2. The Groups Officer shall be informed of the meeting and the reason for it being called, before it is held.
3. Conduct of meetings
4. Voting: Every member of the SDU present at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote upon every voting matter. Only members are entitled to vote and proxy votes shall be accepted only under accepted circumstances as agreed upon by the Returning Officer.
5. Quorum: The quorum at all meetings, should be 51% of committee members.
6. Minutes: The Secretary shall keep minutes of all SDU meetings, and distribute a copy of all of the ones for that year at the AGM. Minutes shall also be available to the Groups Officer and the Societies Committee.
7. **Elections**:
8. Elections for Committee members shall be held at the AGM or an EGM. The Returning Officer shall invite nominations before the meeting. Nominations must be given to the Returning Officer before the meeting. The elections will be advertised to all Union members.
9. The elections must be carried out by secret ballot. The voting system to be used will be the Alternative vote. Should there be a tie, the Returning officer, who cannot normally vote, may vote in favour of one of the candidates or may declare the post unfilled.
10. If any current officer of the SDU runs for another position than it is accepted that they have resigned from their previous office.
11. If a full Committee is not elected for any reason, the President is responsible for co-opting members to fill those positions. These co-options will last only until there is an opportunity to hold an EGM by the end of the first month of the next academic year at the latest.
12. Results of the elections, together with names, student numbers and contact details of those elected, shall be submitted to the Groups Officer before the end of the summer term.
13. **Disciplinary Procedure against Committee Members:**
14. The Committee shall have the power to give notice to any Officer of the SDU, after discussion with the Groups Officer, on the grounds of bringing the SDU into disrepute by means of disciplinary proceedings.
15. The disciplinary procedure will be conducted by a meeting of the committee, with the Groups Officer invited to attend the meeting. The meeting will be structured in this way:
16. The accused shall be given a written formal notice that disciplinary procedure has been instigated against them. This shall be at least 24 hours before the meeting, and shall include a specific accusation(s).
17. The committee (including the accused) will firstly hear evidence from witnesses about their particular action. If the witness is uncomfortable giving their testimony orally they made do so in written format, this however must be submitted prior to the meeting.
18. The accused will then be given the right to reply. This right may be exercised by the accused or by a representative on behalf of the accused.
19. The committee will then hold a secret ballot, in which the accused is not allowed to vote, on whether the accused should remain a member of the committee or not. The accused will be found guilty by a vote 51% majority or greater.
20. Quorum for this vote will be 66% of committee (excluding the accused).
21. Where any Officer of the SDU is given notice by the Committee, a report of the matter shall be made to the next General Meeting of the SDU.
22. Students who are expelled from any SDU have the right of appeal to the Societies Committee.
23. Students who are expelled from the SDU have the right to request reinstatement to the SDU at the next or any subsequent AGM. Should this occur a vote of only committee members will proceed after a reading of the initial report that was produced at the time of the incident. To reinstate the student(s) a vote in favour must be 2/3 or greater.
24. **Financial matters:**
25. The Treasurer of the SDU shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the SDU, which shall be available to the Groups Officer and the Societies Committee.
26. An annual statement of the SDU accounts must be presented at the AGM by the SDU Treasurer.
27. The officers of the SDU are jointly liable for the proper management of the SDU's finances in line with SUSU policy.
28. **Disciplinary Procedure against Members**
29. The Committee shall have the power to expel any member from the SDU, after discussion with the Societies Officer, on the grounds of misconduct, or for conduct of a nature opposed to the objects of the SDU and SUSU by disciplinary proceedings.
30. The disciplinary procedure will be conducted by a meeting of the committee, with the Groups officer invited to attend the meeting. The meeting will be structured in this way:
31. The accused shall be given a written formal notice that disciplinary procedure has been instigated against them. This shall be at least 24 hours before the meeting, and shall include a specific accusation(s).
32. The committee will firstly hear evidence from witnesses about their particular action.
33. The accused will then be given the right to reply. This right may be exercised by the accused or by a representative on behalf of the accused.
34. The committee will then hold a secret ballot, in which the accused is not allowed to vote, on whether the accused should remain a member of the committee or not. The accused will be found guilty by a simple majority or greater.
35. Quorum for this vote will be 66% of committee (excluding the accused).

1. Students who are expelled from the SDU have the right to request reinstatement to the SDU at the next or any subsequent AGM. Should this occur a vote of only committee members will proceed after a reading of the initial report that was produced at the time of the incident. To reinstate the student(s) a vote in favour must be 2/3 or greater.
2. Where any member of the SDU is expelled by the Committee, a report of the matter shall be made to the next General Meeting of the SDU.
3. Students who are expelled from any SDU have the right of appeal to the Societies Committee.
4. **Affiliations**

The SDU may affiliate to an external organisation which is in line with the aims of the SDU and which provides a direct benefit to its members. Affiliations must be voted on at an EGM or AGM.

1. **Constitution Amendments:**
2. The Returning Officer may amend amendments to the constitution, to either improve them grammatically or to fit them appropriately into the constitution.
3. All members of the SDU will be given the opportunity to vote on any constitutional amendments unless alternative structure is accepted by members at an EGM or AGM.
4. Constitutional amendments only come into effect after an AGM and ratification of constitution at the first committee meeting of the new academic year unless alternative structure has been accepted by members at an EGM or AGM.
5. **Equity Policy of the SDU**

a) the underlying principle behind this policy is that no individual should feel unjustly excluded from participating in any SDU event and that all participants are expected to show respect to one another in adherence to our outlined debating standards (see point b).

b) the society’s debating standards are as follows: participants (including: speakers, audience member and chairpersons) are not to use personal attacks, particularly including insults based on characteristics such as gender, sex, sexual orientation, sexuality, disability, religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, educational background, age, appearance, class. Offensive generalisations about such characteristics are equally intolerable. Participants are asked to avoid casual approaches to potentially inflammatory topics, and instead to approach each debate topic with a respectful and polite tone. Participants are to in no way hinder or shut down the speech of other participants. Nor are they to actively call for violence outside of the hypothetical scenarios of the debate.

c) bias, disrespect or discrimination towards participants who speak English as a second language will not be tolerated.

d) these standards apply always to all participants of SDU events, attempts to undermine this equity policy will not be tolerated.

e) the debate chair and Equity officer will be in charge of interpreting and enforcing this policy at SDU events.

f) participants will be given a verbal warning from the event chair or Equity officer should they breach this policy. The event chair and Equity officer reserve the right to expel participants from the event should they continue to breach this policy after such a warning. Additionally, the event chair and Equity officer reserve the right to halt procedures until the expelled participant leaves.

g) any accusation of a breach of this policy will be reviewed by the Equity officer and potentially trigger the disciplinary procedure against those accused of breaching the policy.

h) it should be noted that all participants reserve the right to file equity complaints about SDU events (and/or participants at events) with entities outside of the SDU (namely the University and SUSU).

i) in addition to this policy, the SDU will endeavour to do the following to ensure that everyone feels welcome:

i) Directly contact and advertise SDU events to specific groups of interest and work with SUSU towards increasing SDU outreach to the broader student populace.

ii) Provide designated Welfare Area at SDU events of an obviously controversial nature. The SDU defines Welfare Area as an area out of earshot and eyesight of the event for participants who wish to leave the event for any reason.

iii) Provide Trigger Warnings on event promotions and at the start of SDU events.

iv) Directly prompt participants for a verbal acknowledgment of the Trigger Warnings.

v) Make participants aware of how to contact nightline and other support services.

1. The SDU shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the President for a redress of grievances.

**Schedule 1:**

1. The order of succession is as follows below:

President.

Vice-President.

Speaker Coordination Officer

Social Secretary

Competitions Officer

Treasurer

Secretary

SMP officer

Chairperson

Equity Officer

(Where there are only Members with Portfolio that are able to become interim President, then the particular Member with Portfolio who shall become interim President will be decided by drawing names out of a hat).

Date:

Signed: (Incoming President) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: (Returning Officer)