

**University of Southampton Students’ Union**

**Constitution of: German Society**

**Table of Contents**

# Adoption of the Constitution …………………………………………………………………………………………….…. 3 Name……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…………….3 Objects………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…3 Membership………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..…3 General Meetings…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..4 Proceedings of General Meetings…………………………………………………………………………………………..4 Officers and the Committee……………………………………………………………………………………………………6 Meetings of the Committee……………………………………………………………………………………………………7 Appointment of the Committee……………………………………………………………………………………………..8 Financial Management…………………………………………………………………………………………………….…….9 Irregularities and Saving Provisions…………………………………………………………………….………………….9 Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties…………………………………………………………………….10 Disciplinary Action………………………………………………………………………………………………………….……10 Affiliation to External Organisations…………………………………………….………………………………………11 Amendment to the Constitution………………………………………………………….……………………………….11 Dissolution………………………………………………………………………………………………….……………………….12 Interpretation………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………13

# 10 / 05 / 2018

# This is our society. It is for all the people who study German, for all the people who come from a German speaking nation, and for all those who have an interest in the German culture. I hope it will bring pleasure to all who wish to join us.

# Thank you to the wonderful Committee for making this possible. Your support has been greatly appreciated.

# 1. Adoption of the Constitution

This unincorporated association and its property shall be managed and administered in accordance with this Constitution.

# **2. Name**

The association’s name is “Southampton University Students’ Union German Society”, to be known as “German Society”, or “GerSoc”, and hereinafter ‘the Group’.

# 3. Objects

The objectives of the Group, ‘the objects’, are:

1. Provide a platform for those studying the language to practise speaking German
2. Provide a platform for those who come from a German speaking country to speak their own language
3. Offer anyone who wishes to learn more about the German culture an opportunity to join a range of activities.
4. Offer activities on a weekly basis for the majority of the academic year. The occasional week without any activity is not unexpected. There must also however be alternative social events (a minimum of 4 per year, of which at least 2 must be ‘non drinking’).

# 4. Membership

(1) Membership is open to natural persons, and is not transferable to anyone else.

(2) Membership is constituted in the following categories:

(a) Full, open only to Full Members of the Students’ Union;

(b) Associate, open to Associate and Temporary Members of the Students’ Union, and to those students of the University who have exercised their right not to be members of the Students’ Union.

(3) Only Full Members are entitled to be elected to the Committee; these are the sole privileges afforded to the Full Members over any other category of Membership. Anyone may, however, propose, discuss and vote at a General Meeting.

(4) This Group does not charge a membership fee. To become a member, it is necessary to join an email list, although most announcements and arrangements are made by social media.

(5) The Committee must keep a register of members (‘the register’) on the Student Groups Hub provided by the Students’ Union at [www.susu.org](http://www.susu.org).

(6) The Committee may only refuse an application for Membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Group to refuse the application. A vote must be taken among the current committee.

(7) Membership is terminated if:

1. the Member resigns by written notice to the Committee.
2. any sum due from the Member to the Group is not paid in full within three months of it falling due.
3. a Member ceases to be qualified for their category of Membership.
4. membership is revoked by a resolution of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee, in accordance with Clause 13, ‘Disciplinary Action’.

# 5. General Meetings

(1) The General Meeting constitutes the Group’s highest decision-making body, subject to the provisions of this Constitution.

(2) The Group must hold one Annual General Meeting (AGM) in each academic year and not more than fifteen months may elapse between successive AGMs.

(3) A General Meeting that is not an Annual General Meeting is called an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).

(4) The Committee may call an Extraordinary General Meeting at any time.

(5) The Committee must call an Extraordinary General Meeting if requested to do so in writing by at least five Full Members of the Group.

(a) The Members’ written request must state a complete agenda for the EGM.

(b) If the Committee do not hold an EGM within five days of their receipt of the Members’ written request, the Members may proceed to hold an EGM in accordance with Clause 6, ‘Proceedings of General Meetings’.

(6) Only one AGM may be held per year. The number of EGMs is not limited.

(7) Minutes must be recorded in the form of the agenda and the outcome(s) of the   
 meeting

# 6. Proceedings of General Meetings

(1) Notice:

(a) The minimum period of notice required to hold an Annual General Meeting is seven days. The minimum period of notice required to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting is three days.

(b) The notice must specify the date, time and place of the General Meeting, and an agenda for the General Meeting.

(c) If the General Meeting is to be an AGM, the notice must say so, and must invite nominations in accordance with Clause 9, ‘Appointment of the Committee’.

(d) Notice must be given to all Members and to the Committee.

(2) Chairing:

(a) General Meetings shall usually be chaired by the person who has been elected   
 as President.

(b) If there is no such person or he or she is not present within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the General Meeting, the Full Members present must elect one of their number to chair.

(3) Associate Members may speak at General Meetings with the permission of the meeting.

(4) Voting:

(a) Every Full Member present at a General Meeting, with the exception of the Chair, shall be entitled to one vote upon every voting matter. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

(b) Decisions may only be made by at least a simple majority of votes at a quorate General Meeting.

(c) All voting shall be by a show of hands or secret ballot, at the discretion of the Chair. To ensure neutrality, the votes must be counted by two or more persons. All votes must be made anonymously.

(d) There shall be no absentee voting.

(e) When the Meeting Body is choosing a candidate, Members must always have the option to ‘Re-Open Nominations’ (R.O.N.), if they feel none of the candidates represent their interests and the interest of the Group.

(f) People may campaign by proxy if absent. A speech summarising a candidate’s   
manifesto must be sent in advance and read out in their absence during the   
General Meeting. They still may not vote in absence.

(5) Minutes:

(a) Minutes must be taken of all proceedings at a General Meeting, including the agenda, the decisions made and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. It must also include the date and time of the Meeting.

(b) Minutes of a General Meeting shall be made available to all Members within seven days.

(c) Minutes must always include a list of Committee members present and be   
 signed by at least two Members of the incumbent Committee.

(7) Reports:

(a) If the General Meeting is an AGM, the Chair may invite any of the Committee to offer a report of their activities whilst in office.

(b) The Treasurer must present the Group’s accounts to the Members at the AGM.

(8) Resolutions:

(a) Any Full Member may propose a resolution to be discussed and voted upon at a General Meeting.

# 7. Officers and the Committee

(1) The Group and its property shall be administered and managed by a Committee comprising the officers appointed in accordance with Clause 9, ‘Appointment of the Committee’.

(2) The Group shall have the following officers:

(a) President. The President shall oversee the organisation and management of the Group and the Committee as a whole; ensure the officers’ accountability to Members, the Committee, and the Students’ Union, and represent the Group to all external interests.

(b) Vice President. The Vice President shall oversee the running of the society, alongside the President, and aid them where necessary in negotiating with SUSU and other societies or organisations. They will also participate in the management of other events.

(c) Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee the financing of the Group, set the Group's budget, and maintain the accounts of the Group.

(d) Events Secretary. The Events Secretary shall provide social and cultural pursuits for the Group’s Members on a large scale, such as Balls, sojourns, and theatre trips. He or she shall also support, and be supported by, the Social Secretary in the promotion and maintenance of the overall Group ethos.

(e) Social Secretary. The Social Secretary shall provide social and cultural pursuits for the Group’s Members on a smaller scale, such as nights out. He or she shall also support, and be supported by, the Events Secretary in the promotion and maintenance of the overall Group ethos.

(f) Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer shall provide welfare pursuits for the Group’s Members, and offer academic advice in conjunction with the course representatives of the Students’ Union.

(g) Publicity Officer. The Publicity Officer shall communicate the Group’s activities to Members and the Students’ Union, and lead on the organisation of the Group’s democratic processes.

(h) Sports Secretary. The Sports Secretary shall provide athletic pursuits for the Group’s Members, including the organisation of the intra-mural sports teams and their training.

(3) No one may be appointed a member of the Committee if he or she has been disqualified from becoming a member of the Committee under the provisions of Clause 13, ‘Disciplinary Action’.

(4) The number of the Committee must not be less than three, though is not subject to any maximum. There must always be:

(a) a President;

(b) a Vice President

(c) a (Social) Secretary

(5) An officer or ordinary member of the Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

(a) ceases to be a Full Member of the Group.

(b) resigns by notice to the Group, or

(c) is removed from office by a resolution of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee, in accordance with Clause 13, ‘Disciplinary Action’.

(d) Any member of the committee may help others with their roles. If any Member is however not fulfilling their basic roles as per this constitution, they may be removed from office following an EGM, wherein 3 cases must be presented where this member has failed to do their duty. The committee must then open nominations for replacement candidates.

(d) A warning must be given to those who are at risk of losing their committee position before any disciplinary action is taken.

# 8. Meetings of the Committee

(1) The Committee may regulate their proceedings as they think fit, subject to the provisions of this Clause.

(2) Any member of the Committee may request the Secretary to call a Meeting of the Committee.

(3) The Secretary must call a Meeting of the Committee if requested to do so by a member of the Committee.

(4) Meetings of the Committee shall usually be chaired by the person who has been elected as President.

(5) The quorum for a Meeting of the Committee shall be three members of the Committee.

(6) No decision may be made by a Meeting of the Committee unless a quorum is present at the time the decision is made.

(7) Every member of the Committee, with the exception of the Chair, shall be entitled to one deliberative vote upon every voting matter. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

(8) Decisions may only be made by at least a simple majority of votes at a quorate Meeting of the Committee.

(9) In the case of a Committee Meeting, absentee voting may be allowed as per the will of the Committee. The matter of absentee voting must, however, be clear before any other matters are discussed.

(10) Minutes should be taken of all proceedings pertaining to the running of the society or other democratic issues at a Meeting of the Committee, including the decisions made, and a record of those in attendance.

# 9. Appointment of the Committee

(1) The Full Members of the Group in General Meeting shall appoint the officers and ordinary members of the Committee by election.

(a) Elections for the Committee shall be held at an Annual General Meeting. By-elections for vacant offices shall be held at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

(b) A First-Past-The-Post system shall be used for all elections.

(c) In all elections Re-Open Nominations, ‘RON’, shall be a candidate. An election yielding a result of RON shall be re-run as a by-election.

(2) The count for elections shall be conducted publicly by the Chair of the General Meeting and the Secretary, who must do so accurately. Should the Members in General Meeting be dissatisfied with the accuracy of the count, they may resolve as a Point of Order to have the election re-counted or, if they remain dissatisfied, re-run as a by-election.

(3) (a) A member of the Committee shall assume office with effect from the conclusion of the Extraordinary General Meeting of his or her appointment.

(b) A member of the Committee shall retire with effect from the conclusion of the academic year, but shall be eligible for re-election at the AGM. The successive Committee shall assume office on the first day of the next academic year. Should activities run into holiday times, it should be the responsibility of the Committee who organised said activities to ensure they are executed sufficiently.

(4) The Committee must update their committee information on the Student Groups Hub provided by the Students’ Union at [www.susu.org](http://www.susu.org) (or failing that inform the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Officer) within seven days.

(5) A retiring member of the Committee must transfer all relevant information and documentation to his or her newly-elected counterpart, or to the President, within twenty one days.

# 10. Financial Management

(1) The Committee are jointly liable for the proper management of the Group’s finances.

(2) The income and property of the Group must be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects.

(3) The members of the Committee are entitled to be reimbursed from the property of the Group or may pay out of such property only for reasonable expenses properly incurred by him or her when acting on behalf of the Group. This must be a written request with evidence (receipt or invoice).

(4) The accounts of the Group, as maintained by the Treasurer, must be made available to the Students’ Union upon request.

(5) The Group may spend money on organising events or on articles helpful to developing the society. Money should not be spend on perishables (food and drink), though this is up to the discretion of the incumbent committee.

(6) The expenses of the Group must never exceed £1000 during the academic year. There should be more money in the account at the end of the year than there was at the start (though this is not always possible).

# 11. Irregularities and Saving Provisions

(1) Subject to sub-clause (2) of this Clause, all acts done by a Meeting of the Committee shall be valid notwithstanding the participation in any vote of a member of the Committee:

(a) who was disqualified from holding office;

(b) who had previously retired or who had been obliged by this Constitution to vacate office;

(c) who was not entitled to vote on the matter, whether by reason of a conflict of interests or otherwise.

(2) Sub-clause (1) of this Clause does not permit a member of the Committee to keep any benefit that may be conferred upon him or her by a resolution of the Committee if the resolution would otherwise have been void, or if the Committee has not complied with Clause 12, ‘Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties’.

(3) The Members in General Meeting may only invalidate, as a Point of Order, a resolution or act of:

(a) the Committee;

(b) the Members in General Meeting;

if it may be demonstrated that a procedural defect in the same has materially prejudiced a Member of the Group.

# 12. Conflicts of Interests and Conflicts of Loyalties

(1) A member of the Committee must:

(a) declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect, which he or she has in any decisions of a Meeting of the Committee or in any transaction or arrangement entered into by the Group which has not been previously declared;

(b) absent himself or herself from any discussions of the Committee in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between his or her duty to act solely in the interests of the Group and any personal interest, including but not limited to any personal financial interest.

(2) Any member of the Committee absenting himself or herself from any discussions in accordance with this Clause must not vote or be counted as part of the quorum in any decision of the Committee on the matter.

(3) It is expected that the members of the committee attend each Group event. If unavailable, they should provide written notice, or following the event, a written explanation. If any member is absent from two separate events without volunteering an explanation, they shall be issued a warning from the Committee. Should this happen a third time, they should expect disciplinary action (removal from office).

# 13. Disciplinary Action

(1) Disciplinary action may be taken against any Member of the Group as a consequence of conduct:

(a) detrimental to the reputation of the Group or the Students’ Union.

(b) opposed to the objects of the Group (see clause 2) or the Students’ Union.

(c) in contravention of any provision of this Constitution.

(2) Disciplinary action that may be taken against any Member may be, but is not limited to:

(a) issue of a formal written warning.

(b) partial or total ban from certain Group activities.

(c) disqualification from becoming a member of the Committee.

(d) removal of a member of the Committee from office.

(e) temporary or permanent revocation of Membership.

(f) referral of the complaint to the Students’ Union’s Disciplinary Committee.

(3) It is the right of the subject of the complaint to choose to have the disciplinary matter heard by either the Members in General Meeting, or a Meeting of the Committee. Either shall have the power to take disciplinary action, including but not limited to those measures set out in paragraphs (a) – (f) inclusive in sub-clause (2) of this Clause.

(4) Any disciplinary hearing must be conducted in an impartial, balanced, and fair manner, considering all representations on the matter.

(5) All disciplinary action must be subject to prior discussion with the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Officer or Head of the Education Zone.

(6) Members subject to disciplinary action have the right of appeal to the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Committee.

(7) A full report of all disciplinary action taken by the Group in the previous year must be presented at the AGM.

# 14. Affiliation to External Organisations

(1) The Group may only become an affiliate of an external organisation if:

(a) the aims of that organisation are in line with those of the Group;

(b) the Members derive a direct benefit from the affiliation;

(c) no Policy of the Students’ Union is breached by the affiliation;

(d) a resolution to affiliate is passed by the Members in General Meeting.

(2) The Group’s affiliation to an external organisation shall immediately lapse:

(a) at the conclusion of each Annual General Meeting after affiliation, unless the Members in General Meeting resolve to re-affiliate at each AGM in accordance with sub-clause (1) of this Clause.

(b) if a resolution to disaffiliate is passed by the Members in General Meeting.

(3) All external affiliations and disaffiliations must be reported to the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Committee within seven days.

(4) The Students’ Union is not an external organisation for the purposes of this Clause.

# 15. Amendment to the Constitution

(1) The Group may amend any provision contained in this Constitution provided that:

(a) amendments do not:

(i) alter the objects in such a way that undermines or works against the previous objects of the Group;

(ii) retrospectively invalidate any prior act of the Members in General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee;

(b) a resolution to amend a provision of this Constitution is passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the Committee.

(c) a copy of the resolution amending this Constitution is sent to the Students’ Union within seven days of it being passed;

(d) the resolution is ratified by the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Committee.

(2) The interpretation of this Constitution shall be with the Committee, except that during a General Meeting or a Meeting of the Committee the Chair shall have this responsibility. The Members in General Meeting may resolve to revise any interpretation made by the Committee or a Chair as a Point of Order.

(3) The provisions of this Constitution shall be subordinate to those of the Articles, Rules, By-Laws and Policies of the Students’ Union.

(4) The Committee and the Students’ Union shall retain a copy of this Constitution, which the Committee must make available to Members upon request.

# 16. Dissolution

(1) If the Members resolve to dissolve the Group, the Committee will remain in office and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Group in accordance with this Clause.

(2) A resolution to dissolve the Group must be passed by at least a two-thirds majority of the Full Members present at a General Meeting;

(3) The Committee must collect in all the assets of the Group and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Group.

(4) The Committee must apply any remaining property or money:

(a) directly for the objects;

(b) by transfer to any Group or Societies for purposes the same as or similar to the Group;

(c) in such other manner as the Students’ Union’s Student Groups Committee may approve in writing in advance.

(5) The Members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the Group specifying the manner in which the Committee are to apply the remaining property or assets of the Group. The Committee must comply with such a resolution if it is consistent with the provisions of this Clause.

(6) In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Group be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Group.

(7) The Committee must ensure the register and all other data held by the Group are securely destroyed upon the dissolution of the Group.

(8) The Committee must notify the Students’ Union within seven days that the Group has been dissolved. If the Committee are obliged to send the Group’s accounts to the Students’ Union for the accounting period which ended before its dissolution, they must send the Students’ Union the Group’s final accounts.

# 17. Interpretation

In this Constitution:

(1) ‘The University’ means ‘the University of Southampton’.

(a) ‘University term’ and ‘academic year’ have the definitions set out in the University Calendar and Almanac.

(2) ‘Financial benefit’ means a benefit, direct or indirect, which is either money or has a monetary value.

(3) ‘The Students’ Union’ means ‘The University of Southampton Students’ Union’, trading as ‘Union Southampton’.

(a) ‘Articles’, or ‘Articles of the Students’ Union’ mean the Students’ Union’s Articles of Association. ‘Rules’ and ‘Policies’ have the definitions set out in the Articles. ‘By-Laws’ has the definition set out in the Rules.

(4) ‘Drinking’ and ‘non drinking’ socials refer to whether or not the event revolves around or   
 involves the consumption of alcohol

(5) ‘SUSU’ refers to the Southampton University Student’s Union.

# 18.

# 18. Declaration

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| --- | --- |
| The Members of the Group in General Meeting Adopted this Constitution: | |
|  | Date |
| President |
| Secretary |
|  | |
| The Students’ Union Approved this Constitution: | |
|  | Date |
| Student Groups Officer |