

SUSU Rules

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These Rules should be read in conjunction with the Guidance documents issued by SUSU including in relation to Elections and Clubs and Societies as well as the Policy Book held by Student Council. All these documents and other sources of information can be found on the SUSU website.

The Rules are reviewed every year by Student Council and the SUSU Representation Team. Any proposed changes need to be approved by the AGM.

Rule 1 – Democratic Framework

As well as elections, there are three main ways that students can be part of democratic decision making in SUSU. Each of them has authority over its lower levels, subject to the Trustee Board exercising a right of veto as described in the Articles.

General Meetings:

Meetings which all Full Members can attend and participate in.

The role of **General Meetings** is to transact formal business in accordance with company law and the Articles, approve changes to the Rules and any other matters requiring a general meeting of members.

The Annual General Meeting will be held as part of a scheduled Student Council meeting every year. Quoracy for the AGM will be the same as quoracy for Student Council. Simple majority voting will apply to all votes at an AGM.

The Annual General Meeting will receive SUSU's Annual Accounts and Report of the Trustees.

A list of affiliations to external organisations will be included within the Annual Accounts and Report of the Trustees for approval.

Decisions of a General Meeting will take precedence over those of other SUSU meetings, except in the case of Trustee Board exercising its veto as described in the Articles.

Student Council:

A body consisting of elected student representatives as outlined in Rule 3.

The role of **Student Council** is to be responsible for overseeing the policy and political direction of SUSU, including having oversight of the Sabbatical Officers as the lead student representatives.

All full members are allowed to attend and submit ideas to Student Council meetings.

All Student Votes (ASV):

The role of All Student Votes is to mandate action by SUSU or to determine student views.

An All Student Vote can be called by Student Council or the SUSU Executive Team.

An All Student Vote will use the 'First Past the Post' voting system in the case of a yes/no question, or the Single (Alternative) Transferable Vote system in the case of a question with

multiple answers, or any other electoral system deemed appropriate by the SUSU Representation Team.

For each All Student Vote, SUSU will notify all students of the ASV and how to vote.

The quorum for an All Student Vote will be 10% of the whole student body.

Other ways for students to make change:

Any student can also make change by means of the following options, all of which may lead to SUSU support for ideas and initiatives:

- Submitting a change suggestion via the SUSU website. This can be submitted anonymously and requires the Sabbatical Officers to consider the suggestion, investigate as appropriate and publish a response.
- Submitting a petition via the SUSU website. If the petition receives at least 500 signatures, SUSU must call an extra Council meeting to discuss the petition. If the petition is calling for an All Student Vote on the continued affiliation to an external organisation, the Representation Team will proceed to an All Student Vote as soon as the petition is successful. As part of this process, the Representation Team will ensure the arguments in favour and against the proposal are presented to students.
- Attending Student Council and submitting a policy idea for consideration (see Rule 3 for details).
- Contacting a Sabbatical Officer directly.

Union Executive Bodies

Students are also represented on the two executive bodies in SUSU, each of which holds authority to take decisions within its remit.

Trustee Board: The body responsible for oversight of the high-level management and administration of SUSU as set out in the Articles. Membership of the Trustee Board includes Sabbatical Officers, directly elected Student Trustees as well as non-student External Trustees. Full details of the Trustee Board can be found in the SUSU Articles.

SUSU Executive Team: The day-to-day leadership body responsible for SUSU's collective representation and advocacy function.

- a. The SUSU Executive Team will be responsible for:
 - All public statements made by SUSU
 - Protecting the reputation of SUSU
 - The collective representation, campaigning and advocacy work of SUSU
 - The interpretation and implementation of union policy
 - Any other duties set out in these Rules
- b. Its membership will consist of: the Sabbatical Officers, the SUSU Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team
- c. The SUSU Executive Team will meet at least once every month

Rule 2 – Membership of SUSU

A student is automatically a **Full Member** of SUSU if:

1. They are currently enrolled on a credit-bearing programme of study being delivered in person by the University of Southampton in the UK.
2. They are normally based in the UK and on campus but are absent from the University in fulfilment of a year abroad requirement, or undertaking an industrial or placement year.
3. They are elected as a Sabbatical Officer of SUSU. Sabbatical Officers are Full Members for the duration of their term of office.

Students who are suspended, in nominal registration or externally repeating are not considered full members of SUSU.

Full Members of SUSU enjoy the following rights and privileges:

- To have access to, and use of, facilities provided by SUSU for its members.
- To vote in Elections, All Student Votes and to attend and participate in General Meetings and other meetings of SUSU, subject to any eligibility criteria laid out in Rule 4, Rule 5 and in Elections guidance.
- To become members of affiliated clubs and societies, and to take part in events, initiatives and campaigns.
- To hold office in an affiliated student club or society (apart from Sabbatical Officers).
- To nominate for and hold office as a Sabbatical Officer, member of the Student Council and all other elected roles of SUSU, subject to any eligibility criteria laid out in Rule 4, Rule 5 and in Elections guidance.

The Trustee Board may at their absolute discretion agree additional categories of membership including any membership costs, rights and privileges.

Additional categories of membership

Category	Applies To	Cost	Duration	Includes
Full (overseas only)	All students at UoS overseas campuses on a credit-bearing course	N/A Automatic membership	Length of study	Local representation Limited access to Advice Centre Online access where relevant to clubs and societies and events Local association
Associate (online only)	All Southampton Online students All UoS students on a credit-bearing distance learning course	N/A Automatic membership	Length of study	Local representation Limited access to Advice Centre Online access where relevant to clubs and societies and events
Associate (SUSU Staff)	All permanent SUSU staff	N/A Automatic membership	Length of employment at SUSU	Can apply for membership of affiliated clubs and societies (may not hold office in a club or society)
Associate (Clubs & Socs)	UoS Alumni UoS Staff UoS Lifelong Learning students OnCampus students ULaw students Solent University students Authorised coaches and other trainers Multi-HEI students SUSU External Trustees	£25 per academic year	Current academic year	Can apply for membership of affiliated clubs and societies (may not hold office in a club or society) Can purchase tickets for and attend SUSU events Can use SUSU facilities on Highfield campus
Associate (opted out)	A student that has exercised their right to opt-out of Full Membership	N/A	Duration of study or until the student wishes to change their decision	Can use SUSU facilities including the Advice Centre Can apply for membership of affiliated clubs and societies (may not hold office in a club or society) Can purchase tickets for and attend SUSU events

Membership is not transferable.

The rights of Full Members are subject to all relevant rules and regulations of the University.

Upon enrolment, relevant students will automatically be registered as Full Members unless they inform studenthub@soton.ac.uk in writing within four weeks of their initial enrolment of their wish to opt out of membership.

A student who exercises their right to opt out will not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services (or otherwise) by reason of having done so. If a student believes that they have been unfairly disadvantaged, they can invoke the complaints procedure, as set out in Rule 6.

Rule 3 – Student Council

The role of the **Student Council** is to be responsible for overseeing the policy and political direction of SUSU, including having oversight of the Sabbatical Officers as lead student representatives. Policy is defined as statements that set out the collective beliefs of the students of the University on matters that concern them.

It does this by:

- Receiving and approving plans from Sabbatical Officers at the first meeting of each academic year
- Monitoring the performance of Sabbatical Officers, including against their plans and the role descriptions contained in Rule 4, and taking appropriate action as necessary, including the applying of any reasonable sanctions up to and including the ability to recommend the removal of a Sabbatical Officer
- Ensuring that the Sabbatical Officers are implementing decisions and abiding by Policy
- Deciding union policy and maintaining a permanent online Policy book that can be updated and amended from time to time
- Proposing changes to the Rules to be approved at the AGM
- Making recommendations to the SUSU Executive Team following approval of an idea at Student Council

Membership

The membership of the Student Council consists of:

- The five Sabbatical Officers.
- Chair of Student Council
- 10 elected officers to be representative of all areas
- 10 directly elected students

Attendance

SUSU Chief Executive (or nominee) attends all Student Council meetings to support and advise as needed but is not a voting member.

Any full member of SUSU may attend any Student Council meeting unless the Chair of Council advises that a meeting is to be for Councillors only (this will generally only apply to disciplinary or other particularly sensitive or confidential matters).

Creating Policy

Policy must not be in breach of the SUSU values, Rules, Articles, Code of Conduct or any legislation. Policy may set a general direction and priorities for SUSU but may not attempt to change day-to-day operational management.

To create union policy any student, elected officer, Councillor or Sabbatical Officer may bring an idea to Student Council. The idea may be submitted in advance via the SUSU website or brought to the meeting. If an idea is submitted after the normal deadline of two weeks before the meeting, it will be at the discretion of the Chair to decide whether the idea will be accepted.

The Chair of Council will, with the support of the Representation team, decide whether the idea should be debated at the Student Council meeting, whether there should first be a policy inquiry or whether the idea is unsuitable to become policy, in which case the student will be directed to the SUSU Representation team to explore other options.

If the idea is contained in a petition via the SUSU website which has received at least 500 signatures, Council **must** discuss it.

The Chair may also call for a policy inquiry after the idea has been debated in a Student Council meeting but before a vote to approve, to ensure Councillors are fully informed and confident that the proposed policy is both appropriate and representative of student views. In this case, the idea will return to Council after the policy inquiry has concluded.

Policy Inquiry

If a policy inquiry is called, the Chair will notify SUSU's Chief Executive who will nominate a member of SUSU staff to conduct the inquiry.

The inquiry will normally consist of a combination of the following:

- Desk-based research
- Analysis of existing research and insight
- Focus groups and other in-person consultation

The policy inquiry should make evidence-based recommendations to Council.

To ascertain student views, the SUSU Executive Team or Student Council may call an All Student Vote (as defined in Rule 1).

Voting

Meeting quoracy is set at one half of filled Councillor roles, to include at least two Sabbatical Officers, two elected officers and two student Councillors. The Chair or nominee must also be

present for the meeting to be quorate. If the Chair is unable to nominate a deputy, Union President will act as deputy.

All voting is by show of hands, unless online voting has been approved.

Approval is by simple majority voting other than for votes to recommend removal of a Sabbatical Officer, where two thirds of eligible Councillors must vote in favour.

The Chair may not vote unless a casting vote is required.

The Sabbatical Officers have full voting rights other than when voting on Sabbatical Officer reports and plans or on recommendations to remove a Sabbatical Officer, in which case they are required to abstain from voting.

Procedures

There will normally be five meetings a year, one of which will include the AGM.

Emergency, additional Council meetings may be called by the Chair of Council or the SUSU Executive Team. Any additional meetings will only discuss the matter for which they were called and normal quoracy and voting procedures will apply.

The following timetable will apply to Student Council meetings:

Meeting date, time and venue published (ordinary meeting)	Three weeks before meeting date
Meeting date, time and venue published (extraordinary or emergency meeting)	Three days before meeting date
Sabbatical Officer papers Policy ideas to be submitted in advance	Submitted two weeks before meeting date
Agenda and paper published	One week before meeting date
Emergency/urgent policy ideas or debates	May be submitted at any point up to and including the start of the meeting. Chair has discretion whether to accept.
Draft minutes published, including outcome of votes	One week after the meeting. Overall voting numbers rather than individual votes to be published.

All members of Student Council are expected to attend all meetings. If they are unable to do so, they should send apologies to the Chair and Representation Team in advance of the meeting, including the reason for their absence. If a Councillor fails to send apologies for absence in advance (unless there are exceptional circumstances), the Chair will issue a warning to be filed with Representation. If the Councillor misses a second meeting without good reason and without sending apologies, the Chair may require them to resign from their role.

All meetings will normally be in person and all voting will normally be by show of hands. The Chair has discretion to allow hybrid meetings and voting in exceptional circumstances. Online voting will only normally be used to ratify a decision taken by a meeting that was not quorate or to take an urgent decision where it is not reasonably practicable to call an in person meeting. The results of all votes, including when conducted online, must be published on the SUSU website.

If it is not possible to call a meeting of Student Council, including one that is either hybrid or fully online, and a decision is required as a matter of urgency on the advice of the Representation Team, the Chair may take Chair's Action and reach a decision on behalf of Student Council. They must then report this decision to the next scheduled meeting of Council.

Decisions made by Student Council in accordance with this rule, and acting within their powers, may only be overturned by a General Meeting, Trustee Board or All Student Vote.

Sabbatical Officers – Sanctions

If Student Council is not satisfied with the performance of a Sabbatical Officer on one or more of the following grounds, they may decide to consider imposing sanctions on the Officer.

1. The Sabbatical Officer has failed to produce a satisfactory Plan (at the first meeting) or progress report (at subsequent meetings) and there is no acceptable reason or justification for this
2. The Sabbatical Officer has failed to attend Council or to meet Council's reasonable requests for updates or to satisfy initial sanctions imposed and there is no acceptable reason or justification for this
3. A complaint has been received about the Sabbatical Officer that the Chief Executive has advised is about political performance rather than appropriate for the union's HR procedures. Complaints about political performance will relate to the duties covered in Rule 4

The following procedure should be followed:

If any of the grounds above apply, Chair of Council (supported by the SUSU Chief Executive) may require Council to discuss and vote on sanctions. Any sanctions should be proportionate, and Council should choose the lowest appropriate sanction in each case.

A simple majority of Councillors must vote in favour of sanctions up to the final sanction of recommending removal. For the final sanction, two-thirds of Councillors must be in favour and the recommendation must be approved by the Chief Executive before being referred to Trustee Board. All Council meetings must be quorate.

Sanctions List

- Requirement for regular progress reports to Council on specific areas of work
- Requirement to show attendance at or attempts to attend specified meetings, committee meetings or campuses
- Requirement to show active engagement with specified groups of students
- Other reasonable specific performance requirements, including making progress on Sabbatical Plan commitments or against the role description
- Where the Sabbatical Officer has made a commitment in their manifesto or Sabbatical Plan and are now reporting they are unable to deliver it, Council may choose to call a policy enquiry to establish the feasibility of delivery and if appropriate, require specific delivery of the original commitment
- Any other sanction short of removal from office (subject to approval by the SUSU Chief Executive)
- Removal from office

Removal of a Sabbatical Officer

In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Council (supported by the SUSU Chief Executive) may feel that a Sabbatical Officer has repeatedly failed to respond to the sanctions imposed with no reasonable explanation or that a complaint received is so serious that the Sabbatical Officer is unable to carry out their role. Council may wish in these circumstances to recommend removing the Sabbatical Officer; this recommendation then needs to be accepted by the SUSU Trustee Board. Removing a Sabbatical Officer is an extremely serious step that should always be the last resort. The following steps must be taken:

1. Discussion in a quorate meeting of Council, including the Sabbatical Officer being able to present their case
2. All Councillors must declare any conflict of interest and any Councillors who have a conflict may take part in the meeting but not take part in the vote. The Sabbatical Councillors have an inherent conflict of interest and so may likewise take part in the discussion but may not vote.
3. Two-thirds of eligible Student Councillors present at the quorate meeting must vote in favour.

4. Chair of Council must refer a vote to recommend removal to the Chief Executive for approval. Approval will only be refused if there are legal or HR reasons for the refusal or if the Chief Executive considers that due process has not been followed.
5. Once approval has been received, the Chair of Council will write to the Chair of the Trustee Board asking for approval of the recommendation that the Sabbatical Officer should be removed from office.
6. If the Trustee Board approve this recommendation, the Sabbatical Officer's employment will be terminated and they will also be removed as a Trustee of SUSU.

Rule 4 – Sabbatical Officers

Full members elect Sabbatical Officers whose paid, full time role is to lead different areas of work and hold political responsibility for different aspects of SUSU. This Rule defines their roles and duties.

In order to run for election as a Sabbatical Officer, students must be a full member of SUSU as defined by Rule 2, and eligible to work in the UK.

There are five Sabbatical Officers:

- Union President
- Vice President Education
- Vice President Inclusion
- Vice President Communities
- Vice President Sports

Sabbatical Officers normally hold office from 1 July for one year and may only serve a maximum of two terms of paid office.

Their generic duties are:

1. To act as the public face of SUSU.
2. To conduct their work in a professional manner and uphold the reputation of SUSU.
3. To represent and promote students and SUSU to the University and beyond.
4. To be accountable to the Student Council, and through Student Council the wider student body, reporting to Student Council meetings on their activity and achievements.
5. To monitor key issues and problems affecting the student population, to update staff, and ensure SUSU is acting on the issues raised.
6. To encourage students to raise issues and opinions and to act as their advocate locally, nationally, and internationally.
7. To promote and fully engage with SUSU elections and democracy.
8. To represent students on University boards, committees and working groups as required.
9. To plan, promote, and run campaigns and initiatives on key student issues.
10. To represent all students, including disadvantaged and minority groups, in all areas of student life, ensuring that they are able to play as full a role as they wish without fear of harassment or discrimination.
11. To maintain contact with students by engaging with them face to face and online, ensuring that insight from this contact informs the work of SUSU.

12. To spend time at the various sites of the University.
13. To take a coordinating lead on issues relevant to their roles whilst being careful to involve other Sabbatical Officers and members of the SUSU Executive Team, Student Council and others as appropriate.
14. To attend and participate in training in their areas of work.
15. To work effectively with relevant SUSU staff, contributing positively to SUSU events, projects and meetings.
16. To work effectively with and support elected student volunteers.
17. To uphold and abide by the Articles of Association, all SUSU policies and relevant legislation.
18. Where appointed by the Trustee Board to do so: to be Trustees of SUSU and be directors of any subsidiary companies of SUSU.
19. To be SUSU employees for the duration of their term in office.
20. To provide an effective handover to the incoming Sabbatical Officer team.
21. To undertake any other duties as required by the needs of the post.

No person who holds the position of Sabbatical Officer may hold any other office in SUSU apart from Sabbatical Trustee.

A Sabbatical Officer may be a member of but not hold an elected role within a club or society.

In the case of a Sabbatical Officer leaving their role before the end of the term of office, the SUSU Chief Executive will ensure the vacancy is handled appropriately.

Role descriptions for each Sabbatical Officer role can be found on the SUSU website.

Rule 5 – Elections

SUSU is a democratic organisation, and so its elections are of paramount importance. To this end, SUSU aims to conduct all elections in a spirit of fairness and friendliness, in line with elections guidance and to ensure all eligible students at the University have the opportunity to participate fully.

All Central Elections (excludes club and society elections)

All elections will have the following stages:

- a. notice given and invitation to nominate
- b. nominations received and approved
- c. candidate briefing
- d. campaigning
- e. voting and
- f. the count and declaration

Elections will be held by cross-campus ballot, where voting is electronically and/or through ballot boxes.

All SUSU elections will use the Single (Alternative) Transferable Vote system.

Re-open nominations (RON) will automatically be a candidate in all elections other than for course reps.

If an election needs to be re-run because of a victory by RON, candidates from the original election may run again.

In the event of a tie between two candidates, neither of which is RON, the Returning Officer may authorise a decision by means of a coin toss.

Guidance will be produced by the SUSU Representation team for each election.

The Returning Officer will be responsible for considering all complaints in line with the elections guidance, including regarding the conduct of candidates and their supporters. As members remain subject to SUSU's Code of Conduct and the University's relevant conduct rules, the Returning Officer may refer issues into those procedures at their absolute discretion.

Restrictions on eligibility to run in elections

The major SUSU offices are elected by a secret ballot of all full members, and only full members are eligible to nominate and vote. However, voting and nominations for some roles are restricted. For example, nominations and voting for the role of School President may be restricted to students in that School. In addition the following restrictions apply:

- Students may not stand for more than one Sabbatical Officer role in the same election.
- A Sabbatical Officer may not concurrently hold any other elected role (other than that of Sabbatical Trustee).
- A Student Trustee may not hold any other elected role except course rep or club or society committee member (and may not be employed by SUSU).
- An ordinary Student Councillor may not hold any other elected role except course representative or committee member.
- Students are only permitted to serve a maximum of two terms of office within SUSU that are either paid roles or Student Trustee.
- Students may not hold more than one academic rep role at the same time.

Sabbatical Officer Elections

The Returning Officer will be a competent individual external to SUSU, and the Deputy Returning Officer will be the SUSU Chief Executive or their nominee.

The Deputy Returning Officer will be responsible for running the elections on a day-to-day basis.

The Returning Officer will be solely responsible for interpreting all election procedures referred to them by the Deputy Returning Officer. The Returning Officer may impose sanctions in line with elections guidance, up to and including the removal of a candidate in the elections if the candidate has committed a sufficiently serious breach of election guidance or rules and/or has repeatedly breached the guidance and rules. This decision will only be made after the Returning Officer has fully investigated the complaint and is satisfied that the sanction of removal is proportionate.

The Returning Officer will prepare a report following Sabbatical elections for presentation to the SUSU Executive Team and the Representation Team, and the independent person appointed by University Council.

Non-Sabbatical Officer Elections

The Returning Officer will be the Chief Executive or their nominee and the Deputy Returning Officer will be a senior member of SUSU staff.

Rule 6 – Complaints

Anyone who is dissatisfied with their dealings with SUSU, or who wishes to complain about the conduct of a member of SUSU staff or Sabbatical Officer will submit their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive. If their complaint is about the Chief Executive, they should contact the Chair of the Trustee Board. The Complainant may, but is not obliged to, specify whether the complaint is informal or formal in nature.

Any complaint must normally be received within thirty working days of the incident occurring. If there are exceptional circumstances for the delay, these must be explained when submitting the complaint. If the complaint is received out of this time frame, the Chief Executive will have absolute discretion to accept or reject the complaint.

Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the conduct of a member of SUSU other than a Sabbatical Officer should refer to the appropriate procedure set out in Rule 7.

The Complainant will normally receive formal acknowledgement of their complaint within five working days, together with confirmation of next steps. The Chief Executive may in the first instance ask a member of staff to try to resolve the complaint informally at this stage.

The Chief Executive may also decide to refer the complaint into a different process, such as the disciplinary procedure outlined in Rule 7, the University's complaints or student discipline processes or SUSU HR procedures.

Complaints about Sabbatical Officers

The Chief Executive will determine if the complaint relates to the Sabbatical Officer's political performance (in relation to the duties listed in Rule 4) or to their performance as an employee of the union. If the complaint relates to their political performance, the complaint will be referred to Student Council to consider in the first instance. If the complaint refers to the Sabbatical Officer's performance as an employee, it will be considered in line with the SUSU's HR procedures.

Stage One - Informal Complaints

A member of SUSU staff appointed by the Chief Executive will investigate the complaint and establish whether there are grounds and whether informal resolution is appropriate and possible. If it is, the investigator will recommend a course of action to resolve the complaint.

The investigator may alternatively conclude that there are no grounds to the complaint.

Complainants will normally receive an outcome to their complaint within fifteen working days.

At this stage, the Complainant may accept the outcome, or they may decide to proceed to Stage Two – Formal Complaints, in which case they must notify the Chief Executive within ten working days of receipt of the outcome of Stage One.

Stage Two - Formal Complaints

The Chief Executive will appoint a senior member of SUSU staff (who was not involved in Stage One) to investigate the complaint. If the complaint refers to the Chief Executive, the Chair of Trustee Board will appoint the investigator.

The Complainant will normally receive formal acknowledgement of their complaint from the investigator within five working days, together with confirmation of next steps.

The Investigator may at their absolute discretion reinterview anyone interviewed at Stage One or interview anyone they deem relevant who was not interviewed at Stage One. Where the complaint had no Stage One, the Investigator will consider any evidence they deem relevant.

Complainants will receive an update on the investigation within ten working days.

The outcome of the complaint will normally be sent within thirty working days of the initial receipt of the Stage Two complaint and will include details of the right to appeal. The Complainant will be informed if there are unavoidable delays to this timescale.

The investigator may reject, uphold or partially uphold the complaint and may recommend any outcome they deem appropriate.

Stage Three - Appeal

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint, they may appeal on the grounds below within ten working days of receipt of the outcome in writing to the Chief Executive (unless the complaint involved the Chief Executive, in which case they should contact the Chair of Trustee Board.)

Appeal grounds:

1. That the procedures were not correctly followed and that this has disadvantaged the Complainant
2. That new evidence is available that was for good reason not available at the time of the original investigation and that this has disadvantaged the Complainant

The Chief Executive (or Chair) will refer the appeal to the independent person appointed by the University for the appeal to be considered by the independent person or their nominee acting as Stage Three Investigator.

The appellant will normally receive formal acknowledgement of their complaint from the Stage Three Investigator within five working days of their appointment, together with confirmation of next steps.

The Stage Three Investigator will review the complaint, outcome and appeal and may but is not required to investigate further at their discretion, including by interviewing or reinterviewing any individuals they deem relevant.

The Stage Three Investigator may:

- Decide the appeal is vexatious, malicious or without grounds in which case there will be no further action or
- Decide to uphold or partially uphold the appeal in which case they should also recommend an outcome which may either be to hold a new investigation or to require a specific outcome without holding a new investigation

The Stage Three Investigator will normally send the outcome of the appeal to both the appellant and the SUSU Chief Executive within thirty working days of their appointment. There is no further right of appeal.

Rule 7 – Code of Conduct

Behavioural Expectations

SUSU's Code of Conduct seeks to ensure an inclusive, respectful and safe environment for all our members and to protect the union's reputation.

We expect all members to adhere to the following values:

- **Respect** – treating everyone with courtesy and dignity
- **Inclusivity** – creating spaces where all feel welcome, regardless of identity or background
- **Integrity** – being accountable and responsible
- **Disagreeing well** – upholding freedom of speech by expressing, listening to and challenging diverse opinions respectfully
- **Sustainability** – acting in ways that are environmentally and financially responsible

Rules-based Expectations

Members are also expected to adhere to:

- The full **Rules** of the union
- University of Southampton **regulations and policies**, as outlined in the Student Charter
- Any additional **guidance** issued by SUSU relating to elections, student democracy, clubs and societies or other SUSU activity.
- The University of Southampton Code of Practice on **Free Speech** and Academic Freedom.
- Where relevant, members will also be bound by the **BUCS** rules.

Any behaviour which may bring SUSU into disrepute may be dealt with under this Code of Conduct.

Scope of this Code

All full and associate members of SUSU are covered by this Code of Conduct as well as visitors in some situations. All SUSU Trustees are also covered by the Code. It applies to all club and society or elected officer activities (including reps) and takes precedence over individual constitutions. Club and society activity will be taken to include online activity as well as any activity (in person or online) which is not officially organised by the committee, but which is still clearly linked to the club or society.

The expectations within the Code apply to any activity taking place within SUSU or on the wider University campuses. They also apply to any online activity on an official SUSU platform and to any physical activity that takes place off campus but where students are identifiably linked to SUSU.

The Code also applies to all SUSU venues and events, as well as external trips, tours and events directly organised by SUSU.

Responsibilities – members and SUSU

Respect

Members should treat each other with courtesy and dignity, valuing diverse opinions, experiences and backgrounds.

They should ensure that members are not subject to any form of harassment or discrimination, on any grounds.

SUSU will: maintain a Zero Tolerance approach to any form of harassment or discrimination in all its spaces, both physical and digital.

Inclusivity

Members should seek to create an environment that is free from barriers to participation.

For clubs and societies in particular, this means committees must ensure accessibility for members with disabilities, must welcome diverse identities and provide equitable opportunities for participation.

SUSU will: support clubs and societies to understand their existing membership and develop strategies to identify and remove barriers to participation.

SUSU will constantly review its own work and consider how to remove barriers to participation in order to become more inclusive.

Integrity

Members should act honestly and openly and take responsibility for their actions. This includes all aspects of running clubs and societies including financial, the exercising of any voluntary elected role within SUSU, or in the delivery of any events organised by students.

Members should also act when others breach these behavioural standards. They should choose the approach that is both safe and appropriate, ranging from direct challenge (bystander intervention) to reporting the misconduct to SUSU, the University or the police.

SUSU will: support students who report incidents or misconduct by ensuring appropriate reporting pathways and confidentiality as well as support for all parties.

Disagreeing Well

SUSU supports the expression of all lawful opinions as long as they are expressed with respect and do not attack or undermine the rights of others.

Members should allow space for different views, ensuring discussions remain respectful and constructive. There should always be the opportunity to challenge the views expressed.

Members should be prepared to hear different, lawful views and accept that sometimes they will be offended by the views of others.

SUSU will: support the expression of all lawful views, as long as they are expressed in a way that does not make others feel unsafe or excluded. The union may also place reasonable restrictions on the expression of views linked to the time, place or manner in which the views are expressed.

Environmental Sustainability

SUSU has made a commitment on behalf of members to recognise the importance of the climate crisis and to try constantly to become more environmentally sustainable in all its practices.

Members are required to consider the environmental impact of their actions, including restricting the production of flyers and posters and reducing waste when organising events, campaigns or club and society activity

SUSU will: consider the environmental and community impact of its actions at all times and will take all reasonable steps to restrict the use of flyers, posters and other waste both from SUSU's internal practices and on the part of business and other external partners.

Clubs and Societies – additional responsibilities

Separate guidance can be found on the Clubs and Societies' Sharepoint site, including additional requirements attached to committee roles.

SUSU does not allow initiation ceremonies, hazing or any coercive behaviour.

Other Elected Roles, including Trustees – additional responsibilities

All members with an elected role within SUSU are expected to uphold the behavioural expectations in this Code of Conduct including respecting confidentiality, and to act as an ambassador for SUSU when carrying out their role.

Student Trustees are additionally bound by the Trustee Handbook and the legal requirements of that role. Any unauthorised sharing of confidential information by Trustees may be viewed as a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Trustees and all other elected roles should be aware that any major breach of this Code of Conduct, even if not in the course of carrying out their official duties, may result in the termination of their position.

Disciplinary Procedures

Where there is an alleged breach of the standards, expectations or requirements laid out in this Rule, this process will be followed.

Referrals

Disciplinary cases may be referred into this process by:

Referred By	When
SUSU Chief Executive	Redirected complaints (under Rule 6)
SUSU Activities Team	Issues relating to Clubs and Societies
SUSU Representation Team	Issues referred by the University and issues raised by/about individual students
SUSU Venues Team	Issues that occur in venues/at events

Club and society committees should speak to the Activities team for advice before undertaking any disciplinary proceedings. They must also report the outcomes of any proceedings to the Activities team.

Categories of disciplinary offence

This table provides a guide to the type of incidents that will be considered under the union's disciplinary procedure. The list should be viewed as indicative rather than exhaustive.

All incidents will be logged and all outcomes, including warnings, will be recorded by the Representation Team and will remain on file.

Any incident where there is concern for a member's mental or physical health or where there is physical injury will be treated as a **welfare incident**. In these cases, the priority will be ensuring that the appropriate support service is contacted. The member's details will be retained in order to follow up from a welfare perspective.

Type of Incident	Examples	Immediate Actions may include
Category A	Smoking or vaping indoors or in any non-smoking place outside	Verbal warning Ejection from venue/event/activity

<p>(all may be referred into formal SUSU process)</p>	<p>Low-level anti-social behaviour (disruptive or inappropriate behaviour)</p> <p>Failure to comply with management requests and processes</p> <p>Minor, deliberate damage to union property</p> <p>Minor breach of SUSU's values</p>	<p>Refusal of admission</p> <p>Instruction to desist</p> <p>Requirement to comply</p> <p>Ban/suspension of up to four weeks (individual or student group)</p> <p>Details retained</p> <p>If individual is a visitor rather than a member, they may be banned or suspended for any length of time, including permanently</p>
<p>Category B (all will be referred into formal SUSU process and may be referred into University formal process)</p>	<p>Major or repeated breach of SUSU's values</p> <p>Major, deliberate damage to union property</p> <p>Interference with or abuse of digital spaces</p> <p>Significant anti-social (including abusive, threatening or indecent) behaviour</p> <p>Possession or consumption of illegal substances</p> <p>Possession or consumption of illicit alcohol</p> <p>Harassment or discrimination</p> <p>Theft or fraud</p> <p>Repeated failure to comply with management requests and processes</p> <p>Behaviour causing reputational damage</p>	<p>Verbal warning</p> <p>Ejection from venue/event/activity</p> <p>Refusal of admission</p> <p>Instruction to desist</p> <p>Requirement to comply</p> <p>Ban/suspension of up to four weeks (individual or student group)</p> <p>Details retained</p> <p>Campus security may be informed</p> <p>Police may be informed</p>
<p>Category C (all will be referred into University formal process and may be referred to the Police)</p>	<p>Possession of illegal substances with intent to supply</p> <p>Possession of offensive weapons</p> <p>Physical assault</p> <p>Sexual assault</p> <p>Suspicion of terrorist activities or radicalisation</p>	<p>Verbal warning</p> <p>Ejection from venue/event/activity</p> <p>Refusal of admission</p> <p>Instruction to desist</p> <p>Requirement to comply</p> <p>Ban/suspension of up to four weeks (individual or student group)</p> <p>Details retained</p> <p>Referral to Campus security</p> <p>Referral to Police</p> <p>Referral to University Safeguarding lead</p>

Venues and licensing law – additional powers

In addition to the expectations set out in this Code of Conduct, the Management Team in SUSU's venues has responsibilities and powers under the Licensing Act 2003 and may also follow the procedure outlined below:

- In the event of a suspected disciplinary incident in the venues, the Duty Manager has absolute discretion over the decision to refuse admission or to remove a member from the venue with immediate effect. If the reason for the removal is within Category A, the Duty Manager is also able to impose a temporary ban on a member from the union's venues of up to four weeks.
- When such a temporary ban is imposed, the Venues Management Team will notify the Representation Team.
- If the incident is within Category B or C or if the Duty Manager wishes to impose a longer ban than four weeks, they will refer the member into the Disciplinary Process below.
- If the person being removed is not a full or associate member of SUSU, the Duty Manager may impose a ban of any duration, including permanent exclusion.

Clubs and Societies activities – additional powers

If a suspected disciplinary offence takes place in the context of club or society activity, any member of SUSU's Activities team may issue an immediate, temporary suspension of membership (of up to four weeks) and refer the alleged offender(s) into the disciplinary process below.

Procedure

Stage One – Complaint Triage

The initial complaint should be sent to the Representation Team who will normally acknowledge receipt within three working days.

The team will start by checking discipline is the appropriate procedure. They will choose one of the following outcomes:

Outcome	Next Steps
Not within scope of any process	No further action
Within scope of a different process	See Other Disciplinary Routes section below
Informal resolution or mediation appropriate first step	Recommend to complainant. If not accepted, proceed to Stage Two
Investigate complaint	Investigator appointed

If the Representation Team feels it necessary, they can suspend the Respondent from SUSU activity, including any or all club or society activities or any activity related to any relevant SUSU elected role, while the investigation is carried out.

If there is more than one Respondent, the Representation Team may either treat the cases separately or collectively. Where more than one Respondent is involved in a case, including where a committee is under investigation, different outcomes may apply to different individuals.

Stage Two- Investigation

- If the decision is made to appoint an Investigator, in order to complete their report they will normally speak to the Complainant and may choose to interview any witnesses or other parties (members, SUSU staff and other relevant individuals) at their discretion.
- They will normally be required to report to the Representation team within fifteen working days of being appointed, with the recommendation either to:
 - proceed to a disciplinary hearing, in which case their report should include recommended outcomes OR
 - take no further action. This may be because they do not consider there is a case to answer, because there is insufficient evidence or because they deem the allegation to be vexatious or malicious.
- The Representation Team will now confirm to the Complainant either that no further action is to be taken or that the case will be proceeding to a panel hearing. The Complainant will have no further role in the proceedings, including having no right to appeal the outcome of any disciplinary process.
- The Representation Team will also now notify the Respondent of the complaint (if they have not already been made aware by the Investigator) and of the intention to proceed to a panel hearing (and will share the support available). The Respondent will be made aware of the procedure to be followed and the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a full member of SUSU.

Stage Three - Disciplinary Panel and Hearing

- When a case is to proceed to a Disciplinary Panel hearing, the Representation Team will organise a panel, check for any potential conflicts of interest, and try to balance the panel as much as possible.
- The hearing will be called with at least five working days' notice. Once the date is confirmed, the Respondent will be sent a copy of the Investigator's report and invited but not required to submit a response in advance of the hearing. Their response may include statements from other members of the union.
- In advance of the hearing the panel will be given both the Investigator's report and any pre-submitted response from the Respondent.
- At this stage the Panel may request further clarification of points in either/both document (s). The hearing date may need to be postponed in this case.

- The Respondent has the right to be accompanied to the hearing by a full member of the union.
- The Panel will be supported by an appropriate member of SUSU staff who will not take part in any decision-making, nor seek to influence the decision-making, but whose role is to ensure the panel follows the correct procedure at all times, including taking account of precedent and not acting beyond their powers.

Hearing

- The Panel will convene and start by selecting the Chair. Then, led by the Chair and supported by the staff advisor, they will agree how the hearing will proceed. This may include any particular lines of questioning they wish to cover with the Investigator and/or the Respondent.
- The Panel will then invite the Investigator to join them, provide an overview of their report including the reasons for any recommendations within it and answer the Panel's questions.
- The Investigator will then be asked to leave the hearing.
- The Panel will then invite the Respondent to join them, to provide an overview of any pre-submitted document (if relevant), to make any additional contributions they wish the Panel to consider and to answer the Panel's questions.
- The Respondent will then be asked to leave the hearing.
- Normally, neither the Investigator nor the Respondent will be required to attend the hearing again, but they should both remain available until the end of the hearing.
- Once the Panel have heard from both the Investigator and the Respondent, they will – led by the Chair and supported by the staff advisor - consider their decision and any sanctions or other actions.
- Until the publication, if any, of the outcome of the hearing, the process is fully confidential. Any breach of that confidentiality may itself be considered as a breach of this Code of Conduct and result in disciplinary action.
- The Panel's decision will be sent to the Respondent and the Investigator by the Representation Team within three working days of the panel concluding their deliberations.

Stage Four - Appeal

The Respondent has the right of appeal on the following grounds only:

1. That the procedures were not correctly followed and that this has disadvantaged the Appellant
2. That new evidence is available that was for good reason not available at the time of the original investigation and that this has disadvantaged the Appellant

If the Respondent wishes to appeal, they must inform the Representation Team within ten working days of receipt of the Panel's decision.

The Representation Team will refer the appeal to the SUSU appeal panel, consisting of the Union President and Chief Executive.

The appeal panel will review the original complaint, the investigation report, hearing outcome and appeal. They may at their absolute discretion decide to investigate further, including by interviewing or reinterviewing any relevant individuals.

The appeal panel will then decide whether the appeal is vexatious, malicious or without grounds, in which case there will be no further action. In this case, there is no further right of appeal.

If the panel agrees with the appeal, they may either reduce, modify or discard the original outcome.

Publication of outcomes

The decision on whether to publish the outcome of disciplinary proceedings, including any sanctions imposed, will be taken by the Representation Team if recommendations have not been made as part of the panel decision. The Team will take a view on whether there is a 'public interest' in outcomes being made public.

Any cases involving SUSU-affiliated clubs and societies will normally be published on the SUSU website.

The Representation Team will report to Student Council on the outcomes of all disciplinary cases.

Other Disciplinary Routes

If a complaint is made in relation to this Code of Conduct which is deemed by the Representation Team to be more appropriately addressed under another process, it may be referred to any of the following:

Where	Why
SUSU Complaints, Rule 6	If the issue relates to a member's dealings with SUSU or wishing to complain about the conduct of a member of SUSU staff or a Sabbatical Officer
SUSU HR processes	If the issue relates to a member of support staff and is related to their employment
SUSU Club or Society Committee	If the issue is best dealt with (initially) by the club or society. The committee will be supported by the Activities team in this instance

University of Southampton Student Discipline Team	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the issue is sufficiently serious (including all harassment and sexual misconduct) to potentially result in more serious sanctions than SUSU can impose. 2. If the issue may constitute a breach of UoS regulations such as Fitness to Practice 3. If the issue has no link to SUSU
University of Southampton Safeguarding lead	If the issue may relate to terrorism or radicalisation
Partner Associations (in the case of Associate members of SUSU)	If imposing a sanction is beyond the power of SUSU but deemed necessary
Police	If the issue may relate to criminal activity

Available Support

Full members may at all stages of the process access support from the SUSU Advice Centre and the Student Hub.

Associate members will be guided through the process by the Representation Team.

Procedural Guidance

Investigator and Panel composition

	Investigator	Panel	Appeal Panel
Clubs & Socs	Sabbatical Officer	3-5 Elected Officers	Union President & Chief Executive
Elected SUSU roles	Sabbatical Officer	3-5 Elected Officers	Union President & Chief Executive
Full members	Sabbatical Officer or SUSU Staff	3-5 Elected Officers	Union President & Chief Executive
Associate members	Sabbatical Officer or SUSU Staff	3-5 Elected Officers or 3-5 Executive Team (not President/Chief Executive)	Union President & Chief Executive
Venues related	SUSU Staff	3-5 Elected Officers or 3-5 Executive Team (not President/Chief Executive)	Union President & Chief Executive
Visitors	SUSU Staff	3-5 Executive Team (not President/Chief Executive)	Union President & Chief Executive

Guidance for panel use - sanctions

All members general sanctions list (this should be viewed as indicative rather than comprehensive)

	Moderate
Category A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warning held on file by Representation for academic year • Requirement to make good/compensate • Individual or committee commitment to improve/comply • Private apology • Mandatory training • Ban/suspension of four-twelve weeks
Category B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warning held on file by Representation Team for academic year • Requirement to make good/compensate • Individual or committee commitment to improve/comply • Private apology • Mandatory training • Public apology • Ban/suspension of up to twenty-six weeks • Referral
Category C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban/suspension/disaffiliation of any duration including permanent. This may include either specific activities or all SUSU-related activities. Removal of union membership must be approved by Student Council.

Clubs and Societies sanctions list

	All	Moderate	Severe
Sports clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private apology • Mandatory training • Committee undertaking to improve/comply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial penalty • Removal from grant funding round (s) • Public apology • Removal from Varsity • Removal of committee members • Removal from Awards/Ball • Removal from the Performance Sport programme • Exclusion from SUSU premises/venues • Restriction on use of SUSU vehicles • Removal from taster sessions • Exclusion from Tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaffiliation • Removal from Clubs & Societies Fairs • Removal from BUCS • Removal from block bookings • Removal from current season's IM league • Points deduction • Relegation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socials Ban • Withholding deposits 	
Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private apology • Mandatory training • Committee undertaking to improve/comply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public apology • Financial penalty • Removal from competitions/External opportunities (e.g Fridge, Uni-Bass, Inter-Uni Dance Comps) • Removal from GIAG sessions • Exclusion from SUSU premises/venues • Removal from Awards/Ball • Restriction on use of SUSU vehicles • Restriction on the use of University performance spaces. • Removal of committee members • Exclusion from Tour • Socials Ban 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaffiliation • Removal from Clubs & Societies Fairs • Removal from block bookings

Rule 8 – Student Groups

Students can form societies and clubs for specific purposes, interests or activities - this rule outlines the provisions for these groups.

An affiliated student group exists as part of SUSU and all funds will be held by SUSU.

Affiliation

Groups will normally be able to apply for affiliation once a year, in line with the procedure outlined in the Clubs and Societies Sharepoint site. SUSU may, however, limit the number of total clubs and societies and so will not always be able to accommodate additional groups. In this instance, no new applications will be accepted.

When applications are open, student groups must meet the criteria of affiliation as specified in this Rule:

- The student group must not duplicate the objectives and aims of another student group, leading to an unnecessary proliferation of groups.
- The objectives and aims of the group must be clear and lawful.
- The student group must have at least 15 members who are full members of SUSU.
- The total student group membership may never exceed more than 25% associate members.
- Membership of the student group is open to all SUSU members.
- The student group must have an elected committee which consists of at least President (or equivalent role), Treasurer and Wellbeing & Inclusion Officer (or equivalent role). The committee must all be full members and there must only be one President and one Treasurer.
- The student group must have a constitution that is compatible with the SUSU Articles, Rules and any other relevant policies.
- The student group must have an Annual General Meeting which includes a financial review of the group and election of the following year's committee.

Affiliated student groups may receive support from SUSU in accordance with the procedure outlined in this Rule including:

- Insurance cover for core activity
- Permission to use University of Southampton name
- Access to block bookings
- Ability to book space in SUSU
- Access to events such as Clubs and Societies Fair
- Groups management system
- Listing on SUSU website

- General SUSU staff support
- The ability to apply for grant funding (which, where available, will be allocated strictly in line with the guidance listed on the Clubs and Societies Sharepoint site)

An application to become an affiliated student group will be assessed by the SUSU Activities Team. The Activities Team will make recommendations to a panel consisting of the SUSU Executive Team except the Union President and Chief Executive.

The panel will decide whether to approve the application.

If the application is not approved, the applicants can appeal on the following grounds only:

- That the procedures were not correctly followed and that this has disadvantaged the applicant
- That new evidence is available that was for good reason not available at the time of the original assessment and that this has disadvantaged the applicant

The applicants should send their appeal to the SUSU Representation Team who will organise the appeal panel, consisting of the Union President and Chief Executive. The panel will review the appeal submission and original application only.

The panel will:

- Decide there is no valid evidence submitted and dismiss the appeal. The applicants should re-submit an application in the next affiliation window. Or
- Decide there is some valid evidence and require the Executive Team panel to reconsider the application. The panel will reconsider the application but may still reject it. If the application is rejected, the applicants may not appeal on the same grounds again. Or
- Decide there is strong enough evidence to overrule the original decision. The appeal panel will approve the application to affiliate.

Disaffiliation

An affiliated student group may disaffiliate from SUSU at any time and for any reason as long as their members have voted to approve this. To affect this decision, the committee should contact the Activities Team and notify them of their intention to disaffiliate, including evidence of their members' vote.

The Activities Team can temporarily suspend the operation of a student group if it believes that the group no longer meets the criteria of affiliation. If the Activities Team wishes to disaffiliate the group because they no longer meet the criteria for affiliation, they should make this recommendation to the SUSU Executive Team with a request for approval.

The same decision-making and appeal process will be followed for disaffiliation as for affiliation.

Where SUSU hold funds or assets on behalf of an affiliated group, and that group is disaffiliated, then any funds or assets held by SUSU on behalf of the group will either be passed to another affiliated group or taken to be part of the union's general resources.

Where these funds or assets are acquired by SUSU, the union can reallocate at their absolute discretion, but such funds will always be directly allocated to the student experience.

Glossary

(If there are any other terms in the Rules that you do not understand, please tell the Representation team and we will add them to this glossary)

SUSU Chief Executive – the most senior member of permanent staff in SUSU

HR processes – Human Resources; refers to employment processes, policies and procedures

'Normally' - this term is used throughout the Rules and recognises that there will sometimes be circumstances which mean the usual timescales or processes cannot be followed, such as during vacation periods

BUCS – British Universities and Colleges Sport. The national organisation to which SUSU is affiliated and which organises traditional, competitive sports leagues

Articles of Association – legal document forming part of SUSU's constitution and which covers the charitable objects and procedures to be followed by the Trustee Board

Multi-HEI – some programmes are jointly delivered by more than one University (or Higher Education Institution). Students on these programmes may be registered as students at more than one University.

RON (Re-open nominations) – an option in a vote which indicates that the voter does not want to vote for any of the candidates

UoS – University of Southampton

Contact details

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SUSU Advice Centre	advice@soton.ac.uk
SUSU Chief Executive	ceo@susu.org
SUSU Chair of Trustee Board	chair@susu.org
University of Southampton Student Hub	studenthub@soton.ac.uk