



Student Democracy Regulations

Table of contents

1. Democratic structures
2. Elections
3. Budgets
4. Policy
5. Online Referenda
6. The Student Council
7. The Association Executive
8. Liberation Officers
9. Section Representatives
10. Electronic Business
11. Activities Executive
12. Resignations, Reprimands and Dismissal
13. Amending These Regulations
14. General Meetings



Part 1: Democratic Structures

Section A: The Role of the Democratic Structures

- i. There shall be Democratic Structures which:
 - a) Are clear, transparent and facilitate accountability;
 - b) Are inclusive, maximise opportunities for student involvement and embody equal opportunities for all;
 - c) Are open and easy for students to interact with;
 - d) Facilitate effective interaction with the University at all levels, to represent all University of Edinburgh students;
 - e) Ensure effective transmission of University of Edinburgh student views to the University and external bodies;
 - f) Ensure accountability for decisions and actions taken by and on behalf of the representative structures of the Association as set out in this Regulation;
 - g) Aim to accurately translate the views of the student body into policy and campaigns, and represent student interests for the improvement of the student experience at the University of Edinburgh.

Section B: Bodies of the Democratic Structures

- i. The Democratic Structures shall comprise the following bodies:
 - a) Online Referenda, which shall also have association-wide powers;
 - b) The Student Council;
 - c) The Association Executive, which shall also have association-wide powers;
 - d) Activities Executive.

Section C: Elected Officers

- i. There shall be elected officers who ensure that the work of the Democratic Structures is carried out.
- ii. The elected officers shall comprise:
 - a) The Sabbatical Officers, whose roles shall be outlined in the Sabbatical Officers regulation;
 - b) Five Liberation Officers;
 - 1) Women's Officer
 - 2) Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Officer
 - 3) LGBT+ Officer
 - 4) Disabled Officer
 - 5) Trans and Non-Binary Officer
 - c) Seven Section Representatives;
 - 1) International Student Representative



Representation & Democracy

- 2) Mature Student Representative
 - 3) Part-time Student Representative
 - 4) Student Carers Representative
 - 5) Student Parents Representative
 - 6) Postgraduate Taught Representative
 - 7) Postgraduate Research Representative
 - d) Activities Representatives (societies and volunteering);
 - e) An Undergraduate School Representative for each School;
 - f) A Postgraduate School Representative for each School.
- iii. The above elected officers shall be members of Student Council along with:
- a) The Sports Union President or a nominee from the Edinburgh University Sports Union Executive Committee.
 - b) An student representative from Edinburgh Students' Charities Appeal (ESCA) appointed by ESCA.



Part 2: Elections

Section A: Cross Campus Ballots

- i. In the Second Semester there shall be a General Election which shall be a cross-campus ballot.
 - a) The following positions shall be elected at the General Election:
 - 1) The Sabbatical Officers;
 - 2) Five Liberation Officers;
 - 1) Women's Officers;
 - 2) Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Officer
 - 3) LGBT+ Officer
 - 4) Disabled Officer
 - 5) Trans and Non-Binary Officer
 - 3) Six Section Representatives;
 - 1) International Student Representative
 - 2) Mature Student Representative
 - 3) Part-time Student Representative
 - 4) Student Carers Representative
 - 5) Student Parents Representative
 - 6) A Postgraduate Research Representative
 - 4) Activities Representatives (societies and volunteering);
 - 5) An Undergraduate School Representative for each School;
 - b) Those elected to these positions shall serve a term of office of one year, beginning in June of the year of the election.
 - c) Other positions, as required by the Association, will also be elected by Cross-Campus Ballot.
- ii. In the First Semester there shall be a By Election which shall be a cross-campus ballot.
 - a) The following positions shall be elected at the By Election:
 - 1) A Postgraduate School Representative for each School;
 - 2) A Postgraduate Taught Representative
 - b) At these elections will also be elected other positions as required by the association.
 - c) Those elected to these positions shall serve a term of office of approximately one year beginning immediately and ending at the next year's By Election.
 - d) In addition, any posts which remain vacant from the General Election shall be elected in the By Election for the remainder of the one year term of office.



Section B: Eligibility to stand and vote in cross-campus ballots

- i. Eligibility to stand in all these elections shall be restricted to Members.
- ii. Eligibility to vote for Sabbatical Officers shall be restricted to Members and Life members, eligibility to vote for all other positions laid out here shall be restricted to Members.
- iii. Eligibility to stand in the following elections shall be further restricted:
 - a) Only undergraduate students in a given school shall be eligible to stand to be its Undergraduate School Representative.
 - b) Only postgraduate students in a given school shall be eligible to stand to be its Postgraduate School Representative.
 - c) Only students in a given section shall be eligible to stand in the election for the Section Representative.
 - d) Only students who are current members of a society or volunteering group shall be eligible to stand in the election for the Activities Representatives.
 - e) Only students who self-define into a given liberation group can stand in the election for the Liberation Officer.
- iii. Eligibility to vote shall be further restricted for the following posts:
 - a) Only those who self-define into a given liberation group can vote in the election for the Liberation Officer
 - b) Only students who are part of a given school can vote in the elections for School Representative positions.
 - c) Only students in a given section group can vote in the election for the Section Representative.

Section C: Running of cross-campus ballot elections

- i. The elections shall be run in accordance with the *Election Regulations* as upon ruled by the Returning Officer.



Part 3: Budgets

- i. The total budget for the democratic structures shall be set by the Board of Trustees.
- ii. The Association Executive shall, before the start of the academic year, allocate the budget to the following bodies:
 - a) The Student Council;
 - b) The Association Executive;
 - c) Any other elected representatives or groups of representatives which Association Executive agree should have their own budget.
- iii. The Student Council cannot increase or decrease its overall budget but it may in the first six weeks of the academic year through an extraordinary motion, amend the allocation of any funds within the Student Council budget.



Part 4: Policy

- i. Policy constitutes establishing principles or practices which shall have implications for the future direction of the Association.
- ii. Policy, actions and budgets passed through the democratic structures should be forwarded to the Association Executive for information and to ensure that actions do not violate the law or otherwise require action which would be unlawful and/or bring the association into disrepute.
- iii. A record of all policy passed through the various structures should be kept centrally and be made publicly available.



Part 5: Online Referenda

Section A: Role of Online Referenda

- i. Outside of General Meetings, online referenda shall be the sovereign decision-making mechanism of the democratic processes of the Association.
- ii. Decisions made by Online Referenda shall be binding on the Association. The Association shall seek to implement Referendum decisions and communicate the outcome of any referenda to the student body.
- iii. All Members shall be entitled to vote in each online referendum.

Section B: Referendum Proposal

- i. A Referendum Proposal is a single proposal that voters may agree or disagree with.
- ii. Voting for the 'For Response' indicates that the changes proposed should be implemented, while a vote for the 'Against Response' is a vote for no changes to be implemented.
- iii. The For and Against Responses will be a full sentence succinctly explaining the two options.
- iv. Each Referendum Proposal shall explain three things:
 - a) The changes being proposed.
 - b) The reasons behind the changes.
 - c) The other relevant implications of the changes.

Section C: Submission and Acceptance of Referendum Proposal

- i. Referendum Proposal may be submitted through any of three different mechanisms:
 - a) Any Member may present a Referendum Proposal to Association Executive with the signatures of at least 500 Members.
 - b) The Student Council may submit a Referendum Proposal through an Extraordinary Motion.
 - c) Association Executive may submit a Referendum Proposal by a two thirds majority vote.
- ii. Once the Proposal is submitted the Association Executive shall issue notice for an Opposer to the Proposal to come forward.
- iii. A member of Association Executive will work with the Proposer and Opposer to amend the Proposal to fit the following criteria:
 - a) That it maintains the original spirit of the question.
 - b) That where costs are incurred they are offset elsewhere, making the Proposal revenue-neutral or generate a surplus.



- c) That there are no factual inaccuracies and that the facts included are relevant.
 - d) That there is a For Response and an Against Response which are not leading.
 - e) That the consequences of the Proposal are unambiguous.
 - f) That there has been consultation which must include a presentation to Student Council.
 - g) That the Referendum Proposal will not cause the Association to act illegally or outwith its charitable objectives.
- iv. In the case where the Students' Association is asked to take a stance then there will be two successive questions:
- a) Should the Students' Association take a stance on X.
 - b) If the Students' Association is to take a stance should it be Z or Y.
- v. In the case where the Students' Association is asked to commit to two contradictory statements then there will be two successive questions.
- vi. The Proposal shall be considered 'accepted' and will go forward to the next available Referendum Period when Association Executive considers that the Proposal meets these criteria.

Section D: Referendum Periods

- i. A Referendum Period shall be the period of time between when a referendum is called and the referendum results are announced.
- ii. There may be up to eight Referendum Proposals put forward in any Referendum Period.
- iii. Referendum Periods must be held entirely within University term time.
- iv. Each Referendum Period shall comprise three immediately consecutive periods:
 - a) A Planning Period where For and Against teams are formed and For and Against Statements may be submitted.
 - b) A Campaigning Period where For and Against teams campaign to the student body, subject to the rules laid out in the Election Regulations of the Association.
 - c) A Voting Period where votes are cast.
- v. The Referendum Period must last no longer than four weeks.
- vi. The Planning Period must last no less than one week.
- vii. The Campaigning Period must last no less than one week.
- viii. The Voting Period must include no less than forty-eight hours of weekday time.
- ix. The Returning Officer for Referenda will be the Association's Returning Officer who is responsible for the oversight of the referenda and must be able to be satisfied that referenda have been conducted fairly and freely and in accordance with this Regulation and Election regulations.



Section E: Calling a Referendum Period

- i. A Referendum Period can be called by the Association Executive at any point when more than one Referendum Proposal has been accepted.
- ii. The Association Executive must call a Referendum Period as soon as reasonably possible after four Referendum Proposals have been accepted.
- iii. The calling notice for a Referendum Period shall inform the student body of the accepted Referendum Proposals, the dates of the Campaigning and Voting periods, the budget allocated to the campaign teams, and the date, time and location of the Referendum Debates. This calling notice will be widely publicised to the student body.
- iv. Referendum Proposals submitted after the calling notice will be carried over to the next Referendum.
- v. The Planning Period shall begin immediately following the calling notice.

Section F: Referendum Campaigns

- i. Only two campaigns for each Referendum Proposal shall be permitted and funded – one 'For' campaign and one 'Against' campaign.
- ii. The original Proposer and Opposer of the Referendum Proposal shall be the key respective contacts for the For and Against campaigns.
- iii. The key contacts for the two campaigns shall be in contact with relevant election officials throughout the campaigning period and shall attend, or send a deputy to, any official briefings held.
- iv. If a campaign does not send a representative to any official briefing without good reason the campaign will be deemed to have withdrawn and no further funding will be given.
- v. The individual budgets for the campaign teams during a given Referendum Period shall be equal and set by the Association Executive.
- vi. Students' Association Societies and University of Edinburgh Sports' Clubs may endorse the For or Against campaign for any question.
- vii. The Students' Association reserves the right to put forward neutral and factual information to facilitate informed debate.

Section G: Referendum Debate

- i. There shall be at least one Referendum Debate held during the Campaign Period.
- ii. Where there is a For and Against campaign for a Referendum Proposal they should be given equal time in the debate.



Section H: Referendum Voting Period

- i. Voting shall take place online.
- ii. The voting page shall display:
 - a) A full explanation of the consequences of the Proposal.
 - b) A statement from both the For and the Against campaigns.
 - c) The names of any Students' Association Societies or University of Edinburgh Sports Clubs who have endorsed one of the campaigns.
 - d) Three voting options:
 1. For
 2. Against
 3. Abstain
 - e) Students also have the option to Skip Question
 - f) A video from the Referendum Debate
- iii. The total number of votes cast is the sum of votes cast For, Against and Abstain;
- iv. In the case where the Proposal would amend the regulations there must be 2000 votes For or a two thirds majority of votes cast, whichever is greater, for the decision to be binding;
- v. In all other cases there must be 1000 votes For or a simple majority of votes cast, whichever is greater, for the decision to be binding.

Section I: The Referendum Outcomes

- i. The results of the Referendum Period should be publicised to the student body as soon as possible.
- ii. The Association Executive shall be responsible for implementing the decisions of the referenda.



Part 6: The Student Council

Section A: Role of the Student Council

- i. The primary mechanism for the discussion and initiation of action on all matters shall be Student Council.
- ii. Student Council shall be the primary mechanism through which student population can scrutinise the work of the elected officers and organisers.
- iii. Student Council shall have the power to approve societies and their affiliation to the Association, following recommendation from Activities Executive.
- iv. Student Council meetings will be open to all students and advertised so that attendance by students is maximised.
- v. The budget of Student Council shall be held by the elected membership of the Student Council, and shall only be accessed through a majority vote of these elected members.

Section B: Running of Student Council meetings

- i. Student Council meetings shall be run in accordance with the Standing Orders and the Students' Association's Safe Space Policy.
- ii. Any member of the Association may attend Student Council, submit motions, speak and vote.
- iii. Student Council meetings must be held during a week day of semester time.
- iv. Student Council will meet regularly and the frequency of these meetings shall be determined by the Association Executive, with a minimum of three meetings in both the First and Second Semester.
- v. The draft running order and agenda for Student Council shall be agreed by the Student Council Facilitator and published online at least seven days before the Student Council meeting.

Section C: Student Council Policy

- i. An Ordinary Motion shall have the power to set Association policy, or allocate or access funds from the Student Council budget.
- ii. An Extraordinary Motion shall have the power to censure an officer, amend these regulations or submit a Referendum Proposal.
 - a) An Ordinary Student Council motion may be brought either by twenty signatures of Members or by Association Executive.
- iii. An Extraordinary Student Council motion may be brought either by forty signatures of Members or by Association Executive.
- iv. The Association Executive will add it to the agenda of the next available meeting of that Student Council.



- v. Motions must be distributed to the membership at least seven days before the Student Council meeting.
- vi. Amendments may change the meaning of a Motion, or even reverse the meaning entirely, but must not change the subject that the Motion discusses.
- vii. For an Amendment to a Motion to be accepted on the Agenda of a given Student Council meeting it must be submitted to the Student Council Facilitator no fewer than five days before the Meeting.
- viii. Policies shall be deemed to have lapsed after 4 years unless they are readopted by Student Council, or they are subsequently replaced, overturned or amended. Policies which are due to lapse shall be discussed each year by Student Council.
- ix. Policy may not be overturned within three months of its initial passing.
- x. Student Council policy may be sent back for reconsideration by Association Executive, by a two third majority vote, providing it meets one of the following criteria:
 - a) That the policy will cause the Association to act illegally or outwith its charitable objectives.
 - b) That the policy would contradict previous policy of the past three months.

Section D: Emergency Meetings

- i. The Association Executive, 15 Elected Officers, or 30 Members shall be able to call an Emergency Meeting providing that:
 - a) The meeting only discusses matters which cannot wait until the next Ordinary Meeting.
 - b) The meeting only discusses the matters for which the meeting was called.
 - c) Three working days' notice is given to Members.

Section E. Student Council Facilitator

- i. There shall be a paid and trained Student Council Facilitator who shall chair Student Council meetings.
- ii. The Student Council Facilitator shall be responsible for ruling on any part of the Articles, the Democracy Regulations, the Standing Orders and Safe Space Policy which relates to the running of the meeting.
- iii. They shall:
 - a) Be impartial and not participate in debate, or submit ideas to Student Council.
 - b) Be unable to vote at Student Council but shall be able to vote in Student Council online ballots of members.
 - c) Ensure the debate is orderly, conducted in accordance with these Democracy Regulations, the Standing Orders, and Safe Space Policy.



- d) Decide the order of the agenda and the order and length of debate, and make changes to these during the meeting if necessary.
 - e) Be responsible for ensuring that debates are participative, productive and balanced.
 - f) Adjourn the meeting, or remove speaking rights from individuals, if necessary to ensure the good conduct of the meeting.
 - g) Remove any person present from the remainder of the meeting who is preventing the meeting from proceeding in a fair and democratic manner or otherwise in accordance with these Democracy Regulations, the Standing Orders or Safe Space Policy.
- iv. The Association Executive shall ensure that Student Council meetings are facilitated effectively through a substitute if the Student Council Facilitator is unable to attend. A member of Association Executive shall chair Student Council if the Student Council Facilitator is not in attendance.

Section F: Debate at Student Council

- i. Any member of the Association may speak at Student Council meetings in order to:
 - a) Ask a question
 - b) Give speeches for or against motions and amendments
 - c) State a practical point of clarification
 - d) Make a comment
 - e) Ask for a change to meeting proceedings
- ii. The order of debate shall be decided by the Student Council Facilitator. This shall normally include:
 - a) Speeches for a motion or expenditure request
 - b) Speeches for and against amendments
 - c) Vote on amendments
 - d) Speeches against a motion or expenditure request
 - e) Questions and comments
 - f) Summation
 - g) Vote on motion or expenditure request
- iii. Debate at Student Council shall run in accordance with the Students' Association Safe Space Policy.

Section G: Voting at Student Council

- i. Following debate on motions at Student Council a vote shall take place.
- ii. Elected members of Student Council shall consult their student constituents on motions and issues to be voted on at Student Council in order to represent their views.



- iii. The vote of an elected member of Student Council counts for 1.5 votes, compared to 1 for a vote from an unelected member.
- iv. If an Ordinary Motion receives 67% or more of the total votes in favour, then it shall become Association policy.
- v. If an Ordinary Motion receives less than 33% of the total votes in favour, then it shall not become Association policy.
- vi. If an Ordinary Motion receives fewer than 67% of votes in favour but more than 33%, then the Ordinary Motion will be referred to an online ballot where all members of the Association will get the chance to vote on the issue in accordance with Part 6, Section H.
- vii. An Extraordinary Motion shall pass if it receives 67% or more of the total votes, or fifty votes, whichever is greater, in favour at Student Council. It shall then become Association policy.
- viii. If an Extraordinary Motion receives less than 67% of the total votes in favour at Student Council, then it shall not become Association policy.
- ix. An Extraordinary Motion will not proceed to Student Council online ballot of members if the motion receives less than 67% of the total votes in favour at Student Council.

Section H: Student Council online ballots of members

- i. Student Council online ballots of members shall be held if an Ordinary Motion at a Student Council meeting receives fewer than 67% of votes for but more than 33%, as outlined in Part 6, Section G.
- ii. Student Council online ballots shall take the form of a secret ballot in which all members are asked to vote either for, against or abstain to an Ordinary Motion or Ordinary Motions.
- iii. The Ordinary Motion(s) to be voted on shall normally be posted on the Students' Association website within four working days after the Student Council meeting in which the Ordinary Motion(s) to be balloted was discussed.
- iv. Online ballots shall be communicated to students.
- v. For each Ordinary Motion put to a Student Council online ballot of members the quorum shall be the total number of votes for and against plus one which were cast on the Ordinary Motion(s) at the Student Council meeting at which it was discussed. Abstentions shall not count towards the total votes.
- vi. An Ordinary Motion(s) shall pass at a Student Council online ballot of members if a majority of the total votes are in favour and the quorum outlined in Part 6, Section H.v is met.
- vii. Student Council online ballots will be open for two working days.
- viii. Results will normally be announced within two working days after the ballots close.
- ix. If an Ordinary Motion(s) passes at Student Council online ballot of members then it shall become Association policy.



Section I: Accountability at Student Council

- i. Each of the Sabbatical Officers shall submit a report to each sitting of Student Council for scrutiny and approval. This report shall include recommendations for the approval of societies wishing to affiliate to the organisation.
 - ii. If two reports from a Sabbatical Officer are rejected by Student Council in one semester a member of Association Executive shall bring a vote of censure to the next meeting of Student Council.

Section J: Policy Passes at Student Council

- i. All policy passed at Student Council shall be referred to Association Executive.



Part 7: The Association Executive

- i. The role, remit, membership and powers of the Association Executive shall be set out in the Association Executive Regulation.



Part 8: Liberation Officers

- i. There shall be Liberation Officers to ensure representation and campaigning on behalf of specific self-defining groups within the student body which are traditionally under-represented due to historical discrimination and inequality.
- ii. These Liberation Officers shall be politically autonomous.



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19

Part 9: Section Representatives

There shall be Section Representatives to address the issues of specific sections of the student body with particular needs

- i. These Section Representatives shall not be politically autonomous.

Part 10: Electronic Business

- i. Elected business can only be conducted for:
 - a) Expenditure requests
 - b) Matters which need to be addressed outside of the teaching period
- ii. To conduct electronic business an email should be sent to all elected members of Student Council outlining the decision to be made and asking elected members to vote For or Against.
- iii. Elected members should have at least two working days to reply.
- iv. Any electronic business will pass if a majority of the total elected members of Student Council vote in favour.
- v. No amendments will be accepted.



20

21

22 **Part 11: The Activities Executive**

23

24

25

- i. The role, remit, membership and powers of the Activities Executive shall be set out in the *Activities Executive Regulations*.



26
27

28 **Part 12: Resignations, Reprimands and Dismissal**

29

30 **Section A: Resignations of elected officers**

31

- 32 i. Resignations by elected officers should be notified to the President in writing.
33 The relevant body on which the resigned person sits shall be notified at their
34 next meeting.
- 35 ii. In the event of a resignation the Association Executive will decide if a By Election
36 should be called.

37

38 **Section B: Censure of Sabbatical Officers**

39

- 40 i. These officers may be censured through an Extraordinary Motion at Student
41 Council.
- 42 ii. A censure, or formal reprimand, constitutes a formal disapproval of the actions
43 of an individual member. The censure shall have no further penalty attached.

44

45 **Section C: Censure of School Representatives, Liberation Officers and Section** 46 **Representatives**

47

- 48 I. School Representatives may be censured by 20 members of their School.
- 49 II. Liberation Officers may be censured by 20 members who self-define into the
50 liberation group.
- 51 III. Section Representatives may be censured by 20 members who are part of the
52 section group.

53

54 **Section D: Dismissal of Sabbatical Officers**

55

- 56 i. The process for dismissing a Sabbatical Officer is laid out in the Memorandum
57 and Articles of Association.



58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81

Part 13: Amending these regulations

- i. These regulations may be amended by passing an Extraordinary Motion outlining the proposed amendments at two consecutive Student Council meetings.



82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91

Part 14: General Meetings

- i. General Meetings are the sovereign decision making mechanism of the organisation and as such can overturn decisions that come from processes laid out in this document.
- ii. General Meetings run according to the regulations outlined in the Articles of Association.