



## How to write an amazing Student Council Motion

### What is a Student Council Motion?

Motions are a way for students to have their voice heard on a particular issue. A student, or group of students, identify a problem within the university, and submit a Motion which lays out how and why they think it should be solved. They try to get signatures of fellow students, and any Motion with more than twenty signatures will be discussed at the Student Council and then voted on. Any student can write and submit a motion!

In general, Motions should be short, clear and to the point. Good motions will be specific and well researched. This Guide aims to help you to write the best motion you can so that it has a good chance of being passed.

### How should a Motion be structured?

There is a particular structure that a written Motion should follow. Don't worry if this doesn't make sense, we've included an example too. The subheadings for each section are:

What will we do?: in this section you should lay out your plan of how you will solve the problem. Key actions you want to see the University or Students' Association to do.

What is the background to this?: in this section you should explain the background of the problem. This will be mostly factual, but the facts you use here may also help to persuade people to support the Motion.

What beliefs motivate the actions you propose?: here you should explore the beliefs which underpin your Motion. This is the place to argue why it should be passed.

Under each subheading you should use a numbered list to separate your points into digestible 'chunks.'

### Quick Tips for an Amazing Motion

- ✓ Keep your aim simple and clear
- ✓ Be concise and to the point
- ✓ Use accessible language – don't overcomplicate it!
- ✓ Research what's already happening, how university structures affect your issue, and who should be involved in your solution
- ✓ Ask for help – [makeachange@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:makeachange@eusa.ed.ac.uk)



## **An Example: 24/7 Main Library** *Passed by Student Council of 31 March 2016*

### What will we do?

1. For the EUSA Sabbatical Officers to lobby the University to open part of the Main Library to be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in time for the next academic year (September 2016).
2. For the EUSA President to write a letter on behalf of the Students' Association to the Head of Information Services and the Head of Estates, declaring support for this.
3. This includes ensuring the Main Library is properly resourced with extra staffing and support costs.
4. To push for a 24/7 Main Library to be included in the University's current 'Central Area Building Opening Hours' review, which is set to be concluded by June.
5. For the 24/7 access to be reviewed a year after implementation, to ensure that the study space that is open to students, through the night, is proportionate to the numbers of students that want to use it.

### What is the background to this?

1. The University is currently reviewing the possibility of 24/7 access to the Main Library as part of its 'Central Area Building Open Hours' review, which both the EUSA President and Vice President Services attend.
2. There have been calls from senior University figures within this review group to open parts of the Main Library for 24 hours, to ensure a safe, secure and effective study space for students who are working through the night.
3. So far, proposals for a 24 hour Main Library do not include opening the whole space, which is seen as excessive. Instead it is much more likely that the first 3 floors will be open rather than all 5.
4. Data from the review group showed that hundreds of students go in and out of University buildings between the hours of 3am and 7am, Monday to Friday. It was felt that it was important for students to have the option of a safe and secure Main Library to study in.
5. EUSA Sabbatical Officers have been elected by students on manifestos that included demands for a 24 hour Library, including Mike Williamson, former EUSA Vice President Academic Affairs (2011/12) and Vice President Societies and Activities-elect Jessica Husbands.
6. A 24/7 Main Library is quite common in the UK. Roughly 1/4 of universities across the UK have 24 hour libraries, including Russell Group university's like the University of Sheffield.
7. There is no evidence, from other Students' Unions or Universities that have introduced 24 hour Library access, that this causes a negative impact on student welfare.

### What beliefs motivate the actions you propose?

1. That students need the option of a safe, secure and effective Main Library if they are studying during the night.
2. That, whilst studying through the night is not necessarily encouraged for welfare reasons, it is sometimes necessary for students to do so during their academic lives.
3. That the Main Library is a safe and secure place for students to study.
4. That many students study in different ways and some would, on occasion, choose to work late at night.