



Your Guide To Student Council

What is Student Council?

Student Council is the democratic decision-making body of the Students' Association, and all students are welcome to submit motions for discussion, attend meetings, and vote.

At each Student Council meeting you will:

- 1) Hear the Sabbatical Officers' accountability reports, and have the opportunity to ask them questions about their work.
- 2) Discuss and vote on motions and expenditure requests which have been submitted by students.

Discussion of Motions

Student Council is chaired by a trained and impartial Student Council Facilitator to ensure that meetings are fair, run smoothly, and in accordance with the relevant Students' Association policies (see below).

The Facilitator sets the running order of the meeting, and this is published in the agenda which is released before each meeting. The discussion on each motion or expenditure request runs in the following order:

- 1) Facilitator invites speeches for a motion or expenditure request (usually the proposer of the motion speaks first, or a representative on their behalf)
- 2) Speeches for and against amendments
- 3) Vote on amendments
- 4) Speeches against a motion or expenditure request
- 5) Summation
- 6) Questions and comments
- 7) Vote on motion or expenditure request

Voting

Once an issue has been adequately discussed, there will be a vote by paper ballot. Student Council Members (students elected in the Students' Association's March or October elections) are given weighted votes of 1.5, compared to 1 for a vote from an unelected member. Additionally, only Elected Representatives can vote on expenditure requests.

The table below explains the different voting outcomes:

If a Motion receives...	<33% of votes in favour	33-66% of votes in favour	67% or more of votes in favour
Ordinary Motion	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion is referred to online ballot	Motion becomes Association policy
Extraordinary Motion	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion does not become Association policy	Motion becomes Association policy

Motions which pass at Student Council become Students' Association policy and shape the work of Students' Association until they lapse, four years after being passed.

Online Ballots

Student Council online ballots take the form of a secret ballot in which all members are asked to vote on a motion which has failed to receive enough votes in favour at Student Council to pass.

Ballots will be posted on the Students' Association website and communicated to students within four working days after the associated Student Council meeting. Ballots will normally be open for two working days, with results being announced within two working days after the ballots close.

Online ballots will need to obtain a quorum for motions to pass. If a motion is quorate and passes it becomes Students' Association policy, and will subsequently be published on the Students' Association website.

Safe Space Policy and Democratic Meeting Code of Conduct

Student Council meetings are governed by our Safe Space Policy and our Democratic Meeting Code of Conduct which exist to ensure that all students who attend feel safe, respected, and able to fully participate.

You can find these documents in full below.



Edinburgh University Students' Association Safe Space Policy

Introduction

Edinburgh University Students' Association operates under a Safe Space Policy which covers all Students' Association spaces and events.

The aim of this policy is to create an environment in which all students, staff and visitors feel welcome, respected, and able to fully participate in our events and activities. It sets out our collective commitment to the principles of liberation, equality, diversity, and inclusion which we place at the heart of everything we do.

We are aware that certain social structures may serve to disadvantage particular groups (including but not limited to people of colour, women, the LGBT+ community, and disabled people) and therefore this policy aims to redress that imbalance by actively challenging oppressive and discriminatory behaviour.

It is also important to note that this policy exists within a legal framework that includes the Equality Act (2010) and Hate Crime legislation.

Zero Tolerance

To ensure this environment is maintained we operate a Zero Tolerance policy to the following behaviours towards both students and staff, as well as anyone visiting our venues or attending our events:

- **Harassment**, defined as any behaviour which is directed at an individual or group which is non-consensual. This includes sexual harassment such as cat-calling, groping or stalking.
- **Abuse**, covering both verbal and physical abuse, including sexual assault, which results in an individual or group feel intimidated or unsafe.
- **Discrimination**, including verbal and physical expressions of discrimination, based on any characteristics, including but not limited to:
 - Age
 - Class
 - Disability or Mental Illness
 - Gender
 - HIV/AIDS Status
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership
 - Nationality and Country of Citizenship
 - Political Affiliation
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Race or Ethnicity



- Religion and Belief
- Sex Worker Status
- Sexuality
- Trans Status
- **Violence**, defined as any act of physical intimidation or aggression, including threats of violence.

All students, members of staff, and visitors to the Students' Association are accountable for their own conduct and should refrain from any of the behaviours listed above. We would also encourage everyone to:

- Be aware of the connotations of their language.
- Avoid making assumptions about another person's gender, pronouns, sexuality, disability, ethnic identity, or life experiences.
- Be prepared to challenge harassment and discrimination if they are witness to an incident, and where appropriate to report it.
- Be open if challenged on their own behaviour, and to learn from the experience.
- Be respectful of other's physical and emotional boundaries.

Event organisers are responsible for ensuring that all attendees, including external speakers, are aware of and adhere to the Safe Space Policy.

Breaches of the Policy

We actively encourage the reporting of incidents that constitute a breach of the Safe Space Policy.

It is the collective responsibility of all to uphold good conduct and challenge others' unacceptable behaviour.

If you experience or witness an incident which you believe is in breach of the Safe Space Policy you can report it either:

- **At the time**, to a member of Students' Association staff, the meeting facilitator, or the event organiser
- **At a later date**, by emailing complaints@eusa.ed.ac.uk

The Students' Association's Complaints Procedure is confidential and impartial.

Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If an individual is found to have breached the Safe Space Policy they may face one or more of the following actions, at the discretion of Students' Association staff, the meeting facilitator, or the event organiser:

- Verbal Warning
- Request for an Acknowledgement of Wrong-doing and Apology



- Removal from Venue

Incidents may also be referred for investigation under the Students' Association's Student Disciplinary Procedure or the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints against members of Students' Association staff, including those against student staff in their capacity as employees of the Students' Association, will be referred to the Students' Association's Staff Disciplinary Policy and handled by the Human Resources department.

If you would like to report an incident to the Police, you can access support and advice (including information on Third-Party Reporting) through the Advice Place, the Students' Association's impartial and confidential advice service.

More Information

If you have any questions regarding the Students' Association's Safe Space Policy or would like more information about how you can implement the policy at your events please contact the Vice President Welfare by emailing vpwelfare@eusa.ed.ac.uk.

Edinburgh University Students' Association Democratic Meeting Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Students' Association's democratic meetings including Student Council Meetings, Committee Meetings, and General Meetings are the Student' Association's primary policy-



making bodies. It is therefore vital that all students feel safe, respected, and able to fully participate.

Edinburgh University Students' Association strives to be a place where contentious topics can be debated accessibly and with consideration for the needs of all participants. However, we recognise that some topics may be particularly difficult or distressing for some members to discuss.

The purpose of this policy is to enable us to facilitate productive debate in a way which is respectful and enables all members to participate.

Code of Conduct

Attendees of democratic meetings are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which is respectful and does not disadvantage or discourage others from participating in the discussion. This includes but is not limited to:

- Allowing others to speak when called upon by the meeting facilitator.
- Refraining from behaviour that discourages others from speaking or prevents others from hearing the speaker including speaking over, interrupting, heckling, or laughing.
- Where appropriate, using content warnings to highlight – in advance – discussion of sensitive topics. This would generally take the form of “I am about to mention [insert subject here]” and should be followed by a pause to allow members to remove themselves from the meeting if they wish.
- Respecting others' experiences, even if they differ from your own.
- Refraining from utilising social media to harass or intimidate others.