



Democracy Handbook 2008

A quick and easy guide to how it all works!

Committees, Council, Exec, Sabbaticals, Motions.... Just what does it all mean?

In 2008 a working group of Students' Union staff and students looked at how the Students' Union was run and how it could be improved. The group found that many of the committees of the Students' Union had not been active for some time and that the rules for how the organisation should run were not being followed.

This was happening for a number of different reasons:

- The committee structure is outdated and no longer reflects the interests of students.
- The language and rules used at official Union meetings is too complicated and confusing.
- Students have increasingly less time to commit to lengthy Union meetings that include issues they are not interested in.

So what happened?

The working group had numerous long meetings, talked to different students, talked to other Students' Unions and even took legal advice!

The following actions were taken:

- Make meetings more issue specific and less complicated for people to have their say.
- Use language which everybody could understand.
- Change some of the job titles for the elected students and what they did so it matched what students wanted.

Help us to help you....

So now, we have new meetings, with new ways for people to voice their opinion on everything they consider important. Importantly we need you the students of University of

Worcester to attend or input to meetings and make your opinions heard. This will stimulate discussion and the Union can strive to improve your University experiences.

Student Council

As a student of University of Worcester you can bring any issue you want to Student Council. We've made many of the meetings more issue specific, however we still need one meeting to pull it all together and give you the students the chance to ask questions of the elected officers and to direct what the Students' Union does so the Union acts in your interests. Student Council is the main governing body of Worcester Students' Union.

Any student of Worcester Students' Union can submit a motion to Student Council and any student can attend Student Council. However, only Student Councillors can vote on motions. Student Councillors are made up of the following groups.

12 Executive Committee Members, 5 Hall Reps, 12 Course Reps, 4 Student Group Reps, 2 Post Grad Reps.

Once a year an Annual General Meeting will be held. This will replace Student Council and the meeting will concern itself with the budget for the forthcoming year and formally adopting new policies.

Jargon Buster!

Motion: A motion is a document submitted to a meeting to have something changed or done. At the Students' Union we have people who can help you write a motion, or look on the Students' Union website in the 'Your Union' section for how to write a motion.

Next Student Council Meetings

Friday 23rd January 2009: Room MB 1.26: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit motions to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Wednesday 18th February

Friday 27th February 2009: Room MB 2.13: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm

Submit motions to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Wednesday 18th March

Friday 27th March 2009: Room HB G6: Starts 3pm until no later than 5pm

Submit motions to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Wednesday 22nd April

Friday 1st May 2009: Room Mb 1.107: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm

Annual General Meeting: 6th March: 1.15pm: Room TBC

Student Groups Committee

Student Groups Committee Meeting is the forum for Clubs and Societies to discuss any issues which affect their groups. This could range from training facilities to funding issues. The Student Groups Committee is made up from one nominated representative (usually the Chair) from every affiliated student group of Worcester Students' Union.

Four Student Group Committee Reps will be elected at the first Student Group Committee Meeting to be Student Councillors and represent the views of the Student Groups at Student Council.

The meeting is organised and run by the Vice President Student Groups. If you wish an item to be put on the agenda see, speak or email John (john.clark@worc.ac.uk) at least two days in advance of the meeting. The Committee will discuss agenda items before asking people for any other issues they wish to be discussed and time may run out, so as with all meetings it's a good idea to get your issue on the agenda early.

Next Student Group Committee Meetings

Thursday 22nd January 2009: Room MB 1.150: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to john.clark@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 20th January 2009.

Thursday 26th February 2009: Room BB54: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to john.clark@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 24th February 2009.

Thursday 23rd April 2009: Room BB54: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to john.clark@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 21st April 2009.

Thursday 21st May 2009: Room MB2.35: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to john.clark@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 19th May 2009.

Course Rep Open Forum

The Course Rep Open Forum is attended by Course Reps; it is an opportunity for Course Reps to discuss issues brought to them by the students they represent about their course of study. 12 Course Reps are elected to Student Council to represent the views of this group. Any student may attend and comment at the Course Rep Open Forum, which is organised by the Vice President Education & Welfare. If you wish an item to be put on the agenda see, speak or email Dave (david.antell@worc.ac.uk) at least two days in advance of the meeting.

Next Course Rep Open Forums

Thursday 2nd April 2009: Room BB54: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to david.antell@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 31st March 2009.

Friday 22nd May 2009: Room TBC: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to david.antell@worc.ac.uk by Wednesday 20th May 2009.

Union Services & Student Experiences Open Forum

This meeting is open to any student and in attendance will be three Sabbatical Officers and the General Manager or invited members of the Senior Management Team. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and raise issues of the services provided by the Union and University, so reasons behind various operational decisions can be explained and discussed. It's also hoped that ideas about improving services or new services can be brought to the meeting by students, discussed and then the feasibility investigated.

If you wish an item to be put on the agenda see, speak or email Andy (President) (Andrew.Hemming@worc.ac.uk) at least two days in advance of the meeting.

Next Union Services & Student Experiences Open Forum

Submit discussion items to andrew.hemming@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 10th March 2009.

Thursday 12th March 2009: Room TBC: Starts 1.15pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to andrew.hemming@worc.ac.uk by Friday 8th May 2009.

Tuesday 12th May 2009: Room CC9: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Fair Trade, Ethical and Environmental Committee

The Fair Trade, Ethical and Environmental Committee meet once a term and is an open meeting to all students with an interest in Fair Trade, Ethical and Environmental issues. In the first meeting of the year a committee will be elected from those in attendance. Also in attendance will be the VP Education & Welfare, General Manager and invited members of the Senior Management Team.

Submit discussion items to david.antell@worc.ac.uk by Friday 13th February 2009.

Next meeting – Tuesday 17th February 2009: Room TBC: Starts 2.15pm until no later than 4pm.

Students' Union On Campus Committee

The Students' Union On Campus Committee will meet twice an Academic year and will consist of 4 Hall Reps from each Block of Halls and 1 Sabbatical Officer. Representatives from the Student Experience Team will be invited to attend although as University staff members they will not be allowed to vote on committee decisions. The Committee will discuss issues effecting residents on campus and these issues will be communicated to the Executive Committee and Student Council.

Five members of this committee are elected at the first Students' Union On Campus Committee meeting to be Student Councillors at Student Council.

Submit discussion items to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 17th February 2009.

Thursday 19th February 2009: Room MB G119: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 28th April 2009.

Thursday 30th April 2009: Room BB54: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Submit discussion items to studentsunion@worc.ac.uk by Tuesday 12th May 2009.

Thursday 14th May 2009: Room CC9: Starts 1pm until no later than 3pm.

Trustee Board

Worcester Students' Union will soon become a charity in its own right (at the moment we are an exempt charity) and we need a dedicated trustee board to oversee the organisation. The trustee board will discuss financial strategy, long term planning, risk, human resource issues and any issues that require a vision that extends beyond the twelve months that the Executive Officers are elected for. The trustee board consists of President, VP Education & Welfare, VP Student Groups, 2 part time Executive Officers, 2 students from any aspect of the University, 1 member of Student Council and 3 external non-student trustees.

The Trustee Board will meet once every two to three months, throughout the year.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee are elected by a cross campus ballot each year and consist of President, VP Education & Welfare, VP Student Groups, International Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer, Mature Students Officer and 4 Officers with non-portfolio (i.e. project

based officers). The Executive's job is to ensure that the Union is engaging with you and acting in your interests at all times.

The Executive Committee is responsible for addressing the issues that affect students at University of Worcester, and for representing your views on an institutional, local and national level. They propose new ways to move both the Students' Union and the University forward, helping both organisations to modernise and progress. They should be approachable and ready to listen to your opinions and views. You are able to direct what areas they work on through Student Council.

Jargon buster!

Cross campus ballot. It simply means every student across campus has the chance to vote!

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for the overseeing of the Union finances, trading services and overall budget allocation. The Committee also upholds the Union's Financial Regulations. The Finance Committee is made up of the President, VP Education & Welfare, VP Student Groups, General Manager, Finance Manager, 1 External Trustee and 1 Student Trustee.

The Finance Committee will meet once a month.

Jargon buster!

Financial Regulations. This is the document that sets out the rules as to how Students' Union money is spent, accounted for and kept safe.

Advertising meetings, agendas and minutes.

Meetings will be advertised across campus using posters, flyers and TV screens. If you are unsure of a date though you can simply drop into the Students' Union and a staff member will be happy to help. All agendas for meetings will be posted on the Students' Union website and also the Democracy Notice Board located opposite the Students' Union Reception Desk. If you require a hard copy of minutes, you are welcome to come to the Students' Union and we will print you a copy. We also where possible will use social networking sites (such as Facebook) however, as these sites come in and out of fashion and are not used by everyone we do not wish to solely rely on this method of communication.

