

Bye Law 5: Student Networks

Overview (purpose of Bye Law)

This Bye Law outlines regulations for student-led Networks. Networks are student groups that have a representative function within the Union's governance structure. They aim to:

- create change through collective action.
- provide purposeful communities for students who share a common characteristic or interest.
- support the delivery of the Union's charitable objective to promote the interests and welfare of Students at the University of Worcester during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising students.
- support the delivery of the Union's charitable objective to be the recognised representative channel between Students and the University of Worcester and any other external bodies.

If you have any difficulty in understanding or interpreting this Bye Law, please contact the Students' Union President.

Key Terms

Student Network	A student group that represents a particular group of students (e.g. LGBTQ+) or an issue (e.g. Sustainability) within the Union.
Network Constitution	A document that sets out the rules and regulations for a Student Network.
Members (of the Union)	All Worcester students automatically become full members of the Union (for free) when they join the University unless they choose to opt-out of membership. Alumni and University staff can apply and pay for associate membership of the Union. Student Council can also grant up to five people per year Honorary Life Membership of the Union
Open meeting	A meeting open to all members of a Network. These are held a minimum of once per semester.
Officer Trustee	One of the elected Full Time Officers of the Union – they are also Trustees of the Union
Student Council	The highest student representative body of the Union. It sets the Policies of the Union and holds the Executive Committee to account.

Executive Committee	The three Full Time Officer Trustees of the Union. It oversees the representation and campaigning work of the Union, as well as the implementation of Policy passed by Student Council and the Ideas Forum process.
Policy	An idea that student/s, submit to Student Council, which they believe will improve the student experience. Once passed by Student Council, policies are binding for three years so the Union must ensure they are progressed during that time, often by working with the University to effect a change somewhere Students may submit relevant policy motions (a proposal for a policy) to Network Open Meetings for them to discuss and vote on. If the Network approves the policy, it will then be sent to Student Council for discussion and approval.
Consensus Decision Making	Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process in which group members agree to support a particular decision or course of action which they feel to be in the best interests of the whole group or in order to achieve a common goal. The decision is one that can be supported or acceptable to all even if it is not the most preferred course of action for every individual.
Quorum/Quoracy	The minimum number of people needed at a meeting to be able to conduct business (carry out votes etc.).
Hustings	A meeting at which candidates in an election can meet students and answer questions from potential voters.
Vote of No Confidence	A vote on whether a person in a position of responsibility (e.g. Committee Member) is no longer deemed fit to hold that position, perhaps because they are deemed to be failing to carry out the role effectively, or are making decisions that others feel are detrimental.
NUS (National Union of Students)	The NUS is a collective of students' unions in the United Kingdom. Around 600 students' unions (including Worcester Students' Union) are affiliated to it, which is more than 95% of all higher and further education unions in the UK.
NUS Liberation Conference	NUS Liberation Conference brings together students to build campaigns, make NUS policy and discuss issues affecting students from Liberation Caucuses. The NUS VP Liberation is also elected at this conference.
NUS Liberation Caucuses	These refer to the different Liberation Groups in NUS' structure. These currently include: Black Students, Disabled Students LGBTQ+ Students (with a separate group for Trans students) and Women Students. NUS and their member Unions (including Worcester) use the term 'liberation' because we believe that working on these issues is about liberation – freedom from the oppression people face because of their identities.

Purpose of Student Networks

1. The Union will establish Networks to create a platform for students to work together to build student communities and create change through collective action.
2. Networks can lead campaigns, hold forums and events, and draft Policy Motions for Student Council. They will exist to do the following:
 - a. Student Networks will have a formal representative function within the Union, and each have a seat on both Student Council and Welfare and Inclusion Council reserved for their Chair or their nominee.
 - b. Take action and campaign on the issues that matter to their members.
 - c. Provide Networking opportunities for students who share a common characteristic or interest.
 - d. Carry out Policy deferred to them by Student Council.
 - e. Act as a consultative body for Full-Time Officers
 - f. Represent the views of those students whom their Network represents to Student Council, Welfare and Inclusion Council, the wider Union and University.

Structure of Student Networks

3. All Student Networks shall be considered fully a part of Worcester Students' Union and are subject to the Union's governing documents, as well as to rulings of the Executive Committee, Student Council, Referenda, and the Board of Trustees.
4. All Student Networks will have a constitution based on a standard constitution provided by the Union, which must not be amended in a way that is not in line with the values or rules of the Union or its governing documents.
5. There shall be the following Networks:
 - a. the Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students' Network;
 - b. the Commuter Students' Network;
 - c. the Disabled Students' Network;
 - d. the International Students' Network;
 - e. the LGBTQ+ Students' Network;
 - f. the Mature Students' Network;
 - g. the Postgraduate Students' Network;

- h. the Sustainability Network;
 - i. the Women's Network.
6. Student Networks can affiliate to relevant external organisations. Networks cannot affiliate to any organisation whose aims and objects conflict with those of the Union or its policies. All affiliations must be approved by the Executive Committee.

Membership of Student Networks

7. Only Full Members of the Union as defined in in Bye Law 1 (Membership) may join a Student Network.
8. The Union reserves the right to deny membership of Networks to any Member of the Union. That member may have a right of appeal, in accordance with the Union's Code of Conduct, which is available on the Union's website.
9. Eligibility to join each Network is as follows:
- a. The BAME Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who defines as having African, African-Caribbean, Arab, Asian, Jewish heritage or from any other minority ethnic origin.
 - b. The Commuter Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who have the same home and term-time address.
 - c. The Disabled Students Network is open to any full member of the Union who self-define as being disabled and/or having a long-term medical condition and/or having a specific learning difficulty.
 - d. The International Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who does not have British Citizenship.
 - e. The LGBTQ+ Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who self-identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Pansexual, Asexual and or Unsure/Undecided and any other identities which do not conform to heteronormative standards of gender and/or sexuality or who self-define as experiencing homophobia, bi-phobia and/or transphobia for not fitting in to heteronormative society.
 - f. The Mature Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who was over the age of twenty-one when they began an undergraduate course or, in the case of postgraduate courses, over the age of twenty-five when they began their course.

- g. The Postgraduate Students' Network is open to any full member of the Union who is study a postgraduate course at the University of Worcester.
 - h. The Women's Network is open to any full member of the Union who self-defines as a woman.
 - i. The Sustainability Network is open to any full member of the Union who has an interest in sustainability.
10. Networks may agree to allow Allies to attend their activities. Allies would not have any voting rights.
 11. All students who are eligible to join a given Network may attend and vote in any Network open meeting and for election to the Network's committee.
 12. There is no mandatory fee to join a Network, but each member must register via the Union's website.
 13. Networks may charge a fee for a social membership to access social events, appropriate for the sustainability of the group.
 14. Networks charging a fee must make clear to those paying the fee what is included within the price of the fee and, as far as practical, outline any additional costs that might be incurred.

Addition of New Networks to the Union

15. Students may wish to add new Networks to the Union's governance structure.
16. To propose a new Network, an application setting out the aims and objectives of the group should be submitted to the Union's President by the prospective committee supported by a minimum of 5 additional full members of the Union. An application form can be found on the Union's website.
17. The President would work with the prospective committee to draw up a constitution for the new prospective Network.
18. The application would then be taken to the next meeting of Student Council for approval. In making their decision, Student Council will take into account how the Student Network will advance the charitable objectives of the Union and its membership
19. Students can propose new Networks at any time of year, but any newly approved Network would be launched by the Union at the beginning of the next semester following its approval.

20. Networks that are not approved by Student Council can appeal in writing to the Executive Committee. The decision of the Executive Committee is final.

Network Committees

21. All Networks shall have a committee that will be made up of a minimum of a:

- a. Chair
- b. Vice Chair
- c. Secretary

22. All Network committees are responsible for:

- a. The running of the Network, ensuring it works towards its aims and objectives.
- b. Undertaking the representative function of the Network.
- c. Promoting the Network to attract new membership.
- d. The smooth running of any social events and activities.
- e. The organisation of the Networks' open meetings and committee meetings.
- f. Working with relevant Union staff members to ensure the Network remains financially solvent
- g. Writing and circulating minutes of these meetings.
- h. Updating Student Council on the Network's activities
- i. Seeking help and support from staff within the Union if they have concerns about their Network or any of its members.
- j. Attend progress meetings with Union staff at least once a semester or as requested, to ensure you have support and sustainable plans.
- k. Ensuring compliance with data protection legislation for which training will be provided by relevant Union staff.

23. Network committees shall be democratically elected to represent their members.

24. Elections will be conducted under the supervision of the Union.

25. Quorum for Network committee elections will be 20% of their registered membership.

26. Only registered members will be entitled to stand and vote in Network elections.

27. Networks are encouraged to hold hustings at an open meeting (a meeting where all members are invited) during the elections period.

28. Election to the Committee shall be conducted by single transferable vote in line with the rules laid out in Bye Law 3 (Elections) Points 39-43 and 47-56. The A member of the Union's management team will act as Returning Officer for Network elections.
29. Each new Network committee shall receive a handover from the outgoing committee.
30. Network committees shall attend mandatory committee training sessions provided by the Union to ensure each committee member is aware of their role and responsibilities. Committee members may not be able to continue in their role until the Union is satisfied, they have received adequate training.
 - a. Network chairs, vice chairs and secretaries will be required to attend mandatory data protection training and will be unable to access registered member names and contact details until they have done so.
31. If Network committee members fail to complete the mandatory committee training prior to the end of their first semester on the Committee, the committee members will have deemed to have resigned from their role. The Union reserves the right to remove committee members if their engagement with training or the wider role is deemed to be poor or in some way detrimental to the running of the Network.
32. In the event of a vacancy in the Network committee, a by-election should be arranged within two weeks to re-elect vacant positions.
33. The individual(s) who are deemed to have resigned from their positions through failure to attend training or low engagement with the role cannot stand in the next election.
34. The individual(s) may appeal this decision in writing to the Executive Committee outlining any mitigating circumstances which impacted upon their ability to attend training. The evidence will be reviewed by the Executive Committee within 2 weeks of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Executive Committee is final.
35. In compliance with data protection legislation, details of Committee members shall only be released to a third party with the permission of the Committee member, in line with the Union's Student Data Privacy Notice

36. Registered members of a Network may remove any member of the Network's committee by submitting a secure petition signed by at least 50% + 1 of their registered membership following the procedure set out in the Union's Code of Conduct which is available on the Union's website.
37. A Vote of no Confidence shall be deemed as a last resort and any member wishing to implement a vote of no confidence should exhaust all other avenues prior to starting proceedings.
38. The Executive Committee may reject any petition for a Vote of No Confidence if they feel that all other avenues, such as informal mediation, have not been used first.
39. In line with the Code of Conduct, the Union reserves the right to remove Committee members from their position through the disciplinary process. Sanctions may include a ban on being able to run for Committee positions in the future.
40. If a Network fails to elect a committee the Union will support the running of the Network until such time as a committee can be elected.
41. If a Network fails to elect a committee for a whole semester, the Network will be suspended, and a motion will be taken to Student Council to consider the removal of the Network from the Union's structures. In this instance Student Council will be able to make one of the following decisions:
 - a. The Network is of material importance to the student body and the President should be mandated to develop an action plan to restart the Network.
 - b. The Network should be disbanded and removed from the Union's structures.

Open Meetings of Networks and Procedures for Forming Policy

42. Networks must hold open meetings at least once a semester and advertise them publicly.
43. The purpose of Open Meetings is to discuss issues of relevance to the Network and where appropriate approve policy to be taken to Student Council on behalf of the Network.
44. The Union will publish templates and guidance on submitting policy to Networks on its website and will provide training to committees.

45. Decision making in Networks will, as far as possible, be consensus based.
Where consensus is not possible, decisions can be agreed by a simple majority vote.
46. Open meetings will be chaired by the Network's Chair or their nominee.
47. Minutes for all Open Meetings will be made available on the Network's webpage and submitting to the President within two weeks of the meeting.
48. Networks may invite the Union's Officer Trustees (Full-Time Officers) to attend each Network. Officer Trustees will be observers to the meeting unless they are members of the Network.
49. Networks may invite guest speakers and Union staff to attend open meetings, as the Chair feels appropriate. Networks are subject to the Union's guest speaker policy which can be found on the Union's website.

NUS Liberation Conference Delegates

50. The following Networks will be able to send delegates to attend the NUS Liberation Conference in line with NUS rules:
 - a. the Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students' Network
 - b. the Disabled Students' Network
 - c. the LGBTQ+ Students' Network
51. The Executive Committee will inform the Networks of their entitlement on an annual basis
52. At the discretion of the Executive Committee may be virtual rather than in person.
53. The Chair of each eligible Network will be the first delegate and all other members shall be appointed in line with the NUS rules for that conference. Appointment will usually be by election as defined by the Student Union Engagement Team on behalf of the Trustee Board.
54. In line with NUS rules, delegates that self-define into multiple NUS Liberation groups may participate, vote, speak and contribute to any of the caucuses they are eligible to attend.

Finances of Networks

55. No Network shall be run for private profit of any of its Members or the Union.
56. No Network committee member may receive personal or private payment for their services either directly or indirectly by any source.

57. No Network may hold its own bank account. All funds shall be held with the Union.
58. All Networks must specify two signatories to access those funds and must be:
 - a. The Chair
 - b. The Vice Chair
59. Any surpluses from Network events will be paid to the Union for use by the Network. This must be paid to the Union within 2 working days of receipt by the committee or their nominee.
60. Activities that fall outside of the aims and objectives of Network may not be financed from Union or the Network's own funds.
61. No Network may commit funds to any expenditure without following the Union's financial procedures which will be made available, annually, on the Union's website and at committee training.
62. All transport bookings must be made through the Union.
63. The Union can freeze any Network's account if its committee members have not adhered to the Union's procedures or whilst an investigation is undertaken.
64. In line with Point 41 of this Bye Law if a Network is suspended their accounts shall also be frozen.
65. All expenditure must be authorised by the Union's budget holder for the relevant Network.
66. The Union will provide each Network with an annual budget.
67. All Networks must complete an annual financial report which must include details of year-to-date income and expenditure against yearly budget, together with explanations as appropriate.

Sponsorship and Promotion of Student Networks

68. All Network communications including leaflets, tickets, posters and publications shall carry the name of the group and the Union's logo. All such material must be approved by the Union's marketing team in advance. All Networks must comply with the Union's regulations on advertising and putting up posters, which will be made available on the Union's website
69. The Union's Networks shall be entitled to seek sponsorship from external organisations to supplement their income, but in doing so, Network must take

care to ensure that other external contracts held by the Union , as well as the Union's values and charitable status, are not infringed. No Network may receive sponsorship from a UK registered political party.

70. The Union's Networks must consult the President, or the core Union staff member who supports their Network before entering into any contract for sponsorship to ensure they adhere to the above. The Executive Committee shall have the final say on any contracts entered into by the Union or its Networks.
71. Networks must not directly or indirectly promote organisations that are prohibited by Union policy.
72. Any Networks wanting to undertake fundraising activities, whether to generate income for themselves or to raise funds for a charity, must do so only with the prior consent of the Vice President Student Activities and, where appropriate, the RAG (Raise and Give) Student-Led Service.

Property Regulations

73. All Networks will be subject to the property regulations for societies, sports clubs and student led services laid out in Bye Law 6 (Societies, Sports Clubs and Student-Led Services) Points 81-88.

Health and Safety

74. All Networks will be subject to the health and safety regulations for societies, sports clubs and student led services laid out in Bye Law 6 (Societies, Sports Clubs and Student-Led Services) Points 89-94.