



# Hereford College of Arts Student Union Constitution

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## **Introduction**

The Hereford College of Arts Student Union is run by enrolled students with support of a staff member as described within the constitution.

The corporation recognises Hereford College of Arts Student Union as a democratically run organisation, committed to serving and representing the students of the college. The corporation will endeavour to ensure that the activities of The Union do not contravene the college's equal opportunities policy nor bring the college into disrepute. To aid this process The Union will submit a yearly report to the Academic Quality & Standards Committee.

The constitution is a framework that sets out the activities and procedures of the student union.

It provides a framework for the operation of the students' union by:

- Defining what The Union can or cannot do.
- Indicating how the union's executive can act on behalf of the student body.
- Outlining how members can air their views.

The Constitution is made up of three sections:

### **Section 1 – The Articles**

This section defines the aims and objectives of The Union as well as setting out what can or cannot be done.

### **Section 2 – The Schedules**

This section gives further operational details in relation to how things get done.

**Name**

1. There shall be a Student Union in the name of Hereford College of Arts Student Union (and in this constitution it is called 'The Union').

**Objectives**

2. To promote the interests and welfare of students at Hereford College of Arts during their course of study and representing, supporting and signposting advice.
  - 2.1 To be a recognised representative channel between students and the college.
  - 2.2 To provide social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities, and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of the students.
  - 2.3 These aims and objects shall be practised without discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability or medical condition, except that action may be taken to promote equality of opportunity.
  - 2.4 The Union shall practise the above aims and objectives independent of any party or religious organisation.
  - 2.5 To work alongside the college, representing the student body, reviewing the Student Charter and other college procedures where requested to do so by the Senior Leadership Team or the Governing Board.

**Membership**

3. All students, over the age of 16 and enrolled on a HE or FE course at the college are automatically members of The Union and shall have the following rights:
  - a) To vote in Union elections
  - b) To stand for Student Governor positions
  - c) To stand for Course Representative positions
  - d) To stand for Executive Committee positions
  - e) To be a member of and run Union clubs and societies
  - f) To vote for an FE Candidate, the voters must be FE
  - g) To vote for an HE Candidate, the voters must be HE
  - h) A HE student cannot vote for a FE candidate, FE students cannot vote for a HE candidate.
- 3.1 Students who do not wish to be members of The Union should sign the 'opt-out' register held with the Student Engagement Team at College Road campus.
- 3.2 All Union members shall be entitled to buy an NUS Extra Card (short course students are also entitled to buy an NUS Extra Card).
- 3.3 Staff members shall also be entitled to buy an NUS Extra Card but do not hold any other rights within The Union.

## **Course Representatives and the Student Council**

4. Members of the Student Union Executive Committee automatically become members of the student councils (FE/HE as relevant) alongside course representatives. A Student Union Executive Committee member may hold a course representative role as well as their committee role.
- 4.1 The SU President may represent other members of the student council in dialogue with college management.

## **The Student Union Staff Contact (SUSC)**

5. The Student Union Staff Contact (hereafter, SUSC) will be an employee of the college that works alongside The Union Executive Committee to ensure that The Union's affairs are conducted properly.
- 5.1 In the case of SUSC having an absence, the current line manager of the SUSC will be the one to contact with enquiries.

The role of the SUSC is:

- A) To work with the Student Union across college to develop links between staff and students, and to promote and develop the activities and role of the Student Union.
- B) To assist in providing an enriched and positive experience for students across Further and Higher Education courses.

## **The Student Union Executive Committee**

6. The Executive Committee will be the elected body responsible for coordinating the activities of the Student Union. The Executive Committee will actively seek to represent the student body as a whole.
- 6.1 The Executive Committee will campaign on issues raised by course representatives and deliver activities that are appropriate/ requested by students.
- 6.2 The Executive Committee will usually be made up of the following Union Officers, but this is subject to change.
  - a) HE Student President
  - b) FE Representative
  - c) Campaign Officer
  - d) Events Officer
  - e) Societies Officer
  - f) Media Officer
  - g) Sustainability Officer.

All of these roles except that of President will have a Co-Officer position available.

- 6.3 The roles available may be changed at the discretion of the Executive Committee in consultation with the SUSC.
- 6.4 The elections for the officer positions will usually take place when students return at the start of the new academic term. Elections will be advertised in enough time for students to apply, usually around two weeks. Once the roles have been elected, the successful candidates will take their positions immediately.
- 6.5 If possible, there will be a handover period where the new Student Union Officers will shadow the outgoing officers.
- 6.6 The SUSC will support the Executive Committee, so sufficient support is in place to ensure The Union runs legitimately but will have no voting rights.
- 6.7 The role of the Executive Committee shall be to:
  - a) Act as the channel of communication between the members of The Union, the Course Representatives, the Senior Management Team and the Corporation.
  - b) Work together towards collective goals and support the activities of each other.
  - c) Be responsible for ensuring The Union works towards the Objectives of this constitution.
  - d) Fulfil the specific duties outlined in individual job descriptions. (*Appendix one*)

- 6.8 All Executive Committee Members will be expected to understand and comply with the terms of the constitution.
- 6.9 Executive Officers will no longer be officers if:
- a) They resign (must write a letter of resignation).
  - b) They fail to attend three consecutive meetings without apologies to the President or SUSC (The SU President in consultation with the SUSC may reinstate a member in exceptional circumstances).

## **Finance**

7. The financial year of The Union shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- 7.1 The Union budget is overseen by the SUSC and SUSC line manager.
- 7.2 The SUSC will provide a financial report to the Executive Committee regularly.

## **Clubs & Societies**

8. Any member of The Union can join or submit a proposal to set up clubs or societies as long as they meet the requirements set out in the Schedules and are in line with The Union Objectives and college policies including for example around Health and Safety, Freedom of Speech within the law, the Prevent Duty, and Safeguarding.
- 8.1 Any student wishing to set up a club or society should, in the first instance, contact the SUSC or Societies Officer and complete an application for Clubs & Societies form.

## **Amendments to the Constitution**

9. The SUSC will review this constitution annually within student council.
- 9.1 The Corporation will review the constitution every three years through Board Committee.

## **Complaints**

10. If a complaint is made about an individual officer, the Executive Committee, it will be dealt with under the college's Student Complaints procedure.
- 10.1 Outside of the student office is a suggestion box. This is to be used as part anonymous suggestions/complaints procedure. There is a suggestions sheet provided where students are able to remain anonymous or not. The box will be emptied once a week and then relayed back to Senior Leadership Team.

## **Interpretation**

11. In the event of a challenge to the interpretation of any part of this constitution, the ruling of the SU President and SUSC shall be sought.

### **Safeguarding and Prevent**

12. The Union will refer any Safeguarding issues to the appropriate member of staff using the [safeguarding@hca.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@hca.ac.uk) email address, in accordance with the college Safeguarding Policy.
- 12.1 In planning and delivering all SU activities, The Executive Committee will refer to HCA's Safeguarding and Prevent Policies.
- 12.2 In booking speakers, The Executive Committee will ensure the guest speaker policy is followed.

### **Freedom of Speech**

13. The SU will promote a positive and inclusive environment which values the rights of individuals to have freedom of speech within the law to express ideas and views even if they are controversial, provocative or unpopular in nature.



## **Schedule One – Meeting Regulations**

### **Student Union Meetings**

1. The Executive Committee will meet a minimum fortnightly during term time.
- 1.1 The SU President or SUSC will usually be chairperson for all Executive Committee meetings, unless they nominate a substitute.
- 1.2 Minutes will be taken as both a record of the meeting and to inform those not in attendance of the business covered and any actions.
- 1.3 If Executive Committee meetings with less than three members attending will not be considered quorate to make significant decisions (as might reasonably be considered decisions that have a significant impact).

## **Schedule Two- Selection of Student Union Executive Committee**

This schedule outlines how Union members can stand for positions on the Executive Committee.

2. Nomination packs will be available in reasonable time before the closing date for expressions of interest (usually a minimum of 10 working days). They will be available from the SUSC and online. The nomination pack shall contain a copy of the job descriptions, an outline of the selection/election process and a nomination form.
- 2.1 All candidates wishing to stand for an Officer position must complete a nomination form, with a recommendation by a fellow student, and return it by the closing date.
- 2.2 Once all nominations are submitted a decision will be made on whether to follow an election or selection process. A selection process will be used if expression of interest is three students or below, an election process will be used if expression of interest is three students or above (Part II of the Education Act 1994 requires institutions to 'take steps that are reasonably practicable to secure that any students' union for students at the establishment operates in a fair and democratic manner).
- 2.3 In the case of an SU President candidate it is expected there will be an election process. In the case of only one student applying for a role, an interview with the SUSC will determine whether the student is suitable for the role. The SUSC must make this decision fairly, without any conflict of interest and must have legitimate reason if they deny the student the role. If the student is deemed unsuitable for the role, the position can be readvertised. Any appeal to the decision made by the SUSC would be made by the candidate in writing to the Head of HE.
- 2.4 In the event of the SUSC having a conflict of interests in the selection, the selection would be made by the Head of HE or their nominated staff member.

*When a selection process should happen:*

- 2.5 Candidates will be invited to attend an initial meeting outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Executive Committee.
- 2.6 The student body will be notified of all students wishing to stand for the Executive Committee. Any students with a concern about the suitability of candidates should raise them directly with the SUSC immediately.

*When an election should happen:*

- 2.7 Voting will take place by secret ballot and will be decided on a simple majority of votes cast (first past the post).
- 2.8 If any post on the Executive falls vacant the position will be advertised. If more than two candidates come forward a by-selection will be carried out (through the SUSC interviewing the candidates) (there may also be the option to have a Co representative). In the case of only one student applying for a role, an interview with the SUSC will determine whether the student is suitable for the role. The SUSC must make this decision fairly, without any conflict of interest and must have legitimate reason if they deny the student the role. If the student is deemed unsuitable for the role, the position can be re-advertised.

## **Appendix One – Job Descriptions**

### **HE Student Union President will**

- i) Act as head of the Student Union representing the student voice on the Higher Education side at HCA.
- ii) Support other Executive Officers in combination with the SUSC.
- iii) Attend relevant college meetings such as student council, focus groups and forums.
- iv) Build on the communication between The Union, students and staff.
- v) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- vi) Work closely with the rest of The Executive Committee to arrange events throughout the year.
- vii) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.

### **FE Representative will**

- i) Represent the student voice on the Further Education side at HCA.
- ii) Support other Executive Officers in combination with the SUSC.
- iii) Attend relevant college meetings such as focus groups and forums.
- iv) Build on the communication between The Union, students and staff.
- v) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- vi) Participate fully in Executive Committee meetings.
- vii) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.
- viii) Will also look to the HE Student Union President for guidance, advice and direction.

### **Media Officer will**

- i) Oversee the Student Union social media pages.
- ii) Be responsible for design of posters and publicity for Union events and campaigns (design or approve others' designs as necessary).
- iii) Be responsible for presenting a suitable brand image for The Union.
- iv) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- v) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.
- vi) Help promote NUS Extra Cards, to increase the budget for SU events.

### **Societies Officer will**

- i) Keep the students and SUSC up to date with what HCA societies there are.
- ii) Be responsible for helping new societies form and letting students know how to set up a society.
- iii) The Societies Officer will oversee the running of the societies, keep everyone up to date on when and where the societies are taking place, and how new students can join.
- iv) Help develop and maintain societies.
- v) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- vi) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.
- vii) Help promote NUS Extra Cards, to increase the budget for SU events.

### **Campaigns Officer will**

- i) Talk/listen/research with other students to find out key issues affecting the academic success and personal development/enrichment of the students.
- ii) Organise and promote a variety of social events to reflect the interests of all students and support the Events Coordinator.
- iii) Organise fundraising opportunities for a charity chosen by the SU.
- iv) Look to NUS and other local campaigns as appropriate to relay to the students.
- v) Encourage students to develop their own campaigns.
- vi) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- vii) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.
- viii) Liaise with the SUSC to agree on annual campaigns for the Campaigns calendar.
- ix) Help promote NUS Extra Cards, to increase the budget for SU events.

### **Events Officer will**

- i) Work closely with the other members of The Executive Committee to arrange Fresher's Week and other events throughout the year
- ii) Organise and promote a variety of social events to reflect the interests of all students
- iii) Organise fundraising activities for charities and SU events
- iv) Help promote NUS Extra Cards, to increase the budget for SU events
- v) Involve as many students in the Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA
- vi) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of the Union
- vii) The Events Officer will be the lead Officer on Fresher's week events and activities

### **Sustainability Officer will**

- i) Talk/listen/research with other students to find out key issues affecting sustainability on campus.
- ii) Support the Events Officer on making events more sustainable.
- iii) Work closely with the other members of The Executive Committee to arrange Fresher's Week and other events throughout the year.
- iv) Join and attend the meetings of the Sustainability Committee.
- v) Look at local and national organisations that promote sustainable practises and see how they can be implemented by the college working with the sustainability committee.
- vi) Get students involved in creating their own one off campaigns that promote sustainability through working with the sustainability committee.
- vii) Involve as many students in The Union as possible and help enhance the student experience at HCA.
- viii) Act responsibly and prudently in all matters, and in the best interest of The Union.