

Societies' Code of Practice

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DEFINITION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the processes and procedures that should be applied to the management and governance of all Societies affiliated to Beds Students' Union (Beds SU).
- 1.2 A copy of this document will be available to any member of Beds SU online at www.bedssu.co.uk or on request by emailing Be.Involved@beds.ac.uk.
- 1.3 The remit of Societies is to allow students with common interest to form groups to further explore this interest and provide opportunities for both social and personal development.
- 1.4 The following Union documents are superior to this Code of Practice:
 - 1.4.1 Memorandum and Articles (M&A);
 - 1.4.2 Beds SU Bylaws;
 - 1.4.3 Members' Code of Conduct (MCC).

CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT

- 2.1 Changes to this document can only be made by a vote held at a quorate Societies' Council (SC) with a two-thirds majority in favour. Following this vote the changes recommended will be subject to ratification at the Union's Board of Trustees (BoT) through a simple majority vote.
- 2.2 Changes to this document cannot be made if they contradict the Beds SU Bylaws.

MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Each society will have the following types of membership:
 - 3.1.1 Student Members;
 - 3.1.2 Associate Members.
- 3.2 Student Members are current members of the University of Bedfordshire's Students' Union (Beds SU) who have purchased membership to an individual society. These members will have the following rights as Society members:
 - 3.2.1 To fully participate in events and socials;
 - 3.2.2 To attend and vote at Annual General Meetings (AGM);
 - 3.2.3 To stand for society committee positions via an online election;
 - 3.2.4 To vote in society elections.
- 3.3 Associate Membership may be offered to individuals who:
 - 3.3.1 Are students studying on University of Bedfordshire courses franchised to a partner institution in the United Kingdom;
 - 3.3.2 Are students studying on University of Bedfordshire validated courses at a partner institution in the United Kingdom;
 - 3.3.3 Are staff of the University of Bedfordshire.
- 3.4 Associate members will have the following rights as Society members:
 - 3.4.1 To fully participate in events and socials;
 - 3.4.2 To attend Annual General Meetings (AGM) as an observer.
- 3.5 Individuals in the categories above who wish to be considered for Associate Membership should complete an application form which shall be reviewed by the President of the Union. A small fee may be chargeable to Associate Members which shall be made clear at the point of application.
- 3.6 Associate members shall not be considered members for the purpose of the Memorandum and Articles or the Companies Act, and such shall not have the right to stand or vote on any union election.
- 3.7 The process for which a society may be affiliated is outlined in section 6.
- 3.8 Membership fees for membership types shall be agreed annually, in line with the Student Groups Finance Procedures.

COMMITTEES

- 4.1 Each society must have the following three committee positions:
- 4.1.1 Chairperson;
 - 4.1.2 Treasurer;
 - 4.1.3 Secretary.
- 4.2 Committee members are responsible for ensuring their society and associated events adhere to the following Union policies and procedures:
- 4.2.1 Memorandum and Articles;
 - 4.2.2 Beds SU Bylaws;
 - 4.2.3 Societies' Code of Practice;
 - 4.2.4 Beds SU Members' Code of Conduct;
 - 4.2.5 Student Groups Finance Procedures;
 - 4.2.6 Student Group Health and Safety Policy;
 - 4.2.7 Student Groups Data Protection Policy.
- 4.3 These positions will have the set role description for each society as follows:
- 4.3.1 **Chairperson:**
 - 4.3.1.1 The Chairperson shall be the principal officer and spokesperson for the society and the chairperson of meetings of the Committee, AGM and EGM. The Chairperson shall attend meetings of the Societies' Council and the Beds Students' Union Annual Members' Meeting (AMM) as a representative of the society. They shall have overall responsibility for the promotion and development of the society. They shall be a signatory for release of payments from society funds.
 - 4.3.2 **Treasurer:**
 - 4.3.2.1 The Treasurer shall be the chief financial officer and accountant for the society, acting as first point of contact for all financial matters. The Treasurer shall attend meetings of the Societies' Council and Beds Students' Union AMM as a representative of the society. The Treasurer shall set and oversee the production of an annual budget, event/trip specific budgets, provide receipts/invoices for all purchases, and present a financial report to the members at the end of the year. They shall be a signatory for release of payments from society funds.
 - 4.3.3 **Secretary:**
 - 4.3.3.1 The Secretary shall take minutes of all meetings, maintain the membership records and deputise for the Chairperson as appropriate. The Secretary shall attend meetings of the Societies' Council and Beds Students' Union AMM as a representative of the society. They shall be responsible for the receipt of and response to any external communications

sent to the society. They shall be responsible for regular communications to the membership and the upkeep of the group's area of the Beds SU website. They shall be a signatory for release of payments from society funds.

- 4.4 Each society may have additional specialist roles as defined in the Society's constitution, which requires annual approval at the Society's AGM.
- 4.5 All committee positions will be elected annually alongside the Union's major elections in term two. If a committee position becomes vacant the following rules will be followed for replacement:
 - 4.5.1 A by-election in term one;
 - 4.5.2 The new individual elected at the major elections in term two bringing their start date forward.
- 4.6 In the event that a position becomes vacant for one/all of the three required committee roles and is not successfully replaced through one of the mechanisms above, the society will be subject to the suspension/disaffiliation procedure outlined in section 7.
- 4.7 A committee position can either become vacant:
 - 4.7.1 Through a resignation which should be emailed to Be.Involved@beds.ac.uk
 - 4.7.1.1 A committee member shall be deemed to have resigned if they fail to respond to any communications for a period of 4 weeks.
 - 4.7.2 Or through the procedure for the removal of elected committee members outlined in sections 9 and 10.

SOCIETIES' COUNCIL

- 5.1 The main purpose of the Societies' Council (SC) is as follows:
 - 5.1.1 To provide information and updates to societies;
 - 5.1.2 To note society affiliations, suspensions;
 - 5.1.3 To hear and rule on appeals to society suspensions and disaffiliations
 - 5.1.4 To receive a report from the Vice President Opportunities on progress against their manifesto;
 - 5.1.5 To provide a forum where committees can question the Vice President Opportunities.
- 5.2 The Council will be chaired by an eligible council member who is elected by the membership, who will have a casting vote only, should it be required at the meeting.
- 5.3 The meeting will take place a minimum of once per term and a maximum of three times per term. The schedule for meetings will be published on an annual basis before the start of the academic year. Councils will rotate the campus upon which they meet and offer the provision for online collaboration.
- 5.4 At any meeting, each society eligible to participate in the Council will have a maximum of three voting/ratification cards, should it be required at the meeting. Three committee members will need to be in attendance for the society to receive three voting/ratification cards.
- 5.5 No business shall take place unless 50% plus one of the affiliated societies eligible to vote at the Council are present.
 - 5.5.1 These voting rights are automatically assigned to the positions named in 4.1;
 - 5.5.2 Should deputies be sent, official notification must be made in advance to the relevant union staff member.
- 5.6 Societies' Council will be open to all elected society committee members.
- 5.7 Any vote taken will pass with a simple majority unless the vote is to make changes to this document, when a two-thirds majority will be required.
- 5.8 The Council will follow the following standard agenda format:
 - 5.8.1 Welcome & Apologies (Chair);
 - 5.8.2 Accepting the Agenda/Declarations of Interest (Chair);
 - 5.8.3 Minutes from the Previous Meeting (Chair);
 - 5.8.4 Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere on the Agenda (All);
 - 5.8.5 Reports from the Council Chair (Chair);
 - 5.8.6 Affiliations and/or Disaffiliations (Chair);

- 5.8.7 Vice President Opportunities Report & Questions (VP Opportunities);
 - 5.8.8 Any Other Business.
 - 5.8.9 Date and time of next meeting (Chair).
- 5.9 The agenda for each Council will be published a minimum of five working days before the meeting.
- 5.10 In addition to the standard agenda items the Council will have the opportunity for consultation and ratification on the following policies and procedures on an annual basis:
- 5.10.1 Student Groups Finance Procedures;
 - 5.10.2 Societies Code of Practice.
- 5.11 Societies council shall also be shown the following policies on an annual basis to make them aware of any changes:
- 5.11.1 Beds SU By Laws;
 - 5.11.2 Beds SU Freedom of Speech Policy;
 - 5.11.3 Beds SU Members' Code of Conduct;
 - 5.11.4 Student Groups' Health and Safety Policy;
 - 5.11.5 Student Groups' Data Protection Policy.

AFFILIATION

- 6.1 All new societies must complete the following application process in order to become an affiliated society of Beds SU.
- 6.2 An application form must be completed online – www.bedssu.co.uk/involved - which will consist of the following:
 - 6.2.1 A lead contact (who will be used for correspondence);
 - 6.2.2 Proposed name for the society;
 - 6.2.3 Proposed aims and objectives of your society;
 - 6.2.4 Proposed committee structure;
 - 6.2.5 A list of five union members interested in joining the new society.
- 6.3 Beds SU's Executive Committee will consider the application based upon the following six principles. In order to be affiliated the application must:
 - 6.3.1 Be best supported through the societies department rather than the sports department;
 - 6.3.2 Have clear aims and objectives that do not directly duplicate another society or union department;
 - 6.3.3 Demonstrate that the society is a feasible and sustainable venture, measured through interest from the current membership, affordable for member, plans submitted and national trends (where applicable);
 - 6.3.4 Demonstrate that the society does not encourage behaviour likely to be deemed as misconduct as defined in the Beds SU Members' Code of Conduct;
 - 6.3.5 Demonstrate that the Society will operate under and does not contravene any Freedom of Speech Policy approved by the membership and in place at the time of application.
- 6.4 The Executive Committee will vote to either:
 - 6.4.1 Accept the application without amendment;
 - 6.4.2 Accept the application with amendments;
 - 6.4.3 Decline the application on the basis that it does not fulfil the criteria above.
- 6.5 The decision of the Executive Committee will be communicated to the lead contact within five working days of the decision being made, including a commentary on the discussion held.
- 6.6 Should the decision be to accept the application without amendments or with amendments (which are in turn accepted by the lead contact), the decision will then be forwarded to the next Societies' Council for a note of information.
- 6.7 Should the Executive Committee decide to either accept with amendments or decline the application, the lead contact will have the right to appeal this

decision in writing, to the Societies' Council, within five working days of the notification being sent, by emailing be.involved@beds.ac.uk. This appeal should include:

- 6.7.1 Statement of which of the following grounds they are appealing on:
 - 6.7.1.1 Evidence of the procedure stated above not being followed;
 - 6.7.1.2 Evidence of the misinterpretation of an element of the student group application form;
 - 6.7.1.3 Evidence of prejudice or bias from members of the Executive Committee;
 - 6.7.1.4 Any combination of the above.
 - 6.7.2 Evidence supporting the appeal
- 6.8 A member of the Be Involved Team will ensure that the appeal is brought to the next Societies' Council.
- 6.9 In the event of an appeal being brought before Societies' Council, they can either rule to:
- 6.9.1 Uphold the appeal and arrange for the application to be forwarded to the next Executive Committee meeting for ratification;
 - 6.9.2 Reject the appeal, which will be the final decision and any application for a similar society will not be considered within a three-month period.
- 6.10 Once a society has been approved, or in the event of the Societies' Council upholding an appeal, the Student Activities Team will arrange for a mini-site to be created on www.bedssu.co.uk so that the applicant can begin to formally register members.
- 6.11 The five union members required for affiliation must register as members of the society on the mini-site within 10 working days of the application approval. Failure to do so will result in the society being suspended as per section 7.

SUSPENSION / DISAFFILIATION

- 7.1 A society will be tabled for a discussion and vote for suspension at the Executive Committee if any of the following situations occur:

- 7.1.1 The Society has one or more mandatory committee positions vacant for two continuous election periods;
 - 7.1.2 The Society becomes in anyway unsustainable (e.g. has fewer than 10 members for a period of three months, is in the red in their account etc);
 - 7.1.3 The Society breaches any of the following Policies or Procedures:
 - 7.1.3.1 Memorandum and Articles;
 - 7.1.3.2 Beds SU Bylaws;
 - 7.1.3.3 Societies' Code of Practice;
 - 7.1.3.4 Beds SU Members' Code of Conduct;
 - 7.1.3.5 Beds SU Freedom of Speech Policy;
 - 7.1.3.6 Clubs and Societies Finance Procedures;
 - 7.1.3.7 Student Groups' Health and Safety Policy;
 - 7.1.3.8 Students Groups' Data Protection Policy.
 - 7.1.4 The Society continuously fails to complete any required essential forms prior an event on three occasions including, but not limited to:
 - 7.1.4.1 Trip/Event Form;
 - 7.1.4.2 Room Booking Form;
 - 7.1.4.3 Accident Report Form;
 - 7.1.4.4 Non-Incident Declaration Form;
 - 7.1.4.5 Attendees list.
 - 7.1.5 The Society fails to send an eligible representative to two consecutive meetings of the Societies' Council;
 - 7.1.6 The Society fails to hold a quorate Annual General Meeting that includes a vote on any changes to their constitution, in any given four academic terms;
 - 7.1.7 The Society acts outside of its aims and objectives;
 - 7.1.8 The Society acts outside of the mission, vision and values of the Union;
 - 7.1.9 The Society acts outside of the law.
- 7.2 In the event that the Executive Committee decide to suspend a society, notification will be given in writing with within five working days of the decision being made and will include a commentary on the discussion held.
- 7.3 Should the Executive Committee decide to suspend a society they will have the right to appeal this decision in writing, within five working days of the notification being sent, to the Societies' Council meeting, by emailing be.inovved@beds.ac.uk .This appeal should include:
- 7.3.1 Statement of which of the following grounds they are appealing on:
 - 7.3.1.1 Evidence of the procedure stated above not being followed;
 - 7.3.1.2 Mitigating circumstances;
 - 7.3.1.3 Evidence of prejudice or bias from members of the Executive Committee;

- 7.3.1.4 Any combination of the above.
 - 7.3.2 Evidence supporting their appeal
 - 7.4 In the event of an appeal being sent to the Societies' Council, they can either rule to:
 - 7.4.1 Uphold the appeal and the Society will not be suspended;
 - 7.4.2 Reject the appeal and the Society will be suspended.
 - 7.5 If a society becomes suspended they will be prohibited from:
 - 7.5.1 Use of accounts and financial services;
 - 7.5.2 Use of all additional services available to the Society (e.g. equipment hire, venue hire etc);
 - 7.5.3 Any promotion that the Students' Union undertakes on behalf of the Society;
 - 7.5.4 Any operations in any respect in the Students' Union's name;
 - 7.5.5 The Society's right to use any branding or logos associated with Beds Students' Union;
 - 7.5.6 Access to the Society's Mini-Site at www.bedssu.co.uk;
 - 7.5.7 Access to Beds SU / UoB room bookings.
 - 7.6 A suspended society will remain so for a three-month period unless one or more of following occurs in agreement with the Vice President Opportunities, where after the society will be reinstated:
 - 7.6.1 A new committee is elected;
 - 7.6.2 The society holds a quorate Annual General Meeting;
 - 7.6.3 The society produces and implements a development plan agreed with the Vice President Opportunities.
 - 7.7 Should a society remain suspended for the full three-month period, a vote will be taken at the next Executive Committee to either:
 - 7.7.1 Disaffiliate, where the society will no longer be a society of the Union and no new application for a similar society will be accepted within a three-month period;
 - 7.7.2 Decide to extend the suspension for a further three-month period, after which the process above will be repeated.

EXTERNAL AFFILIATIONS / SPONSORSHIP

- 8.1 Groups who wish to affiliate/enter into a sponsorship contract with any outside organisations, must seek approval from Beds SU.
- 8.2 Proposed affiliations/sponsorship contracts must not encourage behaviour likely to be deemed as misconduct as defined in the Beds SU Members' Code of Conduct.

- 8.3 The proposed affiliation/sponsorship contract must not contravene the Beds SU Freedom of Speech Policy.
- 8.4 The proposed affiliation/sponsorship contract must not contravene the Beds SU Bylaws.
- 8.5 Beds SU has the right to make the decision to dissolve any affiliation/sponsorship contract.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

- 9.1 All societies shall hold free, fair and transparent democratic annual committee elections. To ensure this process, the Union's Elections Committee will publish a set of rules and regulations for student groups by the final Societies'/Sports' Council of the academic year.
- 9.2 Societies with fewer than 5 members at the close of nominations will be required to meet with the Vice President Opportunities to outline a development plan, which sets out - alongside other plans - how membership will be increased within a timescale determined by the Vice President Opportunities.

- 9.3 Any societies that are formed within 21 days of the start of an election period, will not be required to go through that election.

REMOVAL OF ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS (COMMITTEE MEMBERS)

- 10.1 In the event that a Society Committee wishes to discipline one of its committee members, the issue shall be referred to the Vice President Opportunities who shall in the first instance attempt to resolve all matters in a verbal and informal manner.
- 10.2 Should the matters not be resolved, the Vice President Opportunities shall refer the issue to the Executive Committee who will review it and advise one of the following:
 - 10.2.1 That no action be taken;
 - 10.2.2 That the society holds a committee meeting and proposes a vote to remove one or more members. This would require a 2/3 majority vote. If passed, the member will be removed from the committee with immediate effect but remain a member of the Society with full membership rights.
- 10.3 A member removed from a society committee may appeal on the grounds that the procedure detailed above has not been followed. This can be done by submitting an appeal in writing to be.involved@beds.ac.uk within five working days of the notification of decision. No other grounds for appeal apply.
- 10.4 The relevant union manager will conduct an investigation into the matter and provide a decision within fourteen working days.
- 10.5 In the event that an appeal is upheld the process will be restarted.
- 10.6 In the event that an appeal is not upheld the matter will be closed.
- 10.7 Any member involved in this process may also be subject to the Members' Code of Conduct.

REMOVAL OF ELECTED COMMITTEE MEMBERS (MEMBERS)

- 11.1 In the event that a student Society member wishes to remove one the societies committee members, an email signed by a minimum of 5 registered members must be sent to the VP Opportunities stating the following:
 - 10.1.1 The name and position of the committee member in question;
 - 10.1.2 The reason(s) for wanting to remove the committee member.
- 11.2 If the VP Opportunities deem the reasons for removal are justified, a referendum will take place within the Society. This referendum will be open to ALL the members of the Society to vote for or against the removal of the committee member.
- 11.3 The referendum will follow the same election guidelines noted in section 12 of the Beds SU By Laws.
- 11.4 If the committee member is voted to step down from their position, they will still be an active member of the Society.
- 11.5 The new vacant position will be filled at the next election.