

Liverpool Students' Union Constitution





Chapter 1: The students' union

1a Our name and aims

1. Throughout the rest of this document, The Liverpool Students' Union will be referred to as 'LSU'.
2. Our aims are to improve your education and your social development.
3. LSU is where 'LJMU Students Make it Happen'.
4. We will continue to keep the following values.
 - a. Be Student Led
 - b. Be Inspirational
 - c. Be excellent
 - d. Be Sustainable
5. We want progress for our members in the following areas.
 - a. Student activities - involving you in clubs and societies, events that promote your interests, services that meet your needs and a democracy that inspires change all year.
 - b. Academic quality - making sure there is a strong and active learning voice, responsive university systems and improved rights for all students, including those on placements from Liverpool John Moores University.
 - c. Community involvement – keeping you actively involved in your local area, providing you with safe, secure and affordable accommodation, and make sure you are in touch with Liverpool City Council and your local community.

1b Equal opportunities

1. We will work in line with our equal opportunities policy, which is approved by the trustees every two years.

1c Complaints procedure

1. There will be a complaints procedure, approved by our trustees every two years, that allows for due process when looking into complaints about us, including the conduct of our officers, trustees, societies and how they are funded.
2. Complaints should be dealt with quickly and fairly and where a complaint is upheld there should be an effective way of resolving the problem.



Chapter 2: Membership

2a Types of members

1. There will be the following types of membership.

- a. **Full members** – students enrolled at Liverpool John Moores University and LSU sabbatical officers.
- b. **Strategic members** – trustees who are not full members, the Chief Executive and LSU staff (the Chief Executive will decide these roles).
- c. **Associate members** – supporters of our aims. This may depend on a fee set by our trustees.
- d. **Life members** – former full members who continue to support our aims.
- e. **Honorary life members** – awarded by the Liverpool Futures Forum to those who made a contribution that impressed our full members.

2b Student 'opt-out'

1. You can opt out (end your union membership) by writing to the Chief Executive within 14 days of the start of each academic semester.
2. Each semester the Chief Executive will send the Pro Vice Chancellor (Delivery) a list of all students who have opted out.



Chapter 3: How we are run

3a Officers

1. There will be the following four officers each year.

- a. **President** – the main officer responsible for our strategies, public profile and communication with university leaders and outside organisations. The president will be the delegation leader at all conferences, a member of the university's board of governors and Campaigner-in-Chief for all our aims.
- b. **Vice President (Student Activities)** – responsible for delivering our vision for student activities in partnership with the Better Union Forum.
- c. **Vice President (Academic Quality)** – responsible for delivering our vision for academic quality in partnership with the Better University Forum.
- d. **Vice President (Community Engagement)** – responsible for delivering our vision for community involvement in partnership with the Better City Forum.

2. Officers are the leading political representatives of our organisation.
3. Officers are responsible for the following.
 - a. Promoting our policies.
 - b. Carrying out their democratic responsibilities.
 - c. Getting out and talking to students (GOATS).
 - d. Attending the NUS conference as a delegate.
 - e. Campaigning for positive change.
 - f. Encouraging and celebrating diversity (differences in people's background and circumstances).
4. Officers should work with the Chief Executive (or nominee) to achieve their aims and objectives.
5. Officers should meet regularly, as a team, with the Chief Executive Officer to make sure that the union and any campaigns are running smoothly, in line with guidance set by the trustees.
6. Officers will be paid for their time, which will be decided by the trustees. The amount may change in line with our Human Resource policies.
7. Officer will begin their term of office on 1 July following their election and end it 54 weeks later. Sabbatical officers cannot hold another office or be an employee of LSU during their term. Officers will not be employed in a sabbatical position for more than two years.

3b Trustees

1. The trustees are:
 - a. the President;
 - b. the Vice-Presidents;
 - c. the Chair of each of the Strategic Forums; and
 - d. four community stakeholders, at least two of which will be women, elected for two years. Half of the positions will be available for election each year, decided on by a recruitment panel.
2. Trustees cannot serve for more than four years in a row.
3. Trustees are fully responsible for all activities.
4. Trustees will provide an annual report and plan to the Liverpool Futures Forum which will show their aims for that year.
5. Trustees will together be responsible for the following:
 - a. Making sure they keep in line with governing documents, charity law, company law and any other relevant laws or regulations.
 - b. Making sure all activities and use of resources are in line with our aims, as set out in this constitution.
 - c. Developing a strategic plan, deciding on a policy, setting targets and measuring performance levels.
 - d. Protecting our good name and values.
 - e. Making sure we are run effectively and efficiently.
 - f. Protecting and managing our property and making sure our money is properly invested.
 - g. Reviewing, at least every three years, how decisions are made and how we are governed.
 - h. Meeting as a group every three months, with at least half of all members present.
6. The Chair of the board of trustees will be elected from the sabbatical and forum chair trustees. The Vice Chair will be elected from the community trustees.
7. The Chair and Vice Chair will be responsible, on behalf of the board of trustees, for the following:
 - a. Appointing the Chief Executive and monitoring their performance.
 - b. Making sure all communications with the university board of governors are in line with the code of practice.

3c Resignations

1. All resignations will be made in writing to the President who will let the Chief Executive and the board of trustees know as soon as possible or at the next appropriate meeting.
2. No sabbatical officer can resign as a trustee and keep their position as a sabbatical officer.

3d Changing the constitution

1. Any change to the constitution can be proposed by:
 - a. an individual trustee;
 - b. a Strategy Forum; or
 - c. the Liverpool Futures Forum.
2. The board of trustees will consider any changes to the constitution but must have a 50% plus one vote and be supported by at least one member from each of the three sections.
3. Full members can suggest changes by referendum, in line with Chapter 7.

3e Audit

1. Our audited accounts will be available at the Liverpool Futures Forum.
2. Trustees will suggest auditors for the coming year to the Liverpool Futures Forum.

3f Protection against loss

1. All trustees, appointees or members of our staff will be protected by our assets against all losses or liability, damage or misfortune which they may suffer as part of their role. This is unless they have been negligent. This clause (3f1) will only apply to those people who follow our rules and procedures.

3g Declaration of interest

1. All trustees, appointees, students or members of staff should do the following.
 - a. Not make decisions that benefit them financially or personally, as all decisions should be made in the best interests of the membership.
 - b. Make sure they mention any conflict of interest to the Chief Executive as appropriate.
 - c. Avoid making decisions that benefit them.
2. The Nolan Principles of Public Life will be included in all our officer training.



Chapter 4 Liverpool Futures Forum - the annual general meeting

1. The Liverpool Futures Forum will act as our annual general meeting.
2. The purpose of the meeting will be to do the following:
 - a. important issues with our members.
 - b. Get relevant decision-makers involved in campaigns to create a better union, better university and better city.
 - c. Receive and agree reports from the board of trustees, the strategic forums and the audited accounts.
 - d. Consider our partner organisations.
3. All full members are welcome, can speak and are voting members of the Liverpool Futures Forum. There will be a minimum of 50 full members at the meeting.
4. The President will address the meeting each year.
5. The rest of the day will be split between the different strategic forums' responsibilities. It will be chaired by the appropriate forum Chair, and should include the following.
 - a. A contribution from the appropriate Vice President.
 - b. A guest speaker where possible.
 - c. An 'open mic session' titled 'I think the union/university/city should...(include as appropriate)'.
 - d. An agreed priority campaign for each forum.
6. Any proposed links to outside organisations should be:
 - a. put forward by any full member, the board of trustees or a Strategic Forum in time for the Liverpool Futures Forum and should be advertised to all members at the event;
 - b. considered by the board of trustees (or the Chair or Vice Chair on their behalf) to support our aims; and
 - c. decided in an 'accept' or 'reject' vote during the Liverpool Futures Forum after a speech in favour of each position (the vote will close at the end of the event). If the LFF reject a partnership or link previously decided by a referendum, another referendum on that proposal will be organised immediately.



Chapter 5: Strategic forums

5a About strategic forums

1. There will be three strategic forums.
 - a. Better Union Forum
 - b. Better University Forum
 - c. Better City Forum

2. Each forum will:

- a. be open to all full members, who can make comments, put forward ideas and suggest items to be discussed;
- b. have a minimum of 10 full members with the right to vote;
- c. be linked to the appropriate Vice President and receive their reports;
- d. elect a Chair and Vice Chair at the last meeting of the academic year to serve for the following academic year;
- e. give the final casting vote to the Chair; and
- f. meet at least four times a year.

5b Forum membership

1. The forums will have the following members.

- a. **Delegate members** - who can vote twice and can include all NUS (National Union of Students) delegates (except sabbatical officers), those elected by the forum to be delegates and the unique delegate Members (as set out below).
- b. **Voting members** - who can vote once and who award voting rights to anyone who has attended two meetings in a row of their particular strategic forum or any three strategic forum meetings since becoming a full member.
- c. **Non-voting members** - all our other full members including the sabbatical officers.

2. The Chief Executive or their nominee will act as Secretary and Treasurer for each forum.

5c The three forums

1. The Better Union Forum will do the following.

- a. Have one person elected from each club or society as a 'unique delegate member';
- b. Look into issues and run campaigns to deliver our vision for student activities;
- c. Elect from all full members, or decide on a nomination from the appropriate group:
 - a women's delegate;
 - a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender delegate;
 - a disabled students' delegate; and
 - a black, Asian and ethnic-minority delegate.

Each delegate will be the NUS Liberation Delegate for the appropriate conference, and each delegate must meet the NUS conditions for attending. Any vacancies will be filled in the same way or decided on by the President.

- d. Agree, publish and promote society funding arrangements in a fair and clear way and make funding decisions through the Vice President (Student Activities), the forum chair and the Chief Executive (or their nominee);
- e. Award funds for society partnerships where three or more societies want to develop a unique joint project together that has not been funded in the last three years;
- f. Promote, support and provide a budget for full members to organise events such as:
 - Holocaust Memorial Day;
 - World Aids Day;
 - International Women's Day;
 - Black History Month;
 - LGBT History Month;
 - World Mental Health Day;
 - International Day against Homophobia (IDAHO);
 - And other campaigns as voted for by the Forum
- g. Provide support for an inter-faith society that improves relationships between faiths.

2. The Better University Forum will have as unique delegate members:

a.

- one full member elected from each club or society with an academic role; and
- 14 full members elected from the course representatives (at least two must be postgraduates, two must be first-year students and six must be women).

b. The forum will consider issues and run campaigns to deliver our vision for academic quality;

c. They will elect from all full members:

- a part-time students' delegate;
- a postgraduate students' delegate;
- an international students' delegate;
- a Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts delegate; and
- a mature students' delegate.

Each individual should take the relevant delegate role.

3. The Better City Forum will:

a. have as unique delegate members:

- one full member elected from each club or society with a community involvement or accommodation role; and
- 10 full members elected from the community representatives (at least four must be women).

b. look into issues and run campaigns to deliver the LSU's vision for community involvement; and

c. an Ethical and Environmental delegate, a Community Cohesion and Anti-Fascism delegate, and a Home Students delegate from all full members.



Chapter 6: Elections

6a About the elections

1. Election to sabbatical officer and NUS delegate positions are open to all full members.
2. Full members should nominate themselves to become a candidate in the elections. Sabbatical officers who have been banned from holding public office or a position of trust in a charity will not be able to be nominated.
3. All elections should be carried out under the Electoral Reform Society rules for single transferable vote.
4. Each candidate can choose a nickname of no more than three words.
5. Each candidate will produce a manifesto on an A4 sheet that includes the candidate's full name, the position they are running for and a photograph.
6. Candidates can support candidates in other elections but their budget and resources should only be spent on supporting their own election campaign.
7. voting papers from all elections will be held for at least two years.

6b The elections committee

1. An elections committee must be organised in time for an election. The committee should have a member of each strategic forum, the Chair (or Vice Chair) of the Better Union Forum, a sabbatical officer not looking to be re-elected, the Chief Executive and an NUS nominee (who will be the Returning Officer and Chair of the committee if they attend). The Vice Chair – chosen from the other members – will be the Deputy Returning Officer and act in the Returning Officer’s best interests.
2. election rules will be explained in the handbook for the relevant election rounds.
3. The Elections Committee will be responsible for producing and promoting each handbook, which must include:
 - a. nomination forms;
 - b. the election timetable;
 - c. election rules;
 - e. election events;
 - f. disciplinary and complaints procedures;
 - g. the vote count and the results;
 - h. Criminal Records Bureau checks for trustees, if appropriate;
 - i. the contract for sabbaticals, if appropriate; and
 - j. promotional and campaigning advice.
4. Nomination lists and election timetables will be promoted fairly to those who are eligible to vote.

6c Sabbatical elections

1. Sabbatical officer elections should take place once a year during Semester 2, should be completed by the time of the NUS Conference and should remain open for at least five days.

6d NUS delegates

1. Current sabbatical officers and elected sabbatical officers will also be NUS delegates, unless they have stated otherwise, until they leave their position.
2. An election for the remaining places will take place before the NUS Conference and will remain open for a least one day.
3. Any other remaining places may be decided on by the President, and will be offered to members of the strategic forum first.

6e Changing the constitution

1. Our elected members must keep in line with and promote our policies. They should act as our good ambassador at all times.



Chapter 7: Referendums

1. All full members have the right to vote in a referendum carried out by a cross-campus vote, which will be open for at least three days.
2. All questions must suggest action that is in line with our aims (agreed by the Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees). The question must be answerable by a 'yes' or 'no' vote or be a choice between two different options that are less than six words each.
3. A referendum can be called by 100 full members, and a resolution can be called by one of the strategic forums or by the board of trustees.
4. The referendum must take place within four weeks of being called.
5. The Chief Executive should promote the referendum question, the voting details and the referendum timescale.
6. The Chief Executive will start the first meeting of each campaign team and make sure each team has at least £50.
7. There will be a meeting with potential voters organised between the two campaign teams.
8. The result of the referendum will be widely published.
9. No similar questions can be asked within the next 12 months.
10. All voting papers will be kept for a minimum of three months after the count.



Chapter 8: Policy

8a Changing the constitution

1. The President and Chief Executive should combine the results of all referendums and Liverpool Futures Forum and strategic forums policy statements. This will be known as our policy file.
2. Our policy file will be made available to all officers, the NUS Delegation Leader and all NUS delegates. You should keep in line with our policy at all times.

8b Changing the constitution

1. As set out in the NUS No Platform policy, we do not have any place for, nor will we give any of our resources to, non-members and organisations who hold racist or fascist views. All membership (except full membership) may be withheld from members of racist or fascist organisations.



Chapter 9: Dissolution

1. LSU will be dissolved (ended) on the following grounds.
 - a. LJM University no longer exists.
 - b. The board of trustees decides to close LSU and stop operating.
2. If there are any assets left after dissolution and all debts have been resolved, they will not be paid to or distributed among any of our members.
3. Instead, they will be given to, or transferred to, any organisation that replaces LSU, the LJM University, or if the university no longer exists, some other charity endowment fund that has aims similar to ours.
4. If the university no longer exists, the institution or institutions which will benefit will be chosen by our full members (or the trustees) at or before the time the university comes to a close.

