

Proposal 1 – Amendments to the Constitution of the Students’ Union – Democracy Review

Summary

An all-student vote will take place on Thurs 18 April on amendments to the Rules of the Union to amend democracy structures with the following effect(s):

Proposed Changes to QSU Democracy

Current System:

- Students can submit a detailed policy idea to the QSU Student Council (of 140 elected students) who debate and vote on the idea.
- If approved by the Council, the Students’ Union acts on the idea.
- Annually Council decides if all of the current list of priority ideas should remain, or if some should be removed.
- Non-members of Student Council have limited input into shaping and making decisions on QSU priorities.

Proposed System:

- In general, there will be more opportunities for every student to shape and decide what the Students’ Union works on.
- Any student can submit an idea to QSU. A student-led committee will help that student to shape the idea - providing more info and suggestions for actions.
- If the idea is straightforward, it will be put on the SU website where students can provide feedback and vote on the proposal. If a large majority of voters agree with the idea, then QSU acts on the idea. If the idea is not successful it can be revised to include feedback from students.
- If the idea is not straightforward and/or affects certain groups of students and needs greater input, the idea will be developed by a Student Assembly, who will be a group of students randomly selected to be reflective of the student body in Queen’s. The Student Assembly will invite input from affected students and develop a detailed version of the idea. This will then be voted on by all-students. If a majority of voters agree, then QSU acts on the idea.

INSERT (INTO Rule 5 – COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL, STUDENT NETWORKS AND FORUMS) a new Section and renumber existing sections accordingly:

THE PROPOSAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The remit of the Proposal Support Committee, as delegated by the Council, will be:

To establish and review procedures for the Student Idea Submission process as detailed in the Rules;

To make recommendations on the effectiveness of the Student Idea Submission process to the relevant Union body and to undertake an annual review on behalf of Council;

To establish an annual schedule for Student Idea Submission activities, including Online Voting, Student Assembly events and associated Referendums;

To support the development of policy by proposers and provide oversight of the Student Idea Submission Process;

To make necessary arrangements and approvals for Student Idea Submission activities, including Online Voting and Student Assembly; and

To consider other issues delegated to it by Council.

The membership of the Proposal Support Committee shall be ten elected members of the Council, the Union President and the Union Speaker (who shall chair the Committee), all with voting rights. The Clerk of Council (or nominee) and the Director of the Students' Union (or nominee) shall be in attendance, but shall not have voting rights.

Students' Union staff resources shall be available to support the activities of the Proposal Support Committee.

Committee members shall be provided with relevant training opportunities to support them in their role.

Minutes of meetings of the Committee shall be published on the Union website and made available to the Student Membership.

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 7 - LAPSE OF UNION POLICY)

7. LAPSE OF UNION POLICY

- 7.1 All policies that have been in existence for three years or more will lapse at the Annual Business Meeting of the Council, unless Council otherwise directs.
- 7.2 A list of headings of all policies due to lapse shall be available for consultation in the office of the Clerk of Council not less than 15 days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) before the Annual Business Meeting.
- 7.3 Any Student Member may submit a written objection to the lapse of any policy to the Clerk of Council by 5.00 p.m. on the closing date for business for the Annual Business Meeting. Such an objection will be tabled as a motion to the Annual Business Meeting.
- 7.4 Any policy to which there is no such objection shall lapse at the Annual Business Meeting.
- 7.5 Mandatory policy of the Students' Union shall not lapse until such time as it has been rescinded by a mandatory decision of the membership.

REPLACE WITH:

7. STUDENTS' UNION POLICY

7.1 Policy Formulation

- 7.1.1 The Union shall formulate policy on student matters and on other matters of relevance to the student membership.
- 7.1.2 Policy may be formulated, and resolutions approved, by Union General Meetings, Referendum or Student Ideas Submission.
- 7.1.3 The Council shall receive a report of all additions and amendments to Union policy at the next available opportunity.
- 7.1.4 Details of all policy shall be published online and be available to the Student Membership.
- 7.1.5 The Council shall review the status of all policies and review progress of policy on no less than an annual basis. The outcomes of any such review shall be published online and be available to the Student Membership.
- 7.1.6 The Council may consider and approve Union policy referred to the Council by Student Ideas Submission Process on matters of extreme urgency. A matter of extreme urgency is a matter which could not have reasonably been brought for consideration by the Student Submission process.
- 7.1.7 Any policy approved directly by the Council shall have effect only until such time as it has been considered at the next available opportunity through the Student Submission process.
- 7.1.8 The Council may consider and approve resolutions which support the implementation of established Union policy. Any such resolution may not materially alter or negate established policy.

7.2 Mandatory Policy

- 7.2.1 Mandatory Policy for the Union may be determined by a Union General Meeting or by a Referendum in accordance with the procedures contained within the Rules.
- 7.2.2 A mandatory decision of the Student Membership shall only be amended or overturned by a mandatory decision of the Student Membership.
- 7.2.3 A motion or proposal to alter or rescind a mandatory decision of the Student Membership shall not be considered within 12 months from the date of passing such a decision.
- 7.2.4 Mandatory policy of the Students' Union shall not lapse until such time as it has been rescinded by a mandatory decision of the membership.

7.3 Policy Lapse

- 7.3.1 All non-mandatory policies that have been in existence for three years or more will lapse at the end of the third full academic year after approval, unless Council otherwise directs.
- 7.3.2 All policies due to lapse shall be available for Council to consider at a Statutory Meeting of the Council, as scheduled by the Clerk of Council.
- 7.3.3 Any Student member may submit a written objection to the lapse of any policy to the Clerk of Council. Such an objection shall be tabled as a motion at the Statutory Meeting of Council.

- 7.3.4 Policy for which the Council has approved an objection shall be referred to the Proposal Support Committee for consideration through the Student Ideas Submission Process. Any such policy shall not be deemed to have lapsed until it has been considered at the next available opportunity.

INSERT (INTO Rule 1 – PROCEDURES FOR THE COUNCIL, UNION GENERAL MEETINGS, REFERENDA AND REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION OF ELECTED UNION OFFICERS) a new Section and renumber existing sections accordingly:

STUDENT IDEA SUBMISSION

Proposal Submission and Development

Student members may propose policy through a digital Student Idea Submission Process.

The Clerk of Council shall determine the form of digital submission, taking due account of any recommendations of the Proposal Support Committee.

The Proposal Support Committee shall support the development of policy by proposers and shall have oversight of the Student Idea Submission Process.

The Proposal Support Committee shall consider all submitted proposals, normally within twenty-one working days, and undertake any of the following actions, as deemed necessary:

- Provide additional information or amendments to a proposal, including screening for factual inaccuracies and legibility.
- Equality screening
- Legal screening
- Reject a proposal, or referral of a proposal for consideration to an officer of the Union or to another body of the Union, if the proposal is not deemed to be a valid policy proposal.
- Refer a proposal to the Council for consideration if the proposal is a matter of extreme urgency.
- Progress a proposal to **an Online Vote if the Committee** deems a proposal valid for consideration by the membership.
- Progress a proposal to a Student Assembly if the Committee deems that a proposal requires further scoping or deliberative development, including if a proposal requires contributions by particular cohorts of students.

The Proposal Support Committee shall not make any determination or recommendation on the substantive matters of proposal.

A student may appeal a decision of the Proposal Support Committee to the Council. The Council may delegate consideration of appeals to a Sub-Committee of the Council, which shall not be the Proposal Support Committee.

The Proposal Support Committee may conduct business electronically.

Online Vote

Proposals referred to an Online Vote shall be published on the Students' Union website and Students' Union's online voting platform.

The schedule for the online voting period, the details of the voting process, and the matters for consideration shall be published on the Students' Union website.

Online voting shall be conducted over a period of at least five working days.

Student members may submit feedback on proposals and vote on proposals, subject to the Rules.

The Proposal Support Committee shall approve procedures for the conduct of the online vote, subject to the Rules.

The Students' Union shall host an in-person and online discussion event during each period of online voting, for members to discuss matters under consideration.

An online vote with fewer than seventy votes cast shall be deemed to be inquorate.

A proposal:

Shall require the vote of 75% of those voting to be deemed carried and considered to be policy.

Receiving the vote of 25%, or less, of those voting shall not be considered again within 12 months from the date of passing such a decision.

Receiving greater than 25%, but less than 75%, of the vote, shall be referred to the Proposal Support Committee for review and further consideration.

There shall not be more than two online voting periods in each semester.

An online vote may not consider amendments to the Constitution and associated Rules.

All policy deemed to be carried shall be published on the Students' Union website and reported to the Council.

Student Assembly

A Student Assembly shall be convened by the Proposal Support Committee, when deemed necessary, for further scoping or deliberative development of proposals, including if a proposal requires contributions by particular cohorts of students.

A Student Assembly may give detailed consideration to proposals and recommend policy proposals to be put by the Proposal Support Committee for consideration by the Student Membership by Referendum.

Membership of a Student Assembly shall be open to all Student Members of the Union. Student Members may be required to register to participate in a Student Assembly.

Membership of a Student Assembly shall be representative of the diversity of the Student Membership and shall be selected randomly by means of sortition from amongst the Student Membership.

The criteria and process for sortition shall be proposed by the Proposal Support Committee and approved by the Management Board.

The criteria and process for sortition shall be published on the Students' Union website and reported to the Council. Sortition shall utilise data defined by the relevant University student classification system or Students' Union records system.

A Student Assembly shall have between 24 - 48 members.

The Proposal Support Committee shall determine:

- The number of Student Assembly events convened in each academic year. There shall be a minimum of one Student Assembly convened in each semester if there are proposals to be considered.
- The size of membership of each Student Assembly.
- The maximum number of distinct proposals to be considered by each Student Assembly.
- The process and format of discussion, debate and democratic decision-making at a Student Assembly.
- The Chairperson or facilitator of each Student Assembly, who shall receive appropriate training and support for the role.
- Those entitled to observe, contribute, and participate in a Student Assembly, in addition to the membership of the Student Assembly. This may include recognised student groups, University staff, or subject area experts.
- Which student cohorts, if any, are relevant to a proposal under consideration and if they should be approached to contribute to the Student Assembly.
- Other relevant matters required to conduct a Student Assembly.

Notice of a Student Assembly and of the matters under consideration shall be published on the Students' Union website. Any such notice shall invite expressions of interest from Student members interested in contributing to the Student Assembly.

Members of a Student Assembly shall take into account the best interests of the Union members and shall be required to declare any potential conflict of interest arising from any matter under consideration.

The Students' Union shall endeavour to recognise the contribution of Student Assembly members.

A Student Assembly may not consider amendments to the Constitution and associated Rules.

All policy deemed to be carried shall be published on the Students' Union website and reported to the Council.

Minutes of meetings of the Assembly shall be published on the Union website and made available to the Student Membership.

DELETE (From Rule 1):

“PROCEDURES FOR THE COUNCIL, UNION GENERAL MEETINGS, REFERENDA AND REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION OF ELECTED UNION OFFICERS”

REPLACE WITH:

“PROCEDURES FOR THE COUNCIL, UNION GENERAL MEETINGS, REFERENDA, STUDENT IDEA SUBMISSION AND REMOVAL OR RESIGNATION OF ELECTED UNION OFFICERS”

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 4. REFERENDA, Article 4.1):

A Referendum shall be held on any proposal when more than half of all of the voting members of the Council deem it necessary or upon receipt by the Returning Officer (see Rule 2) of a Petition bearing the names, signatures and student numbers of 1.5% of the Student Membership. The Returning Officer shall determine the form of a Petition document and may also, at their discretion, accept digital Petitions provided that they can verify the identity and

authenticity of petitioners. Petitions shall not be deemed valid unless submitted to the Returning Officer within twenty working days from the date on which the Petition commenced.

REPLACE WITH:

A Referendum shall be held on a proposal:

When more than half the membership of Council, present and voting at a properly constituted meeting of Council, deem it necessary. Any such proposal shall be considered by the Student Idea Submission process and progressed to a Student Assembly in advance of a Referendum being held; or

On receipt by the Returning Officer (see Rule 2) of a Petition bearing the signatures and student numbers of 2.5% of the Student Membership. The Returning Officer shall determine the form of a Petition document and may also, at their discretion, accept digital Petitions provided that they can verify the identity and authenticity of petitioners. Petitions shall not be deemed valid unless submitted to the Returning Officer within twenty working days from the date on which the Petition commenced; or

When the Proposal Support Committee authorise a Referendum to on any proposal considered by a Student Assembly.”

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 4. REFERENDA, Article 4.2):

A Referendum held under 4.1 shall be on a proposal decided by the Council, or as stated on the submitted Petition. If more than one proposal is submitted, the procedure in 4.1 must be adhered to with regard to each separate proposal.

REPLACE WITH:

A Referendum held under 4.1 shall be on a proposal decided by the Council, as stated on the submitted Petition, or as authorised by the Proposal Support Committee. If more than one proposal is submitted, the procedure in 4.1 must be adhered to with regard to each separate proposal.

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 4. REFERENDA, Article 4.3):

If the Referendum is called by the Council as in 4.1, then the date on which the Council decision is minuted and placed on the Students' Union website and authorised noticeboards shall be treated as comparable to the receipt of a Referendum Petition as in 4.1 and shall be used for the purpose of calculating when the Referendum is to be held.

REPLACE WITH:

If the Referendum is called by the Council or Proposal Support Committee as in 4.1, then the date on which the Council or Proposal Support Committee decision is minuted and placed on the Students' Union website and authorised noticeboards shall be treated as comparable to the receipt of a Referendum Petition as in 4.1 and shall be used for the purpose of calculating when the Referendum is to be held.

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 4. REFERENDA, Article 4.4):

The Referendum must begin within 21 clear days from the receipt of the Referendum Petition, but no earlier than eight clear days from the receipt of the Referendum Petition, and can last no longer than ten working days (excluding Saturday and Sunday).

REPLACE WITH:

The Referendum must begin within 21 clear days from the receipt of the Referendum Petition, but no earlier than eight clear days from the receipt of the Referendum Petition, and can last no longer than ten working days (excluding Saturday and Sunday). A Referendum authorised

by the Proposal Support Committee may begin within five working days from the date on which the decision is minuted and published.

DELETE (From Rule 1, Section 4. REFERENDA, Article 4.7):

Each side in the Referendum shall be entitled only to the following printed publicity which must be printed by the Students' Union:

200 A3 Posters;

500 A4 Posters;

1000 A5 Flyers.

The Returning Officer may amend the entitlement to printed publicity material, provided that each side in a referendum campaign receive the same entitlement.

REPLACE WITH:

Each side in the Referendum shall be entitled only to the following printed publicity which must be printed by the Students' Union:

200 A3 Posters;

500 A4 Posters;

1000 A5 Flyers.

The Returning Officer may amend the entitlement to printed publicity material, provided that each side in a referendum campaign receive the same entitlement.

There shall be no entitlement to printed publicity material in any Referendum authorised by the Proposal Support Committee, unless the Committee approves that there be an entitlement.