

Student Council:

Purpose, Function and Terms of Reference

(Bye-Law 1 of the Constitution)

Index

1	Introduction and context	3
2	Student Representatives: providing representation within Bloomsbury Institute	3
3	Student Council: Purpose	4
4	Student Council: Terms of Reference	4
4.1	Membership	5

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1 Introduction and context

This document (Bye-Law 1 of the Students Guild's Constitution) sets out the role and responsibilities for Members of the Guild who have been elected to sit on Student Council. Student Council Members, by virtue of their office, also act as Student Representatives within Bloomsbury Institute and as specified within the Institute's Corporate and Academic Governance Framework. Section 2 provides detail on the role Student Council Members play within Bloomsbury Institute. The purpose and remit of Student Council as it relates to, and operates within, the Student Guild is set out at Sections 3 and 4.

This document is governed by the provisions for Student Council as set out in the Student Guild's Constitution. The Constitution is available on the Student Guild website at www.bil-guild.org.

2 Student Representatives: providing representation within Bloomsbury Institute

Student Representatives hold office for one calendar year – starting from their election shortly after the start of the September/October or January academic year through to the end of October in the next year (or, if relevant, until graduation). Certain Student Representatives are nominated to remain in post until the end of November in the year following their election; these Council members are known as Continuity Student Representatives (CSRs). CSRs allow a continuity of representation for institutional meetings conducted in November and which look back at institutional and course matters for the previous academic year.

All Student Representatives together with the Student President, constitute the student membership of Bloomsbury Institute's Student Staff Consultative Forum (SSCF). Full details on the role and responsibility for Student Representatives is provided in the Student Guild's Guide for Student Representatives available at www.bil-guild.org.

The purpose and role of Student Representatives in relation to **Bloomsbury Institute** is as follows:

- to represent the voice of students by making such representation through membership of committees of Bloomsbury Institute as specified in the institution's Corporate and Academic Governance Framework (CAGF: see <https://www.bil.ac.uk/quality-enhancement-manual/>). These committees include the Board of Directors, Academic Committee, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, Course Committees and the Student Staff Consultative Forum;
- to be available to listen to the opinions or concerns of fellow students and to bring such matters to the appropriate institutional committee meeting;
- to actively gather opinions or concerns from fellow students and bring such matters to the appropriate institutional committee meeting;
- to feedback to fellow students on the progress or outcomes of discussion at committee meetings or of any 'student relevant' policy or strategic developments advised at Bloomsbury Institute meetings;
- to represent the voice of students by making such representation with external bodies and agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA);

- if required, to help and support fellow students by joining them in any meetings they have with the institution;
- to provide a signposting service for their fellow classmates regarding Bloomsbury Institute support services or appropriate staff to assist them.

3 Student Council: Purpose

The overall purpose of Student Council is to:

- provide a consultative role to the Student Guild’s governing body – the Board of Trustees;
- provide student representation to Bloomsbury Institute;
- subject to **Clause 64** of the Constitution, and following Board of Trustee approval, set the Student Policy of the Student Guild and when deemed both vital and appropriate, subject to **Clauses 21-24**, refer such Policy to Referenda of the Members. For the avoidance of doubt, such Student Policy is that which:
 - notes issues that affect students studying at Bloomsbury Institute and through the Policy implementation, seeks to explore and fix such issues. Such Policy stands for 3 years. Examples of the type of Policy that Members may have an interest in could be, amongst many other things, a Policy that ensures the Student Guild lobby the institution on a particular matter or perhaps a Policy that that would ensure increased resources for a society endeavor;
 - remains in force for a maximum of 3 years.

Student Policy differs from Student Guild Bye-laws which are set, amended or repealed only by the Board of Trustees. Such Bye-laws form permanent high-level policy that must be in place in order for the Student Guild to manage its affairs. Such Bye-laws cover matters, *inter alia*, of a statutory, legal, financial, contractual, democratic or operational nature and need.

4 Student Council: Terms of Reference

- Contribute to the development and efficacy of the Student Guild by providing a consultative service to the Board of Trustees and providing feedback to it. This shall be facilitated by:
 - for information, receiving minutes from the Board of Trustee meetings;
 - receiving regular reports from the Guild Manager on the activities undertaken in managing the Student Guild, to include, *inter alia*, the Guild Strategy [standing item];
 - receiving regular reports from Officer Trustees (Student President and Activities Officer) on their respective work [standing item].
- Subject to **Clause 64 of the Constitution**, and following Board of Trustee approval, set Policy of the Student Guild. This shall be facilitated by:

- assistance and guidance from the Guild Manager, following a procedure that enables the Student Council and / or Members to debate issues or ideas that may become Policy. Appendix 1 refers;
 - being guided by the Guild Manager on developments advised at the institution's SSCF meetings;
 - taking account of Board of Trustee minutes;
 - advising Members on any Motion that has received a majority vote by Student Council (and approved by the Board of Trustees) and providing information as to participation in a referendum and ongoing developments of such referenda;
 - signposting Member(s) to the Guild Manager for advice in the bringing of a Motion to Student Council.
- subject to **Clauses 21-24** of the Constitution, refer Policy to Referenda of the Members
 - in accordance with **Clause 14** of the Constitution, to be duly consulted on any proposed amendments to the Constitution
 - to carry out such voting within Student Council that may be required from time to time for the replacement of Student Trustees
 - to receive an annual report from the Trustees
 - to appoint associate members in accordance with **Clause 19** of the Constitution
 - To perform any other actions that the Constitution permits or asks of Student Council
 - to actively engage with Student Council meetings and any resulting business or actions.

The Student Council minutes are received by:

- the Board of Trustees [for consideration and action].

4.1 Membership

- Student President (*ex officio*)
 - The Student President acts as Chair to Student Council meetings and may only vote in the case of a tie.
- Activities Officer (*ex officio*). No voting rights.
- Guild Manager (*ex officio*)
 - The Guild Manager, whilst not a member of Student Council, attends meetings and acts as Secretary
- All Student Representatives (SCSRs).

4.2 Quorum

Student Council meets at least twice per academic year.

No business other than the appointment of a Chair shall be transacted at any Student Council meeting if the persons attending it do not constitute a quorum. Ten SCSRs shall constitute a quorum.

If such quorum is not present within fifteen minutes from the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned and if at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting the Members present shall be a quorum.

Appendix 1

Debating Motions

The role of the Chair

Student Council is chaired by the Student President who is guided by the Guild Manager to ensure that meetings of Council run effectively and in accordance with the Constitution and the Bye-Laws. The Chair's role is to act impartially, to make sure that all Council Members have an equal voice and to take a meeting through the agenda efficiently and effectively.

What is a Motion?

Any Member of the Student Guild is entitled to submit a Motion that outlines what their issue is and what recommended action they believe should be taken. If any Member of the Student Guild feels strongly about a matter relating to their student experience, a Motion may be submitted to the Guild Manager (guild.manager@bil.ac.uk) who will confirm whether the Motion is suitable for discussion. If it is confirmed suitable, then the Motion will be debated at Student Council. The Motion may be subsequently voted on by the whole of the student body (a referendum) if the Student Council so decides.

How are debates conducted?

Debates are conducted by the Chair. For a vote on an issue – such as a Motion – the Chair will call the proposer of the Motion to make a speech in favour, limited to one minute. The Chair will then call for a speech against, and this will continue for as long as the Chair sees fit. A vote will then be called on the Motion, and a simple majority of the Council Members is required to pass the vote. Any Motion passed at Student Council is subject to final approval by the Board of Trustees.

What are parts?

A Motion can be taken in parts when only part of the Motion is agreed with.

For example, the following Motion is considered by the Student Council:

This Council approves of the following ice cream flavours:

1. Raspberry flavour
2. Vanilla flavour
3. Banana flavour

If the Student Council wants to remove one of the flavours, it could be proposed to the Chair that the Motion be taken in parts, with a view to removing – for example - Banana flavour. The Chair would then call a vote on whether Council should consider taking a Motion in parts, and then a further vote on whether to agree with the proposed alteration of the Motion. It is only possible to remove – not add - elements of a Motion while taking it in parts.

What is an amendment?

After the agenda is initially sent out, Council Members have the opportunity to propose amendments to Motions, to change the wording, intent or nature of the Motion in any way the proposer sees fit. This needs to be submitted before the amendment deadline and will then be debated at the meeting.

The proposer of the Motion is given a chance to accept or reject the amendment. If they accept it, then it becomes part of the Motion. If they reject it, it is put to a vote. If the vote passes, then the Motion becomes the property of the proposer of the amendment. Amendments cannot be proposed after the amendment deadline or during the meeting.

Who gets to speak?

The Chair can grant the right to speak on request to anyone at the meeting.

Who gets to vote – and how?

Although all Student Guild Members are welcome to attend, only members of Student Council can vote. This does not include the Chair (Student President), who does not get a vote since he/she must conduct proceedings impartially. However, in cases of a tie in votes, the Student President may have the casting vote. Voting is taken by a show of hands.

What are Points of Order?

Points of order can be raised at any time during the meeting, by calling “point of order.” There are four different points of order:

1. A call of quorum – A quorum is the number of Council Members required to be present at the meeting to be ‘quorate,’ or valid. This is set at ten full voting Council Members.
2. Challenge to the Chair’s ruling – A challenge to a ruling of the Chair can only be made on the grounds that it contravenes the Constitution, Bye-Laws or Student Guild Policy. The Chair must relinquish the role of Chair during the challenge. The proposer of the Challenge and the Chair will then state their case, and a vote is then taken. A simple majority is required to overturn a Chair’s ruling.
3. Clarification – A point of clarification is a question on something that is happening but cannot include an opinion. The Chair can take these at his or her discretion.
4. Procedural Motions – Motions to allow a certain action to take place. These are explained in the next section.

What are Procedural Motions?

Procedural motions can be used to initiate certain actions at a Student Council meeting. They are mostly self-explanatory, require a simple majority to pass and Council Members may speak for and against them as normal.

Procedural motions include:

1. Motion to move to a vote
2. Motion to take a vote in parts
3. Motion to refer a vote to a General Meeting
4. Motion to refer a vote to a referendum

5. Motion for a vote to be adjourned to a later meeting
6. Motion to refer a vote to a sub-committee, forum or working group
7. Motion to not take a vote (i.e. to indefinitely postpone a Motion)
8. Motion to temporarily adjourn the meeting
9. Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Officer Trustee and Guild Manager Reports

Written reports from the Guild Manager and the Officer Trustees (Student President and Activities Officer) are circulated in advance of the meeting, reporting on progress with their work since the last meeting. The Reports are submitted to the Guild Manager 3 working days before the meeting and are circulated with the agenda and appear in the minutes. The Officers may highlight particular points from their report and about their work in general before taking questions.

It is important for Council Members to have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to these reports so that the Board of Trustees can have confidence that Student Council has been adequately updated and is able to express opinion for the Board to take into account. It is also important to question the Guild Manager on what the Guild is doing to implement any Policy passed at previous Student Council meetings.

Further help and information

Please contact the Guild Manager at guild.manager@bil.ac.uk for more detailed guidance of Student Council and its work. Also, check out the Student Rep Resources area on the Student Guild website (www.bil-guild.org).