

Fircroft College Student Union Constitution

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.

1. Name and Status

- 1.1 The Governing Body recognises Fircroft College Students' Union (the Union) as a democratically run organisation, committed to serving and representing the students of the college.
- 1.2 This Constitution shall take effect from 1st March 2021 and invalidates all former constitutions of this union.
- 1.3 The Governing Body will endeavour to ensure that the activities of the Union do not contravene the College's Policies nor bring the College into disrepute.
- 1.4 The Union is an unincorporated association with exempt charitable status.
- 1.5 The Constitution is a legal document that sets out the activities and procedures of the Students' Union. It provides a framework for the operation of the students' Union by:
 - Defining what the union can or cannot do
 - Indicating how the executive can act on behalf of union members
 - Outlining how members can air their concerns

2. Aims and Objectives

- To represent the interests of its members and act as a channel of communication in dealing with the college and other bodies.
 - To advance the educational, social, and cultural development of its members and students of the college as a whole.
 - To promote and protect the welfare of its members.
 - To encourage and co-ordinate student clubs, societies, sports and social activities.
- 2.2 These aims and objects shall be practiced without discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion,, disability, gender reassignment or medical condition, except that action may be taken to promote equality of opportunity.
 - 2.3 The Union shall practice the above aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious organisation.

3. Membership of the Union

- 3.1 All full-time students who are registered at the College are automatically members of the Union unless they choose to 'opt-out' by informing the President in writing (and can opt back in using the same method).
- 3.2 A student who opts out of the union shall not be able to participate in the democratic and decision-making function of the Union but will continue to have the right to attend Union run events and activities.
- 3.3 Members are able to speak and vote at Union meetings, to nominate, to stand and to

vote in Union elections.

- 3.4 College employees may be associate members and apply for NUS cards but may not take part in the decision making functions of the Union.

4. The Executive Committee

- 4.1 The Executive Committee (Executive) will consist of:

- The President
- The Treasurer
- The Secretary
- The Wellbeing & Safety Officer
- The Events & Activities officer
- The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer
- The Education Officer
- The Environmental Sustainability Champion

Role descriptions are attached as Appendix A

- 4.2 Members of the Executive will be elected in accordance with Appendix 1 - Elections.

- 4.3 The role of the Executive is to:

- be responsible for the direction of the Union for the period of study
- undertake administration and day to day running of the Union
- To act on issues and suggestions raised by the General Meeting
- Serve the interests of the membership in its various roles
- act as a channel of communication between Union members, the College management and the Governing Body.
- Ensure that Student Union funds are used appropriately

- 4.5 The Executive will meet monthly or as required by the President and 5 members must be present throughout the meeting to be quorate.

- 4.6 The President (or their nominee) will Chair meetings of the Executive.

- 4.7 Any member of the Executive who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Executive without giving apologies to the President, and without good reason being provided, shall be considered to have resigned.

- 4.8 In the event of a motion of no confidence being passed the Officer will be deemed to have resigned. In the event of the President resigning the Treasurer will take over the role. Elections will be held in accordance with Schedule 1.

5. General Meetings

- 5.1 The General meeting is the supreme Governing Body of the Union.

- 5.2 An ordinary General Meeting will be called once per term with at least five working days' notice given. Any other General Meetings will be termed 'Emergency General Meeting'. The notice for each meeting will be placed on the Student Union notice board.

- 5.3 An emergency General Meeting must be called by the Secretary of the Union and be held with 5 working days on receipt of a written request from either: The President; the Executive, or from any five full members of the Union.

Such a meeting will only discuss the business for which it was called which must be specified in the written request.

- 5.4 The quorum for Ordinary and Emergency General Meetings will be five full members of the Union.
- 5.5 All General Meetings will be conducted in accordance with Appendix 2 – How Meetings Work.

6. Minutes

- 6.1 Minutes will be taken at all Executive and General Meetings. Minutes will be read and confirmed, with any necessary corrections made, at the next appropriate meeting. Confirmed minutes will be made available to all members of the Student Union.

7. Code of Conduct

- 7.1 All members of the Student Union are expected to abide by the College's policies and procedures as they apply to all students of the College at all times.

8. Complaints

- 8.1 Any complaint regarding the Union should be sent to the President. If the complaint involves the President it should be sent to the Treasurer. Meetings may be required to obtain further information from those involved, the complainant will be kept informed and a written response will normally be provided within ten college days.
- 8.2 If the complaint involves the College it should be sent to the College's Complaints manager to be dealt with under the College's complaints procedure.
- 8.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Union's Officers they may appeal to the Head of Student Experience setting out their concerns. A response will be normally be provided within 10 working days as per the College's Complaints procedure

9. Amendments to the Constitution

- 9.1 The General Meeting is the sole body competent to amend the Constitution or Schedules.
- 9.2 All proposed amendments require seven working days' notice and will be carried by majority vote.
- 9.3 Any proposed amendments to the Constitution or Schedules are subject to approval by the Board of Governors before they can be implemented.
- 9.4 The Constitution shall be reviewed by the Union at least every 5 years from the date of the current document's implementation and approved by the Governing Body in line with the Education Act 1994.

10. Finance

- 10.1 The Union will receive appropriate funds from the College to enable it to effectively pursue its aims and objectives. This annual allocation of funding

Is decided by the College's Governing Body.

- 10.2 The financial year of the Union runs from 1st August to 31st July.
- 10.3 The Treasurer is responsible to the Union for the monitoring and reporting of the Union accounts details of which are provided on a monthly basis by the College's Finance Assistant.
- 10.4 The College's Finance Officer is responsible for monitoring and auditing the Union accounts. Details will be reported to the Governing Body annually.
- 10.5 Union funds will be provided to the Treasurer to a maximum of £500 per instance by the Finance Officer who will require the signature of the Treasurer and the President. No amounts will be provided once the annual allocation has been spent.

11. Indemnity

- 11.1 Every Executive Officer and person approved to make decisions of behalf of the Union shall be entitled to be indemnified out of the assets of the union against all losses or liability which she/he may incur in or about the execution of his or her office or otherwise in relation thereto; and no officer, appointee or member of staff shall be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune which may happen to or be incurred by the union in the execution of the duties of his or her office or in relation thereto; provided that nothing in this clause shall affect their liability for the consequences of any negligent or unlawful act on their part.

Section 2 – The Schedules

The following schedules give further operational details in relation to how things get done.

Schedule 1 - Elections

This schedule outlines what to do for all elections for all positions in the Union. It also outlines the procedure to follow if a vacancy occurs in any position.

- 1.1 Any full-time student (over 16 hours per week) registered at the College can self-nominate to stand for any of the Student Union Executive posts unless they have opted out of the Student Union or they have been elected as a Student Governor.
- 1.2 Elections will normally take place in week three of the Autumn term and then as required. The returning officer will meet with the student body a week in advance to explain the Executive posts and the election process. Nomination sheets will be posted on the Union notice board seven days in advance of the election.
- 1.3 The Returning Officer is the Head of Student Experience or their nominee. The Officer is responsible for the good conduct and administration of all Union elections.
- 1.4 There will be an opportunity for hustings where candidates can present their cases prior to the election taking place. This may be done in person or electronically.
- 1.5 All Executive roles must be filled for the Student Union to operate in the Academic year in question.
- 1.6 The elections will be conducted by secret ballot. Where only one candidate is nominated, the Returning Officer will ensure that the Student agrees to be nominated and will provide a process for any student with concerns to raise those confidentially with the Returning Officer prior to confirming Officers in post. The Head of Student Experience will consider any concerns raised and make a decision.
- 1.7 The Returning Officer will convey the election results to all full-time students. Successful candidates will be informed of the outcome, reminded of their roles and provided with links to relevant College staff. College staff will be notified of the Executive Committee.
- 1.8 Any complaints received about this process will result in the suspension of the process until the complaint has been resolved.

Schedule 2 – Meeting Regulations (How do Union Meetings Work)

- 2.1 Meeting regulations apply in full to all General meetings and to all Committee meetings in terms of conduct of meetings.
- 2.2 The business of a General Meeting is divided into two parts:
- a. College Business: to discuss any matters relating to members as students of the College associated with their education and other College issues.
 - b. Union Business: to discuss all other issues of interest to members of the Union.
- 2.3 **Who runs the meeting?**
- The President will nominate a chair and minute taker.
 - The President shall be responsible for the agenda and publicising the meeting at least 5 working days before the meeting on the Union noticeboard.
 - The President will chair of the first meeting of the academic year and the meeting will elect a chairperson and a deputy chairperson at this meeting. The Secretary will normally be the minute taker for each meeting.
 - In the event of any situation arising not covered by meeting regulations the Chair will rule on the procedure to be adopted. This ruling must be approved by the General meeting.
 - In the event of the Chair being in conflict or alleged to be in conflict with the item under discussion the Deputy Chair will stand in for the duration of the discussion of that item.
- 2.4 **Who can attend?**
- All members of the Student Union will be expected to attend all meetings. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without giving apologies to the chair, and without good reason being provided, shall be considered to have resigned.
 - Members of Staff from the College's Management Team may attend the College Business part of the meeting.
 - Any individuals who are not Union members or members of the College's Management Team must receive permission to attend from the Chair who must seek permission from Members for the individual to attend.
- 2.5 **Who can speak?**
- Any full Union member.
 - Members of the College's Management Team or relevant staff invited to the College Business part of the meeting by the Chair due to the nature of their role.
 - Any individual invited and agreed to attend as a guest.
 - Any individual wishing to speak must raise their hand. The Chair will decide the order of speaking.

2.6 Who can vote?

- Only members present at the meeting.
- The Chair may not vote unless the vote is tied in which case they have the casting vote.

2.7 How to get items onto the agenda

- All items for debate/discussion will be submitted to the President five days before the meeting. Amendments to the Constitution and Schedules must be submitted seven days before the start of the meeting.
- All debate items require the signatures of at least two full Union members

2.8 What is talked about at meetings?

The agenda of meetings shall normally be taken in the following order:

a) College business:

- Welcome from the chair
- Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
- Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
- Debate/discussion items
- Reports from the Management Team
- Management question time
- Education issues

b) Union business:

- Checking the minutes of the previous meeting for accuracy
- Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
- Reports from the Executive committee
- Executive question time
- Debate/discussion items
- Any other business

- Any member may request that any item be discussed in full, provided notice is given in advance of the meeting.

- Debates process:

- the proposer makes their speech
- The Chair will invite a speech against the debate
- The Chair will balance the number of speeches for and against the debate and invite questions and statements before a vote
- The proposer will sum up
- A vote will be taken

- General rules
- Any motion/item may only be withdrawn with the consent of the meeting
- Debates require a simple majority.
- Emergency debates may only be discussed if there is a two third majority support of doing so and the matter to be discussed has arisen since the date for submission of

agenda items. The request must have been made prior to the start of the meeting for it to be considered.

Appendix A

Role Descriptions for Executive Officers

THE PRESIDENT

Aim of role:

The aim of the role is to lead the Student Union Executive and represent the Access Course student body.

Duties are:

- To be the prime representative of the Union and seek to involve as many Access students in the activities of the Union as possible
- To chair the Executive meetings and present a report's from the Executive meetings to the General Meetings of the Student Union
- To represent the student body in all matters.
- To liaise with Student Governors to ensure that they are aware of issues, concerns and suggestions from the Student Body.
- To attend meetings where appropriate as requested by the Leadership Team or Governing Body.
- To work co-operatively with other Union Officers and employees of the College.
- To notify the Head of Student Experience of the resignation of any Union Officer and ensure that elections and other matters are carried out in accordance with Union Constitution.
- To be part of the College's self-assessment process and to attend meetings as required
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur

THE SECRETARY

Aim of role:

This is a key role, which includes arranging meetings, minute taking and ensuring the Student Union follows the constitution.

Duties are:

- To report directly to the President
- To deputise for the President if unavailable at short notice
- To arrange meetings, prepare and send out agendas and take minutes of all Student Union meetings
- To deal with any correspondence in liaison with the President.
- To communicate regularly with all members of the Student Union.
- To sign for petty cash from the Student Union finances in the absence of the treasurer.
- To ensure that all members of the Student Union carry out their duties in accordance with the Constitution
- To work closely with the Executive and relevant College employees to ensure the smooth running of the Student Union.
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union.
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur.

THE TREASURER

Aim of role:

To keep all student finances and associated paperwork in order. The Treasurer is a member of the Executive and is responsible for presenting the Student Union as a professional organisation to the student body and the College.

Duties are:

- To regulate the expenditure of the Union to maximise Union activities.
- Present an update of income and expenditure to the Executive and to the General meeting of the Student Union.
- To sign for any petty cash from the Student Union account.
- To undergo coaching/training if required and to work with the College's finance team to ensure all finances can be accounted for.
- To work closely with the Student Union Executive when costing events and gaining supplies
- To be part of the College's self-assessment process and to attend meetings as required
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur

THE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ED&I) OFFICER

Aim of role:

To promote ED&I throughout the Student body. The ED&I Officer is a member of the Executive and is responsible for identifying opportunities to celebrate differences and ensuring that any issues or concerns are addressed.

Duties are:

- To spend time with individual or groups of students to identify ED&I issues and improvement opportunities.
- To ensure that the Executive is regularly made aware of and discusses information gained from the Student Body.
- To attend the College's ED&I Group meetings providing views from the Student Body and feeding back information from the Committee to the Student Body.
- To work co-operatively with the College's Marketing and Student Services Teams to identify opportunities to celebrate differences.
- To assist with equality impact assessments of student related documents
- To assist with awareness raising around British Values and Prevent
- To undertake relevant coaching/training around ED&I.
- To work with the Events and Activities Officer to ensure that all students, including non-resident students, have the opportunity to take part in activities.
- To support students in disciplinary or educational appeal processes where relevant.
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union.
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur.

THE WELLBEING & SAFETY OFFICER

Aim of role:

To be a member of the Executive, providing a contact point for students to discuss concerns with and assisting the College to ensure the safety and support of students.

Duties are:

- To spend time with individual or groups of students to identify welfare and health and safety issues and improvement opportunities.
- To ensure that the Executive is regularly made aware of and discusses information gained from the Student Body.
- To attend meetings of the College's Health and Safety Committee providing suggestions and concerns from the Student Body and feeding back information from the Committee to the Student Body.
- To liaise with the Executive and the College's Student Support Team to find ways to raise student awareness of welfare and wellbeing e.g. drug awareness, mindfulness techniques Executive and Student Support Team.
- To work co-operatively with the events and activities officer to encourage activities promoting wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.
- To undertake relevant training/coaching.
- To support students in disciplinary or educational appeal processes where relevant.
- To ensure that any Safeguarding concerns are reported to the Safeguarding Lead or health and safety concerns are reported to the Facilities Team Leader as soon as possible
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- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union.
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur.

THE EVENTS & ACTIVITIES OFFICER

Aim of role:

To be a member of the Executive, encouraging and organising a range of social and educational activities to enrich the student experience and ensure that the College's good reputation is maintained.

Duties are:

- To liaise with all students on the Access course to seek views, preferences and ideas for events.
- To ensure that the Executive is regularly made aware of and discusses information gained from the Student Body.
- To work co-operatively with the appropriate staff to ensure that risk assessments for Safeguarding, Prevent and Health and Safety are undertaken. Also, to ensure that permission is obtained from the Principal for any in College activities prior to events taking place.
- To work closely with the Welfare and Safety Officer and ED&I Officer to ensure that all students, including non-resident students have the opportunity to take part in activities and to encourage activities promoting wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.
- To work closely with the Treasurer to ensure events are costed and agreed by the Executive prior to events taking place.
- To ensure that students are aware of the requirement for positive behaviour in line with the Student Charter.
- To undertake relevant training/coaching
- To identify community involvement and fundraising opportunities
- To support students in disciplinary or educational appeal processes where relevant.
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur

THE EDUCATION OFFICER

Aim of role:

To be a member of the Executive and support and represent student views regarding the College's educational offer and delivery.

Duties are:

- To spend time with individual or groups of students to identify educational or educational support issues and improvement opportunities.
- To ensure that the Executive is regularly made aware of and discusses information gained from the Student Body.
- To work co-operatively with the College's Programme Manager and attend relevant Education meetings to raise suggestions for improvement and concerns and feedback to the Student Body as relevant.
- To undertake relevant training/coaching.
- To work closely with the Events and Activities Officer to arrange events which promote and support learning.
- To assist with the College's Self-Assessment process, attending meetings as required (with the President).
- To support students in disciplinary or educational appeal processes where relevant.
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union.
- To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION

Aim of role:

To be a member of the Executive, supporting and representing student views regarding the College's impact on the Environment and the measures which the College (including students) can take.

Duties are:

- To spend time with individual or groups of students to identify areas of improvement and ideas around sustainability
- To ensure that the Executive is regularly made aware of and discusses information gained from the Student Body.
- To ensure that Events and Activities undertaken by the Student Body support environmental awareness and have a positive not negative effect on the environment.
- To work co-operatively with the College's Facilities Team Leader and attend relevant Sustainability meetings to raise suggestions for improvement and concerns and feedback to the Student Body as relevant.
- To undertake relevant training/coaching.
- To act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of the Union.

To carry out any other duties, appropriate to the office, that may occur