

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY - BOARD OF GOVERNORS

STUDENTS' UNION

CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

1. The Oxford Brookes Students' Union (the Union) is a charitable body of students which aims to:
 - represent the interests of its members both within and outside the University, and to provide a recognised and representative channel of communication;
 - provide welfare services for students;
 - promote educational and cultural activities (the Union sponsors a large number of clubs and societies to this end);
 - to provide recreational (bars and entertainments) and other services for students.
2. Membership of the Union is available and free to all students. The Union is run in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for this and its finances to the Board of Governors (the Board). The Board looks to the Union to represent the interest of students in the policy and decision making machinery through which the affairs of the University are conducted. The Board, therefore, encourages all students to join the Union to ensure that the Union is truly representative of the student body and that all students participate in the Union's affairs.
3. Nonetheless the Board is obliged in law to advise all potential students that they are entitled not to take up membership of the Union. Students who exercise this right will not be able to stand or vote in elections to a variety of student offices or to take part in formulating Union policy. However, any student who chooses not to be a member can be an associate of the Union and will have access to the welfare, social, cultural, recreational, retail and entertainment facilities provided by the Union and can join its clubs and societies.
4. A student may join the Union at any time and may withdraw from membership at any time. However, having withdrawn from membership he or she may only rejoin in the first two weeks of any academic year and only once during that period.
5. This code of practice describes how the Board discharges its responsibilities to ensure the proper conduct of the Union's affairs and also to ensure that no student is unfairly disadvantaged if she or he decides not to be a member of the Union.

Conduct of the Union's affairs

6. The Board requires the Union to have a written constitution which is subject to approval by the Board. The Board reviews the constitution at least every 5 years and can seek changes to it following consultation with the Students' Union, if those changes are necessary to ensure the fair and democratic functioning of the Union. The Board requires that the constitution includes the following:
 - (a) appointment to the office of President of the Students' Union is by secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote and all other executive offices in the Union are filled in a similar way, although the constituency for some posts is more restricted;
 - (b) a procedure for the conduct of elections which provides for a returning officer to be appointed who is responsible for the proper conduct of elections and provides a mechanism for appeals against his or her decision;
 - (c) no student is allowed to hold a paid union office for more than 2 years in total;
 - (d) the Union must have financial regulations which have been approved by the Board, and can be amended by agreements between Deputy Vice-Chancellor Finance and Marketing and the Students' Union, and should include:
 - procedures for the approval by the Board of the Union's budget and the routine monitoring of its expenditure;
 - procedures for the audited annual accounts to be made available to the Board and accessible to any student who wishes to have a copy;
 - for the accounts to include lists of external organisations to which the Union has made donations and the details of those donations;
 - includes lists of organisations to which the Union is affiliated;
 - (e) a procedure for allocating resources for groups or clubs which is fair and has been set down in writing and is freely available to any student who wishes to see it;
 - (f) notices of any decision to affiliate to external organisations to be made available to the Board and published at the earliest opportunity in the Union newspaper. A list of any external organisations to which the Union is affiliated has to be produced with details of subscriptions and such affiliations have to be approved annually by a General Meeting of the Union.

- (g) at intervals not exceeding a year, a group of at least 5% of the members of the Students' Union can request that a secret ballot is held concerning continued affiliation to any organisation and if a majority of those taking part in the ballot determine that affiliation should not be continued, this decision should be given immediate effect. The Union cannot then decide to re-affiliate unless that decision is reversed by a further secret ballot requisitioned by at least 5% of the members of the Union.

Provision of facilities and services to students who are not full members of the Union

- 7. The Board requires that the constitution provides for students who do not wish to be members of the Union to be associates of the Union. Associates have access to welfare services, clubs, entertainments, bars and other recreational facilities provided by the Union. The only facilities denied to associates which are available to members of the Union are the right to participate in the democratic and decision making processes of the Union.

Complaints procedure

- 8. The University has established a complaints procedure (which is available from the Academic Secretary) which permits students to make complaints if they are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union or feel that they have been unfairly disadvantaged as a consequence of having decided not to be a full member of the Union. That procedure allows for the complaint to be heard in most circumstances by a committee of staff and students or by an independent person.

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