

J21-06 Motion to reform and update the Laws of the Association.

In effect: Immediately after the Association Elections in March 2021

Review Date: January 2022

Owner: Morgan Morris, Association Chair

This Joint Council notes:

1. The current Laws of the Association (Appendix 2) do not reflect current practice of the Association, containing inconsistencies and outdated references.
2. Following interviews with students and Association officers, the University-led review of the Students' Association highlighted that students felt Association Councils was "complicated and limiting" and its complexity led to students being too intimidated to get involved.
3. The inclusion of Association positions has created a sense of hierarchy within Association Councils.
4. A large amount of Association Councils business is procedural motions, such as minor changes to SSC constitutions.
5. The current Laws of the Association cause overlap in remit and membership of certain officers and groups, such as the Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities Subcommittees, and the Postgraduate Development Officer.
6. The Students' Association Executive Committee (SAEC) discussed this plan (Appendix 1) to update the Association Laws at their meeting on 17th November 2020 and gave their preliminary approval to proceed.
7. The Governance, Nominations, and Staffing (GNS) Subcommittee of the Students' Association Board was made aware and discussed this plan (Appendix 1) to update the laws at their meeting on 27th November 2020 and gave their preliminary approval to proceed.

This Joint Council believes:

1. Maintenance of the Association laws needs to be more straightforward, as the current format is unmanageable.
2. The operation and structure of Association Councils needs to be simplified for transparency, and to allow students to meaningfully engage with councils.
3. Association Councils positions and subcommittees need to be streamlined, to allow for Councils to be more accessible to all students.
4. The sense of hierarchy within Association Councils should be removed, particularly Association positions, to ensure all members are equal.
5. The number of procedural motions, such as minor constitutional changes, coming to Association Councils for consideration should be reduced, particularly within the SSC.
6. The two councils should be refocused on their distinct but equally important remits of representation and provision of activities, and away from general governance which should be carried out by SAEC.

7. *Chapter 9: Rectoral Heckling* and *Chapter 11: Association Projects* of the current Association Laws (Appendix 2) should be removed, as they do not reflect current practice of the Association.

This Joint Council resolves:

1. To implement the changes laid out in Appendix 1.
2. To replace the current Laws of the Association (Appendix 2, as of November 2020) with the new Laws of the Association (Appendix 3a) and Association Subcommittee Constitutions (Appendix 3b).
3. To update the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Association in accordance with the new Laws of the Association and Association Subcommittee Constitutions.
4. To mandate the Director of Wellbeing, and other relevant officers, to review and reform the Wellbeing and Equal Opportunities Subcommittees before the end of the current semester, so that they function within the aims of this review, with changes brought to SAEC for approval.
5. To mandate the Director of Education, and other relevant officers, to review and update the three Postgraduate Officer roles before the end of the current semester, so that they function within the aims of this review, with changes brought to SAEC for approval.
6. To mandate that the following chapters of the Laws of the Association are reviewed by the named officers before the end of their term, with changes brought to SAEC for approval:
 - a. *Chapter One: The Students' Association and Sabbatical Officers*, to be reviewed by all Sabbatical Officers.
 - b. *Chapter Six: Elections*, to be reviewed by the Director of Wellbeing (as Senior Elections Officer) and the other Sabbatical Officers.
 - c. *Chapter Seven: Meetings and Referenda*, to be reviewed by the Association President and other relevant officers and members of staff.
 - d. *Chapter Nine: Membership of the Association* and *Chapter Eleven: Rules of the Union*, to be reviewed by the Director of Events and Services and relevant members of staff.
7. To mandate that the following chapters of the Association Subcommittee Constitutions are completed by the named officers and their sabbatical line managers before the end of their term, with changes brought to SAEC for approval:
 - a. *Chapter One: Accommodation Subcommittee*, to be completed by the Accommodation Officer.
 - b. *Chapter Two: Alumni Subcommittee*, to be completed by the Alumni Officer.
 - c. *Chapter Four: Community Relations Subcommittee*, to be completed by the Community Relations Officer.
 - d. *Chapter Seven: Environment Subcommittee*, to be completed by the Environment Officer.
 - e. *Chapter Ten: Lifelong and Flexible Learners Subcommittee*, to be completed by the

Lifelong and Flexible Learners Officer.

- f. *Chapter Eleven: Wellbeing Subcommittee*, to be completed by the Student Health Officer.

Proposed by Morgan Morris, Association Chair

Seconded by:

- Dan Marshall, Association President
- Tom Groves, Director of Events and Services
- Gavin Sandford, Director of Student Development and Activities
- Emma Walsh, Director of Wellbeing
- Sophie Tyler, Athletic Union President
- Amy Gallacher, Director of Education
- Unanimous Approval from the Students' Association Executive Committee

Appendices:

The following appendices will be attached to this motion:

1. Appendix 1: Plan to update Laws of the Association, as approved by SAEC and GNS.
2. Appendix 2: Current Laws of the Association (as of November 2020).
3. Appendix 3a: Proposed Laws of the Association.
4. Appendix 3b: Proposed Association Subcommittee Constitutions

*Appendix 2, 3a, and 3b have been sent in separate documents in order to view tracked changes.

Appendix 1: Plan to update Laws of the Association, as approved by SAEC and GNS.

Association Councils Review 2020/21

Aims of this review, Principals of what we are trying to achieve:

- Make the maintenance of the laws more straightforward
- Simplifying operation of Association Councils for students to understand to enable increased engagement and transparency
- Making it more efficient/streamlined for Councillors to make councils positions more accessible and focused
- Reduce number of procedural motions (such as minor constitutional changes) coming to councils for consideration, particularly SSC.
- Determine what needs to be in the laws
- Remove sense of hierarchy around Association positions and other positions

Ideas:

- Change the SSC to the less formal Students Services Forum (SSF), chaired by the Association Chair. SSF would have no decision-making power beyond carve ups to exec, discipline etc but would be a forum for collaboration and discussion between heads of SSC subcommittees.
- Constitutions held by services subcommittees independently with oversight from the SAEC. Constitutions must fulfil certain basic criteria and if councillors wanted to change their constitution, these constitutional changes would approve by SAEC in the form of a motion.

- Association Positions would be changed to SRC positions with some role descriptions requiring some adjustment to refocus on representation. Along with the change of some position titles.
- Change the number of meetings per semester, to one per month for SRC meeting and twice a semester for SSF.
- Open forum meetings 1 per year/semester for all members with required attendance from SRC and SSF for updates and open discussion (would serve as AGM)
- Remove Chapter 9: Rectoral Heckling. This has become irrelevant as the University Court sets the election rules.
- Update the SA Standing Orders and SA Constitution in accordance with the changes that have been made in the laws

Road Map:

- Bring to the SAEC for the first time on the 17th November 2020, with a wider discussion.
- Dec-Feb: Association Chair and Association President to work on the chapters that would need updated to reflect these changes.
- Bring to SAEC for approval on 16th February 2021
- Bring it to Joint Councils on the 23rd February 2021
- Take it for approval by SA Board on the 17th March 2021