

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

The Students' Union (Kent Union) Code of Practice

1. *Membership of the Students' Union*

1.1 All full and part-time registered students are entitled to full membership of the Students' Union (hereafter called "the Union").

1.2 **The rights of members**

Members are entitled to utilise all of the services provided by the Union.
Members may:

1. Use the Union's welfare and advice services.
2. Participate fully in the Union's democratic procedures.
3. Be represented by:
 - (a) Union officers in accordance with Union policy;
 - (b) Union staff or Sabbatical Officers in Academic or Disciplinary cases.
4. Form or join Union clubs and societies – See the section on Union Societies and Team Kent.
5. Attend all Union entertainments.
6. Utilise the Union's commercial outlets.

Non-members are not entitled to participate in the Union's democratic procedures, and may join Union clubs and societies as an associate member. Permission to utilise the Union's services and commercial outlets and to attend entertainments will not normally be withheld.

Note: The Notes at the end of this Code of Practice also refer.

1.3 **Opting Out**

Every student has the right to opt out of membership of the Union and will be given the opportunity to opt out annually.

1.4 **Opting In**

Students may choose to opt in to the Union at the Student Records and Examinations Office in the Registry building at any time.

2. *The Union Constitution*

2.1 Kent Union has a Constitution which is submitted to the University Council for approval every five years. Any member of the Union may have a copy of the Constitution upon request; the Constitution is also available on the Kent Union website.

The key organisational and structural points of the Constitution are set out below.

2.2 Union Decision Making Structure

In order, starting with that of the highest authority, these are:

- (i) The Referendum
- (ii) The Annual General Meeting and the Emergency General Meeting
- (iii) 'Change It' online democratic structure

2.3 The sovereign decision making body for approving the Trustees Report is the Annual General Meeting.

Amendments to the Constitution have to be passed by a 2/3 majority quorate AGM and the University's Senate and Council before being put into effect.

Constitutional and Rule motions are not governed by the policy lapse protocol set out in 2.4 below.

The quorum for the Annual General Meeting is 100 members.

Policy for the Students' Union is passed by online platform **Change It** subject to a collection of signatures from members and an all student vote. Policy passed is binding for two years. After the relevant time has passed the policy lapses and is discarded. Prior to policy lapsing, a document shall be available on the Kent Union website which contains a list of all policies that are due to lapse in the coming term. A motion to retain a policy for a further two years may be submitted by Change It.

2.4 The Full-Time Officer Team is responsible for the Union on a day-to-day basis.

2.5 The Full-Time Officers receive reports from the Union Director Group (DG) and Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings.

3. Union Officers

3.1 There are five Sabbatical Officers. No Sabbatical Officer may serve more than two full terms of Office (Union rule EX 2.2).

3.2 The Sabbatical Officers of the Union are:

Union President
Vice-President (Activities)
Vice-President (Education)
Vice-President (Welfare)
Vice-President (Sports)

3.3 The Non-Sabbatical Officers of the Union are:

Mature Students' Officer
Students with Dependants Officer
Part-Time Students' Officer
International Students Officer
Ethics Officer
Environment Officer
LGBT Officer (Open Place)
LGBT Officer (Women's Place)
LGBT Officer (Trans Place)
BME Officer (Open Place)
BME Officer (Black Place)

Students with Disabilities Officer
Women's Officer
Parkwood SC President
Eliot College SC President
Rutherford College SC President
Darwin College SC President
Turing College SC President
Keynes College SC President
Medway SC President
KGSA President
UG Humanities Faculty Rep
UG Sciences Faculty Rep
UG Social Sciences Faculty Rep
PG Humanities Faculty Rep
PG Sciences Faculty Rep
PG Social Sciences Faculty Rep
RaG President
Student Trustee x2
University Council Rep
University Senate Rep (Open Place)
University Senate Rep (Postgraduate Place)
Societies Executive Reps
TeamKent Executive Reps
Community Action Committee Reps

4. Elections

- 4.1** All members of the Union have the right to stand for election to any Union post and vote in all Union elections in which they self-define.

All elections held by the Union are by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote method.

The Union's Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer have responsibility for ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and properly.

The annual elections for Sabbatical Officers take place in the Spring Term

4.2 How to stand for election

A nomination form is available on the Kent Union website.

For Sabbatical elections, a nominee must collect 2 signatures from Union members by a specified deadline.

Contact points:

For further information on elections consult "Election rules" or the Deputy Returning Officer in the John Locke Building.

5. Complaints procedure

- 5.1** Any member of the Union with a complaint about the conduct of the Students' Union or a Union officer may make a complaint. For further details, the Comments and Complaints Procedure can be found on the Union's website [Comments and Complaints Procedure](#)

- 5.2** Complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly, and appropriate action will be taken. Details of all comments and complaints are held centrally by the

Marketing department. Any comment received by the Union will be acknowledged and responded to within five working days.

- 5.3** Should a member of the Union remain dissatisfied with Kent Union's Comments and Complaints procedure, there is a provision for an independent person appointed by the University's Council to investigate and report on complaints, as deemed appropriate by the Secretary of the Council (normally an independent senior person from the University). Complaints should be directed in the first instance to the Student Conduct and Complaints Office, sccoffice@kent.ac.uk.

Contact Point:

Director of Marketing and Business Development at the Mandela Building

6. Union Finances

- 6.1** The Union receives an annual block grant from the University of Kent
- 6.2** The Union's annual budget is subject to the approval of the University's Finance and Resources Committee. The Committee reviews expenditure and budget performance quarterly with the President and other senior Union staff and officers, as appropriate, in attendance.
- 6.3** The Union's annual accounts are externally audited, and are submitted each year to the University's Finance and Resources Committee and Council. The Union also produces an annual financial report which is made available to all students. The annual financial report includes details of all external organisations to which the Union has affiliated and details of such affiliated fees.
- 6.4** The Union may not make any payments that are "ultra vires" (Guidelines are set out by the Attorney General and the Charities Commission). The Full-Time Officer team in partnership with the Finance department is responsible for overseeing the Union's finances on a day-to-day basis. The Delegation of Authority is laid out in the Governance, Policies and Procedures Document.

Contact Point:

The Union President at the Mandela Building; union-president@kent.ac.uk

7. Union Societies

- 7.1** All Union members are entitled to join, run or start a society.
- 7.2** No society may be formed whose aims and objectives are not compatible with the Union Constitution, the University's Statutes and Ordinances or the law of the land.
- 7.3** To start a new society there must be a minimum of 3 committee positions and 10 Union members willing to join.
- 7.4** The Volunteer Handbook is available on the Kent Union website (www.kentunion.co.uk/volunteer-resources/). Student Leader Training takes place twice a year. If committees are unable to attend they should meet with the Student Activities Team Leader (Student Groups).

Contact Point:

Vice-President Activities at the John Locke Building; union-activities@kent.ac.uk

8. Procedure for Allocating Funds to Union Societies

8.1 Societies are funded via membership fees and are invited to apply for a grant at the beginning of the year using the application form available online.

8.2 The Societies Executive is responsible for the allocation of the Development Fund to societies which enter applications for additional funding. The Executive will allocate funding based on evidence of long-term development of the society and proportional benefit to members including factors such as size and cost of membership as well as evidence of prior fundraising and current accounts held.

The Executive will not allocate more than £500 per application. Any applications requesting £500 or above will be considered by the Union Board of Trustees under capital expenditure.

8.3 Kent Union is a charity. As such it has to adhere to a number of principles and legislation pertaining to its financial activities, including societies. Kent Union cannot authorise 'ultra vires' expenditure and advice should be sought in those cases which are not clear.

Should any society believe that the Societies' Executive has treated it unfairly, it can appeal through the Comments and Complaints Procedure.

Contact Point:

Vice-President Activities at the John Locke Building; union-activities@kent.ac.uk

9. Team Kent Clubs

9.1 All Union members are entitled to join, run, or start a Team Kent club. Team Kent has its own Team Kent Executive Committee which allocates Development Funds to the sports clubs.

9.2 All sports clubs are required to submit a budget to the Vice-President (Sport) who will, with the Sports Coordinator, allocate funding within the restrictions of the annual budget allocation. Additional grant funding is not available until the sports club has 10 fully paid members.

9.3 Should any sports club feel that it has been treated unfairly, it shall have the right to appeal to the Vice- President (Sport) or the Union President through the Comments and Complaints Procedure.

Contact Point:

Vice-President Sports at the John Locke Building; union-sports@kent.ac.uk

10. Affiliations

10.1 From time to time, the Union or societies may be affiliated to a number of external organisations. Members of the Union have the chance annually to approve all of these affiliations (or not as the case may be).

10.2 The Union maintains a register of its affiliations. This is available for consultation at the Mandela Building, on the Union website and is published annually in Financial Accounts including details of subscriptions or similar fees paid, or affiliations made, to such organisations in the past year (or since the last report).

- 10.3** The 1994 Education Act empowers members of the Union to be able to call a referendum regarding the Union's continued affiliation to any particular organisation. Such a requisition may be made by a petition of 5% of the Union membership and in this case a secret ballot would be held for Union members to decide the point.

Contact Point:

For information on the Union's affiliations contact the Union President

union-president@kent.ac.uk

11. General

The Students' Union is housed in the Mandela Building and the John Locke Building.

The Students' Union name and full addresses are:

Kent Union
Mandela Building
The University of Kent
Canterbury
Kent CT2 7NW

Kent Union
John Locke Building
The University of Kent
Canterbury
Kent CT2 7UG

Union phone number: 01227 824200
Internal extension: 4200

Note: This Code of Practice is subject to annual review. The approvals of minor changes are delegated to the Vice-Chancellor acting on behalf of University's Council. Substantial changes to content and/or policy must be approved by University's Council.

Non-Members of the Students' Union

1. Complaints

A student who is not a member of the Students' Union who wishes to make a complaint about the Union or about being unfairly disadvantaged by reason of opting out of membership should submit this in writing to the Secretary of the University's Council. If the matter cannot be resolved informally or otherwise, as the Secretary of the Council deems appropriate, the Secretary will make provision for an independent person appointed by the University's Council to investigate and report on complaints (normally a senior person from a neighbouring HE institution).

Approved by Senate and Council in June 2014

Amendments made to Section 5 (and the final section on Non-Members) and published in August 2014

Amendments made and published in March 2017