

Student Group Constitution

1.0 Designation and context

- 1.1 The name of the group shall be The University of Birmingham Guild of Students Autism Society, which maybe abbreviated/shortened to: Autism Society. For the rest of this document, called the "group".
- 1.2 It is recognised that this group is a constituent part of the University Of Birmingham Guild Of Students and must therefore fulfil all stipulations and regulations contained within the Memorandum, Articles of Association, bye-laws and policies thereof.
- 1.3 The Guild of Students, or the Student Groups Executive [SGX], acting on its behalf, may require the Group to amend this constitution to safeguard the interests of the Guild.
- 1.4 Amendments to a group Constitution, as approved by Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting, shall not take effect until approved by the SGX.
- 1.5 Queries regarding interpretation should be referred to the Activities and Employability Officer [AEO] after consideration by the group committee.
- 1.6 This constitution, and any additional policies enforced by the group, will be available to all members at any time.

2.0 Objectives of the Group

- 2.1 The objectives of the group shall be:
 - 2.1.1 Provide social activities and opportunities for those with Autism spectrum conditions
 - 2.1.2 Providing peer-to-peer support amongst those with Autism spectrum conditions within the University
- 2.2 All activities of this group must be related to the objectives.
- 2.3 Unless specifically required by the above objectives, membership and admittance to the student group activities shall be open to all University of Birmingham students. Membership of a student group should not be refused for any of the following reasons: race, religion or creed, sex, sexual orientation, colour, ethnic or national origin, political opinion, gender (including gender reassignment), age, marital status, pregnancy or disability. The Committee members shall ensure that activities of the group are pursued in the best interests of student members and independently of any political or religious group external to the Guild of Students.

3.0 Affiliations

- 3.1 The group may affiliate to the following bodies/organisations:
 - 3.1.1
- 3.2 All changes to the above list of affiliations must be approved by the SGX

4.0 Address

- 4.1 The address for all correspondence shall be:
GROUP NAME, Student Groups, Guild of Students
Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham, B15 2TU.

5.0 Membership

- 5.1 The subscription for memberships shall be paid for by each member on an annual basis at the appropriate rate below (minimum £3 for societies; with the exception of 'religious and faith' and 'campaigning and fundraising' groups who have the option to charge, at the discretion of the SGX. Community Volunteering groups and associations must be free to join)
 - 5.1.1 The membership fee for this group shall be: £3
- 5.2 All societies must be open for all members of the Guild to join. Volunteering groups may use a selection procedure if the nature of the activity requires it. Such discretion will be granted by the SGX and can be reviewed or revoked at any time. Associations are restricted to those who self-define as being a member.

- 5.3 Membership of this group shall be open to all Full and External Members of the Guild, subject to the Guild's byelaws and relevant legislation. Acting as a committee member shall only be restricted in some situations with prior approval of the SGX to those who confirm in writing their support of the objects of the group, if the purpose of the group is the practice and advancement of a religion or belief.
- 5.4 Membership of the group shall itself not be deemed to confirm membership of the Guild or any of the privileges pertaining thereto.
- 5.5 External Members may participate in the activities of the group but not hold office.
- 5.6 A student group ensure that all regular participants are registered members.

6.0 Responsibilities of committee members

- 6.1.1 To be responsible for the running and proper management of the group.
- 6.1.2 To be responsible for the financial affairs of the group in line with the Guild's Financial Procedures Manual and in the interests of members.
- 6.2 To uphold the clauses contained in this constitution.
- 6.3 To uphold the clauses contained in the bye-laws, Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Guild of Students.
- 6.4 To represent the group at any meetings required by Student Groups staff or Officers.
 - 6.5.1.1 To ensure their correct contact details are held by the Guild.
 - 6.5.1.2 To ensure the group accounts do not become overdrawn without the agreement of the SGX.
 - 6.5.1.3 To be personally liable to the Guild for any debts owed by the group to the Guild (applicable to authorised signatories only).
 - 6.5.1.4 To ensure no other bank account exists for the group outside of the Guild. All financial transactions relating to the group must be dealt with through the Student Groups department; committee members should not gain personal financial benefit through holding office.
- 6.6 The group does not have the authority to enter into contracts with any external bodies, all such contracts or agreements require the authorisation of the Guild.
- 6.7.1 The committee (excluding the AEO) should meet whenever required, but at least two times per term.
- 6.7.2 The chair shall call a committee meeting at the request of any two members of the Committee.
- 6.7.3 Every committee member shall be given at least two days' notice of an ordinary meeting.
- 6.7.4 In case of emergency, an emergency meeting may be held within less than 48 hours, provided that reasonable notice has been given to every member of the committee.
- 6.8 If any vacancies occur in the membership of the committee during its term of office, the committee will inform Student Groups staff, the vacancy shall be democratically filled at an Extraordinary General Meeting as soon as is practical, unless an AGM is due shortly.
- 6.9 The AEO is an ex-officio member of the committee.
- 6.10 Financial liability shall be devolved to the Guild only where it can be shown that the relevant procedures have been complied with; all other liability rests with the committee members.

7.0 Responsibilities of the Chair

- 7.1 To chair and co-ordinate the committee.
- 7.2 To ensure that the group is represented at meetings required by the Guild, and in any dealings with the Guild or other bodies.
- 7.3 To chair the Annual General Meeting and any other meetings, unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case another committee member shall chair the meeting.

8.0 Responsibilities of the Treasurer.

- 8.1 To provide the committee with regular reports on the group's financial status.
- 8.2 To liaise directly with Student Groups staff so as to maintain and update the group's accounts.
- 8.3 To advise the committee on the financial implications of all decisions taken.
- 8.4 To prepare a grant application requesting financial assistance from the Guild and to submit this application by the required deadline, if the group desires to request funding. Groups may apply for a grant to support some or all of the activities listed in their constitution. This funding should supplement the fundraising and budgeting efforts of the group, and should not be relied upon to ensure the sustainability of the group.
- 8.5 To maintain an inventory of, and to ensure that safety checks are regularly carried out on, all equipment; and to provide related information to Student Groups staff.

9.0 Responsibilities of the Secretary

- 9.1 To take minutes of the Annual General Meeting, Extraordinary General Meetings and committee meetings if required, and to submit copies of these to Student Groups staff.
- 9.2 To maintain and update membership lists for the group, and ensure that Student Groups staff have current records.
- 9.3 To deal with correspondence with members, interested students and external bodies.
- 9.4 To ensure the promotion of the group and its activities to encourage increased awareness of and participation in the group.
- 9.5 To ensure that Student Groups staff receives minutes within 10 days of the Annual General Meeting or any Extraordinary General Meeting.

10. Roles and Responsibilities of other committee members

- 10.1 Other committee members shall be:
- 10.2 Events Organiser
- 10.2.2 To work with the committee to organise, plan and run events/activities to meet the objectives of the society.

11.0 Election of Committee Members

- 11.1 There will be an Annual General Meeting at which the group committee members shall be elected for the forthcoming year, which must occur within 12 months of the previous elections, as far as is practically possible; these must be held in February or March, except where the SGX has granted exemption (which may be reviewed/revoked).
- 11.1.1 The election of all group officers shall be carried out in a free and fair democratic manner (in line with Guild election regulations).
- 11.1.2 All members (including present and potential committee members) are entitled to vote. Voting shall be first-past-the-post, carried out by secret ballot, unless there is only one candidate (in addition to the option to vote to Re-Open Nominations, which must be an option in every election) and if no-one objects, in which case, a show of hands will be permissible.
- 11.1.3 In the event of two or more candidates receiving the same number of votes, the winner shall be selected by chance (e.g. flipping a coin or drawing straws).
- 11.2 A minimum of two term-time weeks' notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given to all members of the group and to Student Groups staff; the group should undertake all reasonable steps to encourage members to participate and to ensure that sufficient information about the roles available is available, promoting the elections through all available means.
- 11.3 Quorum for an Annual General Meeting shall be half of the total membership or twenty members; whichever is the lowest.

- 11.4.1 The Annual General Meeting shall follow the following format:
- 11.4.2 Approval of the minutes of the last meeting.
- 11.4.3 Matters arising from the last minutes.
- 11.4.4 Review of the year from the Chair.
- 11.4.5 Financial report from the Treasurer, summarising the financial position and any significant issues during the course of the year.
- 11.4.6 Reports from other officers as required.
- 11.4.7 Amendments to the constitution (such as objectives, membership fee or committee roles).
- 11.4.8 Elections to the committee for the following year.
- 11.4.9 Any Other Business.
- 11.5 Subsequent to the Annual General Meeting, the new Officers complete committee training within four weeks. After being trained, they need to sign the committee code of conduct as soon as practical - only at that point will officers assume responsibility for all matters relevant to their elected post and committee member status, including all business undertaken by their respective predecessors.

12. Extraordinary General Meetings

- 12.1 Extraordinary General Meetings may be called to discuss urgent matters that can not be postponed until the next due Annual General Meeting
- 12.2 Reasons for an Extraordinary General Meeting may include, but are not limited to: amendments to the constitution, election of an officer to a vacant position, responding to a threat to the reputation or sustainability of the group.
- 12.3 Extraordinary General Meetings may be called following a request by any two committee members, any ten members of the group or the SGX.
- 12.4 One full term-time week's notice is required for any Extraordinary General Meetings, and all reasonable efforts should be made to make members aware of the meeting.

13.0 Removal from Office of Committee Members

- 13.1 Any committee member may be removed from their position if there is due reason for this to happen. This action should be seen as a last resort.
- 13.2 Reasons for removal include:
 - 13.2.1 Failure as an individual to abide by and adhere to the student groups constitution, code of practice, Zero Tolerance Policy or the Guild of Students Membership Policy.
 - 13.2.2 Bringing the Student Group into disrepute by their actions in office
 - 13.2.3 An insufficient level of commitment or ability as a committee member
- 13.3 A committee member can be removed from office following a petition of no confidence in writing outlining the reasons to the AEO from a majority of the incumbent committee, or from either 1/3 of the membership or 30 members of the group, whatever is smallest
- 13.4 Following a petition, a member of Student Groups staff will present this along with any other evidence they are able to obtain within 21 days to the Student Groups Executive for a decision to be made.
- 13.5 The Student Groups Executive (SGX), which will be chaired by the AEO will be able to invite the committee member in question and also a representative of whom supports the aforementioned no confidence to discuss the situation.
- 13.6 The Student Groups Executive are then able to enforce any of the following:
 - 13.6.1 Call an EGM of the student group within 2 term time weeks and for a re-election to be held for the position(s) which there is a dispute, with the incumbent member being able to re-stand.

- 13.6.2 Call an EGM of the student group within 2 term time weeks and for a re-election to be held for the position(s) which there is a dispute, with the incumbent member not able to re-stand. This should only be considered in extreme circumstances.
- 13.6.3 For the case to be referred to the Membership Disciplinary procedure.
- 13.6.4 For the tabled no confidence petition to be rejected.
- 13.7 A report from the AEO must be sent to the group members following a hearing at the SGX within 7 days, outlining the situation, the decision made and any other relevant information.
- 13.8 If an EGM is required, then this must be organised by the student group in conjunction with the AEO. The AEO (or nominee) may be required to attend the EGM if felt necessary.
- 13.9 An appeal can be made in writing to the President of the Guild of Students by the committee member in question or the proposer. They can uphold the original decision of SGX or change the decision to another as outlined in [13.6]

14.0 Cessation of Recognition and discipline

- 14.1 The SGX may derecognise the group or instigate other disciplinary action if any of the following are found to be the case:
 - 14.1.1 The group is financially inactive for six months, or the group accounts are overdrawn.
 - 14.1.2 The group has less than the minimum number of members (20). Religious and Faith groups and associations have no minimum membership requirement.
 - 14.1.3 The group is found to have acted outside of its own constitution or the Guild's Memorandum and Articles of Association, bye-laws, policies and procedures.
 - 14.1.4 Any of the declarations of the authorised signatories are found to be false.
 - 14.1.5 The group has not been taking due regard for the safety of members, this failing to meet the expected duty of care could include negligence or not submitting adequate risk assessment and activity notifications forms.
 - 14.1.6 The committee have not completed/attended all required training/meetings.
 - 14.1.7 The group has caused reputational, legal or financial harm to the Guild of Students.
- 14.2 The AEO shall invite any group being considered for derecognition or disciplinary action to a meeting of the SGX to provide information and appeal against the decision, but attendance by group representatives is not essential for decisions to be made.
- 14.3 The Guild Trustee Board, or nominee, can derecognise a group by absolute majority at any time.
- 14.4 Although the SGX cannot derecognise an association, it can require an Extraordinary General Meeting to elect a new committee, or enforce other disciplinary actions.

Date approved by group: _____27/08/2021_____

(Standard constitution template last amended by SGX on 31st January 2018)