

PROCEDURE FOR UNION ASSEMBLY BYELAW

This Byelaw details the procedures to which the Union Assembly is subject.

Capitalised terms used but not defined in these Byelaws shall have the meaning given to them in the Articles of Association of the Union adopted with effect from 2 January 2023

GENERAL

1. This Byelaw shall apply to the Union Assembly.
2. Meetings can be conducted in more than one location, via electronic means, as long as the meeting is conducted simultaneously, and all participants can hear one another and be heard.
3. A quorum check must take place at the start of each meeting and be monitored to ensure quorum is maintained if members arrive and leave during the meeting or members become ineligible to vote on a particular motion.
4. If the meeting is found to be inquorate, the Chair of the meeting may, at their discretion, dissolve the meeting.
5. Any decisions made whilst a meeting is inquorate must be ratified by the next quorate meeting, or, via an electronic vote conducted before the next meeting.
6. Accurate records and minutes of a meeting should be made available on request to all Student Members, provided that if the Union Assembly or the Board determined that Student Member access to a Union Assembly meeting be suspended while certain business is considered, the minutes of such closed portion of the meeting and any other commercially or personally sensitive information shall be redacted to the extent reasonably required by the Board of Trustees, the President or the Assembly Chair (in that order of priority, with the highest first).

ASSEMBLY CHAIRS

7. Union Assembly shall have an Assembly Chair and Deputy Chair.
8. A member of Union operational staff may be requested to be in attendance to serve as Minutes Secretary and/or as Chair's aide.
9. The procedure by which the Assembly Chair and Deputy Chair of Union Assembly is selected is specified in the Union Assembly Byelaw.

Assembly Chair's Responsibilities

10. The responsibilities of the Assembly Chair shall include:
 - 10.1. Ensuring all motions are clear, suitably researched, and accompanied by all necessary supporting documentation (where relevant);
 - 10.2. Ensuring all discussion items are accompanied by proper documentation to provide necessary background information, or directions to find such documentation elsewhere;
 - 10.3. Ordering the Assembly agenda in accordance with this Byelaw and with regard to relevance to Lancaster University students, importance and time-sensitivity;
 - 10.4. Removing any motions that appear more than once on the order paper;
 - 10.5. Removing any motions that, after attempted consultation with the proposer, are deemed to be incomplete or ambiguous or not adequately researched;
 - 10.6. Reporting any motions that have been removed from the agenda and the reasons for the removal. Any decision may be overturned by a two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly members in attendance and such motion shall be included on the agenda for the next following Assembly meeting unless it is withdrawn by proposer;
 - 10.7. Ensuring that any observers present are treated in a suitably considerate manner and, where appropriate, provided with an opportunity to contribute to the debate (but not to vote);
 - 10.8. Ensuring that each agenda item is discussed fully before moving an item to a vote; and
 - 10.9. Ensuring that debates are conducted in a timely manner, that a diverse range of members and observers are given the opportunity to contribute and that repetition is avoided where possible.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Chair

11. The responsibilities of the Deputy Chair include:
 - 11.1. To assist the Assembly Chair in their responsibilities;
 - 11.2. To take the position of Assembly Chair in the case that the Assembly Chair is absent or chooses to step down in respect of any meeting or motion;

- 11.3. To take the position of Assembly Chair when there is under consideration or has been a Vote of No Confidence in the Assembly Chair;
- 11.4. To administer procedural motions where necessary; or
- 11.5. To advise the Assembly Chair on counts and members wishing to make a contribution.

Conduct in Meetings and Powers of the Assembly

12. The Assembly Chair, following one verbal warning, may have any member or observer felt to be disruptive removed from the meeting. The Assembly Chair may have a member or observer removed from the meeting without a warning for particularly disrespectful or offensive behaviour, subject to overrule by a two-thirds majority vote of the Assembly.
13. The Assembly Chair may adjourn (for a maximum of 20 minutes) or close the Assembly meeting.
14. When the Assembly Chair has invited somebody to speak, other persons in the room shall act respectfully.

AGENDA ITEMS AND ORDER OF BUSINESS

15. Agenda items must be submitted to the Assembly Chair and the Minutes Secretary no later than midday, five (5) working days before the meeting, or within another specified deadline as determined by the Assembly Chair where meetings are held on shorter notice. All supporting papers must be supplied by the deadline.
16. Other papers may only be circulated at the discretion of the Assembly Chair.
17. Should a member of the Assembly wish to use a visual aid or presentation in a Assembly meeting, a request must be submitted to the Assembly Chair in advance of the meeting.
18. The Agenda will be circulated to Assembly members no later than three (3) working days before the meeting or within another specified deadline as determined by the Assembly Chair where meetings are held on shorter notice.
19. Supplementary agenda items may be circulated and tabled if the Assembly Chair feels that not to discuss the item at that Assembly meeting would seriously impair the ability of the Union Assembly to carry out its role and responsibilities.
20. The order of business for all agenda items shall be ordered as follows:
 - 20.1. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting (redacted if applicable);
 - 20.2. Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda;

- 20.3. Motions and Reports as submitted by members of the Assembly or as referred to the Union Assembly by the Board, a sub-committee, student idea or petition;
- 20.4. Discussion items as submitted by members of the Assembly or as referred by a sub-committee to the Assembly;
- 20.5. Officer Reports for the Assembly, including questions;
- 20.6. Presentation of minutes of any sub-committees whose own terms of reference require their minutes to be delivered up to the Union Assembly; and
- 20.7. Other items of business.

Officer Reports

21. Full Time Officers shall each give a written report to every regular meeting of the Union Assembly.
22. Liberation & Campaigns Officers must give a written report to the Union Assembly at least once per Academic Term.
23. Any Officer may issue a verbal supplement to their report. A verbal report may only be given in place of a written report with the express permission of the Assembly Chair, and a written report is still required to be submitted to be circulated to members after the meeting.
24. Members of Assembly and student members present shall be given the opportunity to ask questions relating to the duties and engagements of any Elected Officer.

Motions

25. Motions to Assembly should normally adhere to the following structure:
 - 25.1. “*This Assembly notes*” – shall contain factual background information relating to the purpose of the motion;
 - 25.2. “*This Assembly believes*” – shall contain opinions and beliefs about the proposed position; or
 - 25.3. “*This Assembly resolves*” – shall contain resolutions and actions to be carried out.

DEBATE AND PROCEDURE IN MEETINGS

26. It shall be the responsibility of the Assembly Chair to ensure that debate is as free and open as possible, while at all times remaining relevant.
27. The proposer of a motion shall be given an opportunity to speak in favour of that motion, after which debate shall be opened to the meeting.

28. All voting members of the Assembly should be accorded equity of status during the course of debate.
29. Where a motion of censure is proposed, the subject of the motion shall be entitled to speak against that motion immediately after the proposer.
30. There shall be opportunities where appropriate for summations of the arguments for and against a motion at the end of debate.
31. Members may, at any time during a meeting of the Union Assembly, put forward procedural motions.

Procedural Motions

32. A procedural motion must be proposed by a voting member of the Assembly.
33. A procedural motion takes precedence over all other business.
34. The proposer of a procedural motion will automatically be given no more than one minute to explain the reason for their procedural motion.
35. The Deputy Chair will decide whether or not to accept a procedural motion. The decision of the Deputy Chair can be overturned by a two third majority vote of the Assembly. Where the Deputy Chair is absent, any member of the Union Assembly may be called upon to act as temporary Deputy Chair for that meeting.
36. If a Procedural Motion concerns the Assembly Chair, the Deputy Chair shall take over conduct of the meeting from the Assembly Chair once this has been proposed and will conduct the vote. If Assembly votes in favour of a motion of no confidence in the Assembly Chair, the Deputy Chair will chair the remainder of the meeting. The election of a replacement Assembly Chair shall be the first item of business for the next meeting of the Union Assembly.
37. All procedural motions will be decided by a simple majority of members of the Union Assembly.
38. In the event that a motion is proposed before another is resolved, the motions shall be prioritised as ordered in the following order of priority:
 - 38.1. That the meeting has no confidence in the Assembly Chair;
 - 38.2. That the Assembly Chair/Deputy Assembly Chair's ruling be overturned;
 - 38.3. That a count is taken;
 - 38.4. That a vote takes place by secret ballot;

- 38.5. That the meeting be adjourned or closed;
 - 38.6. That a Motion go straight to a vote;
 - 38.7. That a Motion not proceed to a vote;
 - 38.8. That a Motion be adjourned for consideration at a later meeting;
 - 38.9. That a Motion be remitted to another body or person;
 - 38.10. That parts be taken on a Motion;
 - 38.11. To make an amendment to a Motion, provided that this does not substantially change the scope, purpose or effect of the motion which shall be determined at the discretion of the Chair; or
 - 38.12. That Full Time Officer votes should be recorded. This can be used if members feel that the votes of Full Time Officer should be recorded and made public for students to see.
- 38.13. A count shall be taken if the Assembly Chair or Deputy Chair believe a vote is too close to call by a show of hands or a procedural motion requiring the same is passed. If a procedural motion is made to challenge the Assembly Chair's ruling on the outcome of a vote, then a count should automatically be taken by the Deputy Chair and recorded.
- 38.14. Taking a Motion in parts shall permit the Union Assembly to discuss one or a few particular parts of a motion separately. This debate will then begin immediately if agreed purely on the parts as agreed. If parts are 'deleted' then they will be removed from the original motion. If parts are 'kept' then they will remain in the original motion. Once parts are decided, the debate will continue on the original motion in the usual manner.

Points of Order

- 39. Any voting member of the Assembly may raise a point of order by raising their hand and speaking the words 'Point of Order'. Points of order have precedence over all other business and must be accepted by the Chair immediately.
- 40. A Point of Order must be related to the conduct of the meeting.
- 41. Challenges to the quorum shall be raised as Points of Order.

Points of Information

- 42. Any member of the Assembly may interrupt another member who currently holds the floor to offer a Point of Information by raising their hand and speaking the words 'Point of Information'. After the current speaker has finished, the Assembly Chair must allow the Point of Information to take precedence over other discussion.

43. Points of Information should be concise and must only offer or request information and shall not be entitled to be used to speak against a Motion or otherwise form a rebuttal.

44. A Point of Information may not be directed to anyone other than the Chair.

VOTING

45. When voting, members of the Union Assembly shall always be given the option to vote in favour, to vote against or to record an abstention.

46. All items shall be passed by a simple majority unless otherwise stated in the Articles or Byelaws.

47. Voting shall normally be conducted by a show of hands.

48. An indicative vote between a number of options may be called by the Assembly Chair and recorded in the minutes but will not carry any authority.

OBSERVERS

49. Where possible, there will be a designated area of the Assembly chamber where observers shall be allowed to sit. The observers shall be seated away from members of the Union Assembly to avoid confusion when votes are held.

50. Any Student Member of the Union observing the meeting shall automatically be granted speaking rights but have no other powers and shall have no entitlement to a vote.

51. Speaking rights may only be granted to any other observers at the discretion of the Assembly Chair.

APOLOGIES

52. Members who are aware of their absence must submit apologies to the Assembly Chair by email at least 24 hours in advance of the start of the meeting. Apologies received after this point shall not be recognised unless the circumstances are judged acceptable by the Assembly Chair.

53. Any member of the Assembly deemed to have resigned in accordance with the Union Assembly Byelaws due to a failure to attend meetings of the Union Assembly or by reason of the cessation of their status as a student of the University, shall be informed of this determination by a signed letter from the Assembly Chair and countersigned by the Union President.

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