**Mature Students’ Forum – By-Laws**

1. **STATUS**

1.1. The Lancaster University Mature Students’ Forum, herein referred to as ‘the

Forum’, is an association of members, governed by an executive committee as a sub-division of Lancaster University Students Union.

* 1. The Forum is constituted as a ‘Campaign Group’ under section 10.2.2 of the Lancaster University Students’ Union (LUSU) Student Groups By-Laws.

1. **Purpose**

2.1. The forum shall exist to:

2.1.1. Represent members to Lancaster University Students Union, the National Student’s Union (NUS), the local community, and other relevant bodies, and advise to ensure policy, activities, and services are inclusive;

2.1.2 Provide a space for two-way communication and consultation on all matters relating to Mature Students between The LUSU Mature Students’ Officer (MSO) and members.

2.1.3. Care for the welfare of members by providing support, information, and resources.

2.1.4. Actively campaign at campus and local level for Mature Students’ rights, and to increase understanding of their particular issues and concerns;

2.1.5. Organise a diverse range of social events where members can socialise and ensure that a safe space exists during all affiliated events and meetings;

2.1.6. Publicise its existence, its role, the services it offers, and its contact details to students using a wide range of media and outreach channels.

2.1.7. To promote awareness of intersectional identities among members.

1. **Membership**

3.1. Membership shall comprise all Lancaster University Students Union members self-defining as Mature Students. (As guidance, all Students over the age of 21 are regarded as ‘Mature Students’.) Lancaster University Students Union or University staff members can request Associate Membership from the Committee.

3.2. Members shall have the right to speak and vote at any General Meeting, and vote and stand in any election, providing they self-define as Mature Students.

3.3. Members shall have the right to be represented by the Committee officers.

3.4. Members and associate members shall have the right to attend all Forum events and meetings.

3.5. The Forum shall not charge any fee for membership.

3.6. Non-members are welcome providing they adhere to Lancaster University Students Union and Forum governance documents and policies.

1. **Forum Committee**

4.1. The Forum shall be run by a Committee that shall comprise the following officers:

4.1.1. The LUSU MSO (ex-officio);

4.2. The Forum shall elect to the Committee the following Portfolio Officers (each for a term of up to one year):

4.2.1. General Secretary;

4.2.2. Publicity and Communications Officer;

4.2.3. Socials and Events Officer;

4.2.4. Diversity Inclusion Officer;

4.2.5 Co-opted Officer(s);

4.3. Portfolio Officers shall ordinarily take office on the last day of the Lent term for a period of 12 months.

4.4. No member may hold more than one portfolio position. If elected to another position, the officer must resign their present post if the two would be concurrent.

4.5. Officers may resign by submitting their written resignation to the LUSU MSO or verbally to the LUSU MSO with at least one Portfolio Officer present.

4.6. A Portfolio Officer’s position will be deemed vacant if they are absent without giving acceptable apologies from three consecutive meetings.

4.7 In the event of a Portfolio Office vacancy arising the General Secretary shall convene a By-Election at the next General Meeting, the successful candidate to hold office until the end of the Lent Term following their election.

1. **Duties of the Forum Committee Officers**

5.1 **Standing Officer Mandates**

5.1.1. All Portfolio Officers shall:

5.1.2 Help and Collaborate with all other officers;

5.1.3. Not bring the Committee and Forum into disrepute through their actions or inactions;

5.1.4. Represent the interests of members through their actions and decisions;

5.1.5. Maintain strictly confidentiality on all matters when appropriate;

5.1.6. Contribute to all MSF campaigns and activities when required;

5.1.7. Adhere to all Lancaster University Students Union and Forum governance documents and policies;

5.1.8. Attend or submit acceptable apologies to the MSO or General Secretary for Committee mandated meetings;

5.2. **Duties of the MSO:**

5.2.1. Liaise with Lancaster University Students Union, JCR’s, the University, the NUS, and the local community, and report on behalf of the Forum as required;

5.2.2. Authorize the Forum social media to ensure they follow LUSU governance documents and are legal requirements;

5.2.3. Co-ordinate the activities of the Committee;

5.2.4. Manage finances in conjunction with the general secretary;

5.2.5. Be the primary point of contact;

5.2.6. Make sure that all Officers receive an adequate handover in a timely manner;

5.2.7 All other requirements of the LUSU By-Laws;

5.2.8 Chair all General, EGM and General Meetings of the Forum. Chairing of the Committee may be delegated to an alternate Forum Officer with the agreement of the Committee.

5.3. **Duties of the General Secretary:**

5.3.1. Take minutes of meetings and circulate them within 48 hours, to the committee as well as all members, via email;

5.3.2. Complete risk assessments for all events and activities;

5.3.3. Keep an archive of standing policies and motions available to members;

5.3.4. Make a copy of the By-Laws available at all meetings;

5.3.5. Make sure that all business and procedures of the Forum are discussed at Committee meetings;

5.3.6. Manage the Forum’s finances in conjunction with the MSO.

3.3.7 Arrange By-Elections for Portfolio Officer posts in the event of vacancies arising.

5.4.1 **Duties of** **the Publicity and Communications Officer:**

5.4.1. Design, produce, and circulate publicity advertising the Forum, events, campaigns, and welfare support;

5.4.2. Using an appropriate range to maximise outreach to all students across campus;

5.4.3. Liaise with JCR’s and PG Board to distribute publicity across campus;

5.4.4. Moderate social media accounts and update content in a timely fashion;

5.4.5. Communicate with all relevant officers in the Forum.

5.5. **Duties of the Social and Events Officer:**

5.5.1. Organise a range events and activities that cater to a range of members’ interests and encourage them to socialise in a safe space;

5.5.2. Make sure all details for social and events are articulated to the General Secretary for the completion of risk assessments;

5.5.3. Facilitate a sober duty schedule for all necessary events;

5.5.4. Ensure all events are safe, and made open to all students;

5.5.5. Shall be responsible for the production of a Socials timetable for each term, to be presented to the committee in a meeting in a timely manner;

5.5.6. Shall be responsible for arranging regular meetings with the MSO and the other

Socials officers to discuss upcoming and future socials;

5.5.8. Shall coordinate communication of relevant events information to Publicity Officer;

5.6 **Duties of the Diversity and Inclusion Officer**

5.6.1 Ensure that all meetings and events run by the Forum meet LUSU requirements for the inclusion of all sections of the Student Community

5.6.2 Discuss and take advice from other LUSU Liberation Forums to ensure that the needs of diverse Mature Students are recognised within the forum and action including campaigns taken where needed, jointly with other Forums as appropriate

5.6.3 Work with the Social and Events Officer to develop and promote Forum events relevant to the needs of diverse communities.

5.7 **Co-Opted Officers**

5.7.1 Forum members may be co-opted to join the Committee to discharge a specific purpose or run a specific Forum campaign. Co-Opted members shall be elected in a General Meeting or EGM to serve until the end of the next Lent Term (unless agreed otherwise).

5.7.2 Proposals to create a Co-Opted Officer position shall be publicised using Forum channels for at least 5 working days prior to the relevant General (or EG) Meeting with all Forum members eligible to stand for election.

5.7.3 Co-Opted members will have their duties defined in writing prior to election by the MSO and General Secretary and approved by the Committee. Duties will be made available to all Forum members upon request to the General Secretary.

5.7.4 There shall be no more than 2 Co-Opted officers at any time.

1. **Forum Meetings**

**6.1. Committee Meetings**

6.1.1 shall be held to plan Officer specific activities and discuss issues.

6.1.2 All business and voting shall adopt the procedure for LUSU Executive Committee.

6.1.3. All votes shall carry by a simple majority, except for amendments to these By-Laws.

6.1.4. All meetings shall be chaired by the MSO and convened at a suitable time with 5 working days’ notice except in exceptional circumstances where a minimum of two working days’ notice will apply.

6.1.5. Minutes shall be taken by the General Secretary and ratified at the next meeting. If the General Secretary is unavailable, the MSO shall select another officer to take minutes.

6.1.6. Forum members may attend at the discretion of the MSO or Chairing Officer in their absence.

6.1.7. In the event of an MSO vacancy a temporary chair may be elected by a simple majority vote.

6.1.8. All Committee Members will make an annual report at the AGM.

**6.2. General Meetings**

6.2.1. The Forum will meet at least two times each University Term and twice in the Summer Vacation.

6.2.2. General Meetings will facilitate constitutional and electoral business and all officers of the Forum (including Co-Opted Officers) will present a report of their activities;

6.2.3. All members may attend, speak and vote;

6.2.4. All motions must be on the agenda;

6.2.5. General Meetings must be called by the MSO, a simple majority vote by the committee or a petition of 10 members;

6.2.6. Quorum shall be up to 2 committee members with portfolio in addition to 5 members.

6.2.7. At least five working days’ notice shall be given of a General Meeting, specifying the date, time and venue. Notice must be publicised widely and shall include general details of business to be transacted. Meetings may be held using Microsoft Teams if physical meetings are not allowed or practicable.

6.2.8 Amendments to motions may be proposed at any time prior to the vote.

6.3. **Emergency General Meetings (EGM)**

6.3.1. EGM’s shall only be called when failure to discuss an item of urgent business which in the opinion of the MSO is potentially harmful or detrimental to the Forum or its members. The agenda will be restricted to the urgent matter requiring the meeting to be called.

6.3.2. EGM’s shall be called by either: the MSO, 3 Officers, or a petition of 10 members.

6.3.3. EGM’s shall follow all procedures for General Meetings, except notice period is reduced to two working days. EGM’s must be publicised as widely as possible.

6.3.4. In the event of the MSO resigning there shall be an EGM arranged by

General Secretary, to arrange for continued leadership of the Forum through recommending co-option of an acting MSO to the LUSU Executive pending an MSO By-election.

6.4. **Annual General Meetings**

6.4.1. The Forum’s AGM shall be held in either week 8 or week 9 of the Lent Term.

6.4.2 AGM’s shall follow the same procedure as General Meetings.

6.4.3. AGM’s shall include:

- An open forum for members to suggest structure changes for the following year.

- Presentation of any changes to the By-Laws by the committee.

- Presentation of Outgoing Portfolio Officer Reports.

**7. ELECTIONS**

7.1. The Forum shall run elections for all Portfolio Officers, between weeks four and six of Lent term.

7.2. All elections shall follow Lancaster University Students Union Election regulations.

Where procedure is unclear, the LUSU Vice-President: Union Development shall decide on an appropriate course of action. Should a candidate not adhere to regulations, the LUSU Vice- President: Union Development can disqualify them from the election.

7.3. In all elections, the MSO shall be Acting Returning Officer (ARO). Where the MSO cannot be ARO, the Committee shall vote on an appropriate substitute.

7.4 Any complaints or appeals relating to any Forum election must be submitted in writing to LUSU for adjudication.

7.4 **Hustings Procedure**

7.4.1. Hustings will be included within a General Meeting of the Forum

7.4.2 When called to hust, each candidate shall speak for up to two minutes, or submit a written hust of up to 500 words which shall be read to the meeting by the MSO. Candidates may also submit a “video” hust lasting no longer than two minutes, which must be submitted to the MSO no later than 1 hour before hustings begin.

7.4.3. Once all candidates have had the opportunity to hust, the MSO shall invite questions from attendants. The MSO can end question time at their discretion.

**8. FINANCES**

8.1. The Forum’s finances shall adhere to Lancaster University Students Union Financial

Regulations.

8.2. The General Secretary shall give an account update when requested or appropriate;

8.3. The ordinary signatories of the account with Lancaster University Students Union shall be the General Secretary, MSO, and one other Portfolio Officer elected at a General Meeting.

8.4. The MSO and the General Secretary shall agree internal budgets in the first meeting of each term.

8.5. The MSO and the General Secretary shall manage any petty cash up to £20 that is required for the day to day running’s of the Forum.

**9. DISCIPLINARY AND COMPLAINTS**

9.1. **Disciplinary Procedures for Members**

9.1.1. All disciplinary matters should be dealt with in line with LUSU procedures.

9.1.2. If the Committee deem conduct at activities or online inappropriate, members may have their membership temporarily suspended by the Committee.

9.1.3. Inappropriate conduct shall include but is not limited to:

9.1.3.1. Behaviour that is illegal or deemed misconduct by LUSU;

9.1.3.2. Abuse, harassment, or displays of discrimination or prejudice of any kind;

9.1.3.3. Repeated or malicious breaches of confidentiality and safe space principles;

9.1.3.4. Behaviour at Forum functions likely to bring the Forum into disrepute.

9.1.4. The Committee may refer any disciplinary matter to LUSU.

9.2. **Disciplinary Procedures for Officers**

9.2.1. Failure of officers to fulfil responsibilities or meeting mandates, without reasonable excuse, is sufficient grounds for a vote of no confidence.

9.2.2. For a vote of no confidence in the MSO, please refer to LUSU By-Laws.

9.2.3. A vote of no confidence in an Officer must be proposed by at least two elected Officers or a petition of twenty members. It must be proposed with clear and sufficient grounds in advance as a motion at a General Meeting, where it can either be upheld or overturned by a simple majority vote. LUSU procedures regarding appeals will apply.

9.3 A vote of censure in an Officer must be proposed by at least two elected Officers or a petition of ten members.

9.4. **Complaints Procedures**

9.4.1. All complaints shall be dealt with following LUSU procedures.

**10. TERMS OF REFERENCE GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW**

10.1. These Terms of Reference must be publicly available on the LUSU website.

10.2 These terms of reference must be available from the General Secretary upon request by a member.

10.2. Amendments to these terms of reference shall be made following the motion being carried by a simple majority vote at a General Meeting and ratified at LUSU Executive Committee. Changes shall not come into operation until ratified at LUSU Executive Committee.

10.3. The MSO shall convene a general meeting to review this Terms of Reference once every two years, and widely consult members and the Committee before proposing amendments. Changes shall be approved and ratified as above.

**These Terms of Reference were last amended and approved on XXXXX**