

# By-law (11): Accountability

*This By-law sets out the requirements of all Union committee chairs to publicise the details of their meetings and the business discussed within them. It sets out the oversight responsibility of Democracy Committee to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled and the options for members to hold their officers to account through Officers' Questions, Censure or No Confidence.*

## Transparency

1. It is fundamental to the democratic nature of the Union that its operations are transparent and accessible. This is a key duty of all office-holders within YUSU.
2. Full details of all open meetings in the Union should be publicised within the time limit set out in the relevant By-law, and sooner where possible. The minimum information that should be made available is the time, date and location of the meeting. An agenda should be published where possible for all committees and Policy & Review Group.
3. Each committee or open meeting shall have a designated student or staff member responsible for making an accurate record of the meeting, which should clearly convey:
  - 3.1. The Action Points arising from the meeting and to whom they were assigned;
  - 3.2. A summary of any discussions that accompanied such decisions where relevant, which shall not be a verbatim account but should summarise the main points raised.
4. Action Points from meetings may be used to hold an officer to account through the mechanisms outlined in the remainder of this By-law.
5. The chair of a committee or meeting is responsible for beginning each meeting with a recap on unresolved Action Points from previous meetings and requesting an update on the progress of these actions from the individual specified.
6. All Documents relating to members of the Union must be publically available.
  - 6.1. Publically available is defined as:
    - 6.1.1. Easily available online in a single well publicised and defined location
    - 6.1.2. Making physical copies available to members for reference and for personal use
    - 6.1.3. Easily accessible for scrutiny by the Policy & Review Group

6.2. These three definitions will be regarded as criteria for public availability

6.3. All documents relating to members is defined as:

6.3.1. Elements of the Constitution

6.3.2. By-laws and Appendices

6.3.3. Codes of Conduct

6.3.4. Network Terms and References

6.3.5. Charters governing YUSU members behaviour

6.3.6. Other

7. Any document not publically available, is considered not to be an active piece of legislation and considered unenforceable, until the criteria for public availability have been met

7.1.1. Not publically available means:

7.1.2. A document is not easily available online in a single well publicised location

7.1.3. Physical copies are not available to members for reference and for personal use

7.1.4. Is not easily accessible for scrutiny by the Policy & Review Group

7.2. Active Pieces of legislation is defined as:

7.2.1. A document currently used and implemented by YUSU

7.3. Unenforceable is defined as:

7.3.1. Not applying to YUSU members, societies, networks, clubs, etc

7.3.2. Cannot be regarded as binding

8. The Policy & Review Group will be responsible for judging whether public availability criteria have been met

### **Policy & Review Group**

9. Policy & Review Group will monitor relevant communication from Officer Group to ensure it fulfills the commitments outlined in By-law [OFFICER GROUP] and communicate

to the media and to the membership when they do not.

10. Policy & Review Group also has a responsibility to ensure that its own meetings are open and accessible within reason and that records of the decisions that are made in the committee are made public within three working days of a meeting taking place.
11. Full reports of decision made at Policy & Review Group regarding Active Policy must be published within one week of the meeting.

### **Accountability**

12. All Officers of the Union are expected to fulfil their roles to the best of their ability. They should adhere to the duties laid out in By-law [OFFICER GROUP] and any mandates associated with their office that are passed democratically by the members of the Union.
13. As part of the Officer Group, each officer also shares collective responsibility for the political operation of the Union and is expected to aid other Union Officers as required, in particular in the organization and delivery of major Union events or activities and fulfilling the commitments made in By-law [OFFICER GROUP]
14. Any ordinary member of the Union may hold an officer to account within the democratic structures of the Union. These include:
  - 14.1. Officers' Questions;
  - 14.2. Motion of Censure; and,
  - 14.3. Motion of No Confidence.
15. The processes for holding an officer to account for their political performance within the Union shall be separate from those concerning matters of misconduct, which shall be subject to the procedures laid out in By-law [CODE OF CONDUCT].

### **Scope**

16. Accountability procedures shall apply for alleged non-performance of actions or duties covered by the role description of the officer(s) concerned and any actions to which they are mandated by Active Policy.

## **Officers' Questions**

17. Officer Group shall hold regular informal Open Meetings (at least one per term), publicised at least seven days in advance, which any member may attend to ask Officers questions in a friendly environment.
18. Officer Group shall hold regular formal Open Meetings (at least two per year), chaired by the Policy Coordinator or an appropriate representative as appointed by Policy & Review Group, who may be external to the Union.
  - 18.1. A full breakdown of Officers' expenses, meetings and other activities in relation to Active Policy will be made available to the membership at least a week prior.
  - 18.2. The Chair will accept anonymous question from students from a week prior to the meeting and will question the Officers on these topics.
19. Officers will also be expected to make themselves available for question and comment to the extent outlined in By-law [OFFICER GROUP] and Policy & Review Group will be responsible for ensuring they uphold this commitment.
20. In the event that any Officer does not, the Policy Coordinator will be responsible for communicating this to the membership and to the media.
21. At the Annual General Meeting of the Union, there shall be provision for questions to be put to the Full-time Officers in their role as Trustees of the Union, alongside the other members of the Trustee Board.

## **No Confidence**

22. If an ordinary member of the Union is seriously dissatisfied with a particular Officer or Officers they can propose a motion of no confidence to the Policy Coordinator for an initial inquiry.
23. Policy & Review Group is responsible for conducting an impartial investigation of the grounds upon which the motion of no confidence is proposed, including statements from the officer(s) concerned and identification of the duties or mandates not fulfilled. The Policy Coordinator shall call upon administrative support from staff members of the Union as required and the investigation shall last not more than seven working days.
24. If following this investigation the Policy & Review Group resolves that there are grounds for holding a vote of no confidence, the original motion shall be submitted to the next ordinary Referendum. If no Referendum is due to take place within 4 working weeks of

the resolution, Policy & Review Group may instigate an Extraordinary Referendum in line with By-law [REFERENDA].

25. If the motion of no confidence is passed the Officer(s) concerned are immediately removed from Office.

### **Censure**

26. A motion of censure is to express dissatisfaction with an aspect of how an Officer has conducted their role. It does not have any other implications for the status of the Officer.

27. A motion of censure against any member of Officer Group may be submitted directly to the Policy Coordinator who will investigate the grounds for it in the same manner as a motion of no confidence.

28. If such grounds are found, the motion of censure will be referred to the Officer Group for consultation, and a vote will be held amongst the members of that group.

29. It is possible to censure more than one Officer as part of the same motion, as long as all the text of the motion relates to all who are mentioned, unless all exemptions are stated.

30. The Officer Group may consider and pass a motion of censure against one or more of its members. The member(s) subject to the vote of censure shall not be entitled to take part in the vote but should be given an opportunity to address the matter upon which the motion is based if present.

31. If a motion of censure fails to pass, it is the duty of the Policy Coordinator to inform the student body in such a way that the members involved are not censured by the release itself.