

# 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 Students' Union comprises Kent Union at Canterbury The Students' Union offer for Kent students at Medway is managed via a partnership with Greenwich Students' Union.

#### 1.3 **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 Student Groups.
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.

#### 1.4 **Opting Out**

Every student has the right to opt out of membership of the Union.

#### 1.5 **Opting In**

Students may choose to opt into the Union at the Student Records and Examinations Office in the Registry building at any time or by emailing Student Administration at the University [csao@kent.ac.uk](mailto:csao@kent.ac.uk)

### 2. **The Union Constitution**

2.1 The Students' Union conducts its affairs in accordance with a written constitution which is approved by the University's Council. In accordance with company law, the Students' Union's constitution consists of a Memorandum and Articles of Association. The constitution will be reviewed by the Students' Union and the University every five years.

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 Student Members' Meeting and the Student Members' Meeting
- (iii) The Union Executive Committee (also known as Kent Union Parliament) 'Change It' online democratic structure

**More information on this can be found by clicking: [Articles of Association](#)**

- 2.3 The sovereign decision-making body for approving the Trustees Report is the **Annual Student Members' Meeting**.

**More information on this can be found by clicking: [Student Members Meeting](#)**

Amendments to the Constitution have to be passed by the Board of Trustees 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 below.

Policy ideas for the Students' Union can be submitted through the online platform **Change It** and are subject to an all-student vote. If a simple majority of at least 50 voting members are in favour of the idea, then the policy is submitted to Union Executive Committee (aka Kent Union Parliament) for discussion and approval. If a simple majority of more than 400 voting members are in favour of the idea, the policy proposal automatically passes, subject to ratification by the Board of Trustees. Policy passed is binding for two years. After the relevant time has passed the policy lapses and is discarded. Live policy and expiry dates shall be available on the Kent Union website. A motion to retain a policy for a further two years may be submitted through Change It or through a motion proposed by an elected member of Kent Union Parliament.

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

**Please click here to see our [Sabbatical Officers and Board Members](#)**

## 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;

Students' Union President  
Vice President (Academic Experience)  
Vice President (Student Engagement)  
Vice President (Welfare & Community)  
Vice President (Postgraduate International Experience)

- 3.3 The Network Chairs of the Union are;

Chair of the Sustainability Network  
Chair of the Activities Network  
Chair of the Team Kent Network  
Chair of the International Students Network  
Chair of the Accessibility Network  
Chair of the Women's Network  
Chair of the REMP Network

Chair of the LGBTQ+ Network  
Chair of the Faith Network  
Chair of the Mature and Part-Time Students Network  
Chair of the Postgraduate Network  
Chair of the Academic Network

#### **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" which are available from the Deputy Returning Officer in the Mandela 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](#).
- 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 Governance 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 via [sccoffice@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sccoffice@kent.ac.uk).

#### **Contact Point:**

Governance Department via [kentunion@kent.ac.uk](mailto:kentunion@kent.ac.uk)

#### **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 affiliation fees.

**More information regarding our Annual Finances can be found by clicking here:**  
[Financial Statements](#)

- 6.4** The Union may not make any payments that are "ultra vires" (Guidelines are set out by the Attorney General and the Charity Commission). The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the Union's finances. On a day-to-day basis responsibility is delegated to the Finance Department and Senior Leadership Team. The Delegation of Authority is laid out in the Governance, Policies and Procedures Document.

**Contact Point:**

*The Union President via [union-president@kent.ac.uk](mailto:union-president@kent.ac.uk)*

**7. Union Student Groups**

- 7.1** All Union members are entitled to join, run or start a student group.
- 7.2** No student group may be formed whose aims and objectives are not compatible with the Union's Constitution, values, the University's Statutes and Ordinances or the law of the land.
- 7.3** To start a new student group there must be a minimum of 3 committee positions.

**Contact Point:**

*Student Activities Team in the Mandela Building or the Student Hub at Medway;*  
[kentunion@kent.ac.uk](mailto:kentunion@kent.ac.uk) or [thehubmedway@gre.ac.uk](mailto:thehubmedway@gre.ac.uk)

**8. Procedure for Allocating Funds to Student Groups**

- 8.1** All student groups are funded through membership fees (with the exception of community action groups, academic societies and groups who choose not to have a membership fee). All groups have the opportunity to apply for a grant at the beginning of the year and the development fund throughout the year.
- 8.2** Kent Union is a charity. As such it has to adhere to a number of principles and legislation pertaining to its financial activities, including student groups. Kent Union cannot authorise 'ultra vires' (i.e. outside its charitable purpose) expenditure and advice should be sought in those cases which are not clear.
- 8.3** Should any student group believe that they have been treated unfairly through the funding allocation process, they can appeal through the Comments and Complaints Procedure.

**Contact Point:**

*Student Activities Team in the Mandela Building or the Student Hub at Medway;*  
[kentunion@kent.ac.uk](mailto:kentunion@kent.ac.uk) or [thehubmedway@gre.ac.uk](mailto:thehubmedway@gre.ac.uk)

**9 Affiliations**

- 9.1** From time to time, the Union or student groups may be affiliated to external organisations.

Members of the Union have the chance annually to approve all of these affiliations (or not as the case may be) at the Annual Student Members' Meeting.

- 9.2** The Union maintains a register of its affiliations. This is available on the Union website and is in the Financial Statements.
- 9.3** 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 not exceeding 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's Director of People and Culture [v.todd@kent.ac.uk](mailto:v.todd@kent.ac.uk)*

**10. General**

The Students' Union is housed in the Mandela Building, and the Student Hub at Medway.

The Students' Union name and full addresses are:

Kent Union  
Mandela Building  
The University of Kent  
Canterbury  
Kent CT2 7NW  
Union telephone number: 01227 824200

Kent Union  
The Student Hub  
North Road  
Chatham Maritime  
ME4 4AG  
Union telephone number: 01634 888989

**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***

**11. 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 Council on 17 of May 2024.  
Amendments made and published on the University website.