**Constitution**

of

**The University of Sussex Students’ Union Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer, + (LGBTQ+) Society**

1. The Society shall be called the University of Sussex Lesbian Gay, Bi, Trans and Queer Society and known as the University of Sussex LGBTQ+ Society (‘the Society’)
2. The Society shall be part of the University of Sussex Student’s Union (‘the Union’)
3. The Society shall adhere to the rules that exist within the Union and the University. Financial accounting, elections, general meetings, amendments to these rules and other formal business shall be conducted according to such procedures as the University and Union may from time to time lay down for student societies, except where variation is allowed and otherwise provided by this constitution.
4. The objectives of the Society shall be, within the constituency:
   1. To provide a safe space for people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, those questioning their sexuality and gender, or those that identify with any other non-heteronormative sexuality or gender;
   2. To welcome and support the relevant constituents;
   3. To provide information on issues of sexuality and sexual health through its meetings, the union and other channels;
   4. To campaign for:
      1. The welfare of lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer people and those questioning their sexuality and gender, or those that identify with any other non-heteronormative sexuality or gender,
      2. The equal treatment of students and employees irrespective of sexual orientation or gender status,
      3. The eradication of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and all related oppressions.
   5. To participate in relevant campaigns with the same aims in the wider political forum as a general meeting may determine;
   6. To build and maintain links with Societies with similar objectives in the local, national and international spheres;
   7. To hold social activities consistent with these objectives.
      1. Events not organised or co-organised by the Society may not be advertised by the Society, unless sufficient Committee presence (two committee members) premises this.
5. The meetings shall be run according to the following protocol by which all members abide:
   1. The identities and personal opinions of those present in meetings shall be taken as confidential.
   2. The individual opinions of attendees are welcome but remain their own. No individual opinion may be expressed as if the opinion of the Society as a whole.
   3. Intimidation of any sort is not tolerated.
   4. Prejudiced opinions will not be tolerated, whether on grounds of sexual orientation, sex, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, disability, political persuasion, health, HIV status, appearance, class or student status.
   5. When a meeting is chaired, members must go through the Chair to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.
6. The Society believes that lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people have common interests and that these are best served by working together in unity.
7. The Society may operate separate but cooperating sections, with all of these sections accountable to and represented within the Society committee.
8. All areas in which the Society operates will be subject to the USSU Safer Space; Zero Tolerence and Equality and Diversity Policies. This includes (but is not limited to) the LGBTQ+ room, Facebook page, website and any other space where the LGBTQ+ Society formally meet.
9. Committee
   1. The Society shall have a committee elected by simple majority via a secret ballot.
   2. The Committee will consist of the following posts which will include (but may not be limited to) the noted responsibilities:
      1. Chair: They shall have overall responsibility for the Society and its functions, and shall also liaise with the Union and any external bodies as necessary. The Chair shall verify that the Society is contributing information for Fresher’s Week in addition to that provided by the Union, and oversee the organisation of LGBT History Month. The position shall not be held by the same person for more than two years consecutively. The outgoing Chair shall ensure adequate handover of duties. Candidates for the position of Chair must have held another Committee position for one full academic year. Subject to Union guidelines, the Chair will also be responsible for the Society’s finances and shall supersede the Finance Officer if there is a disagreement between them.
      2. Vice-Chair: They shall be an existing member of the Committee and will take on the responsibilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence, and offer support where required.
      3. Finance officer: They shall be responsible for monitoring the Society’s finances and liaising with the Union in the relevant ways.
      4. Two Welfare officers: They shall have the responsibility of the general and specific welfare of the Society’s members, as well as representing the LGBTQ+ community of the University. They shall hold a drop-in session each week during term of at least one hour in duration; liaise with external welfare organisations; be reasonably accessible by phone and e-mail; and be willing to support LGBTQ+ students where necessary.
      5. Communications officer: They shall perform secretarial duties, including minute taking, collection and dissemination of information, receiving mail and tending to the LGBTQ website(s).
      6. Entertainments and Events officer: They shall be responsible for the organisation of the Society’s entertainment events, both internal and external.
      7. Campaigns officer: They will coordinate and oversee campaigns for LGBTQ+ issues and rights as agreed by the Society.
      8. Two Open officers: They shall be available to help with all areas of the Society and assist all other Committee members where required. They must be adaptable and aware of what is going on in each part of the Society so as to best use their time and resources when helping out.
      9. Post-Graduate and Mature Students’ Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that post-grad and mature students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as a mature student or post-grad.
      10. Trans Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that trans identified students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as trans.
      11. Bi Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that bi students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as bi.
      12. POC (People of Colour) Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that POC students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as a person of colour.
      13. Disabled Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that disabled students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as disabled.
      14. Women's Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that women students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-identify as a woman.
      15. USSU Part Time LGBTQ Officer: They shall be invited to attend all Committee meetings and represent the LGBTQ students within USSU where required. They may be an elected member of Committee.
      16. Aromantic Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that aromantic students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as aromantic.
      17. Asexual Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that asexual students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as asexual.
      18. Intersex Representative: The role of the rep is to ensure that intersex students are represented on the Committee and within the Society as a whole. The elected rep must self-define as intersex.
      19. Brighton Representative: This role is unique in that it shall be occupied by someone who has a position on the committee of the University of Brighton (UoB) LGBT Society. At elections, the Chair of UoB LGBT shall nominate someone, ordinarily themselves, and Sussex members shall vote via simple majority whether to approve the nomination. As an associate member, the Brighton Rep shall not be able to vote on Committee matters and therefore is more of an observer role than full Committee position.
   3. The ‘rep’ positions (Trans, Bi, POC, Disabled, Postgrad, Women's, Mature Student’s, intersex, aromantic, asexual and Brighton) are to be elected first at AGM. All bar the Brighton Rep may then stand for any of the Committee officer positions apart from Chair. Vice-Chair is elected last, with any elected Committee member with fewer than two portfolios being eligible to stand, unless their single portfolio is ‘Chair’.
   4. The Committee should ensure that the needs and issues of all the groups it represents are represented wherever possible.
   5. Other Committee officers may be elected and may be given such titles as a general meeting may see fit. All the officers shall form the Committee.
   6. The following duties shall be assigned to specific Committee members:
      1. Regular meetings and publicity.
      2. First contact for people coming out and welfare issues.
      3. Liaison with the University, Union and Trade Unions as necessary.
      4. Advance preparation of material for Fresher’s.
      5. Liaison with students, staff, and authorities of the constituency outside of the main campus of the University of Sussex.
      6. The organisation of awareness or campaign events/days (minimum of two events per year in different terms).
      7. Preparation of the Society’s entry for the Brighton Pride parade.
   7. At the start of elections, all Committee members are to stand down, thereby allowing all Society members to stand for a position.
   8. If elected to the Committee, unless expressly requested, all Committee members shall understand that their names, contact details and photograph may be circulated within the Society and Union. They will also appear on the website and Facebook Society.
   9. By-elections for empty positions may be held as necessary, ordinarily before the end of the academic year so that some positions are filled for Pride, Trans Pride and Freshers’ Week.
   10. Committee members may re-stand for positions as outlined elsewhere in this constitution.
10. Membership
    1. The LGBTQ Society meetings are open to lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people, those questioning their sexuality/gender identity, those that identify with any other non-heteronormative sexuality or gender, their partners and those members of the union and University who agree to comply with the protocol and objectives of the Society.
    2. The Society’s constituency shall consist of members of the University of Sussex Students’ Union.
    3. Ordinary members of the Union shall be eligible for ordinary membership.
    4. Only ordinary members may vote in general meetings and may hold office.
    5. All other students and employees of bodies within the constituency shall be eligible for associate membership if they hold associate membership of the Union.
    6. If the participation of associate members in a particular event would involve some identifiable marginal cost to the Society, the Union, or the University of Sussex, then they may take part in the event only at the discretion of the Committee. Otherwise all activities shall be open to all members.
11. Society Records
    1. Any records of Society membership shall be used solely for the purposes of informing members of forthcoming activities, regulating general meetings, and for auditing purposes. The Union and designated members of the committee shall have access to the official Union membership records (recommended Chair, Comms and Finance).
    2. If the University, Union, or other authority requires verification of the Society’s membership, the Chair shall agree with that authority an auditor, who shall be given temporary access to all relevant records of both parties. Under these circumstances members will be given written notice and the opportunity to have their name removed. It is suggested that the Society use the University’s Student Advice Centre employees for this purpose.
       1. The word of the auditor shall be deemed to have satisfied in full the request for verification.
       2. The auditor shall not duplicate, publicise or otherwise reveal any information about the Society’s membership apart from that required by the audit.
       3. The auditor shall then surrender access to the records.
12. Meetings
    1. There shall be an Annual General Meeting at full elections between the 28th Feb and 3rd March, as the Union states. There can be other General Meetings such as before LGBTQ+ History Month for planning.
    2. General meetings shall be held each term at a time and place that is convenient for its members, who shall be given seven days’ written notice. An ordinary member to be determined by the Committee will chair the general meetings. A member of the Committee may chair the meeting if there is no such other person, but they must hand over their chairing responsibilities if and when they stand for re-election.
    3. Guests and speakers may attend by invitation or arrangement through the Committee before the start of the meeting.
    4. The quoracy of a General meeting shall be: (filled Committee positions x 2) plus 1.
    5. Committee members may stand down and become ordinary members for the duration of the general meeting.
13. Society Finance
    1. The Society may apply for funding from the Union, which it shall administer according to the rules of the Union or awarding body.
    2. The Finance officer shall be either a full-time or a part-time student of the University and member of the Union.
    3. The Society may fundraise separately from the Union, all monies will be recorded and managed by the elected Finance officer according to Union policy, and all monies will be reported to the Union.
14. Elections
    1. Upon election, the Chair shall complete the USSU Society Handover Form. The form only requires the details of three members of committee: the Chair, Finance officer and Communications officer.
    2. Any Committee member who does not attend Committee meetings for three consecutive meetings without apologies will be deemed to have resigned and elections for their post will occur once suitable warning has been given to both the former officer and the ordinary members. Under no circumstances shall the Committee members seek to undertake any judicial role for themselves, but a General meeting may re-elect removed officers or members.
    3. Should a member of the Society propose a motion of “No Confidence” in a Committee officer, a seconder will be required. The Committee officer will receive seven days written warning to challenge the motion. For the motion of “No Confidence” to be successful it must be passed by a two-thirds majority. Elections for the now vacant post will take place at the General Meeting. If the procedures laid out in this section are not followed the motion shall be deemed invalid and the Committee officer will still hold their post.
    4. Elected officers will be elected into post for one year only (or the duration of their remaining time as a student at the University of Sussex, whichever is less). Where a Committee member resigns from their post during their term, a by-election will be held, and the newly elected Committee member will complete the previous Committee member’s term.
    5. All those expecting to leave the University of Sussex in June/July as a student, and not to remain/return as a student should be expected to stand down from their position and announce this the Committee prior to the last three weeks of Spring term, with the following exemptions:
       1. Anyone intermitting if they will or intend to stay Sussex or be within easy reach of the University of Sussex.
       2. Anyone that will or intends to return to Sussex on a different course.
       3. Anyone intending to stand for an available position in the by-elections should be expected to be returning or to remain at the University of Sussex beyond September (or intermitting and remaining within easy reach of the University of Sussex).
          1. The Committee may determine at their discretion the meaning of ‘within easy reach of the University of Sussex’
15. Misconduct of Members
    1. The Society adheres and upholds the University of Sussex Students’ Union Safer Space; Good Conduct and Zero Tolerence policies.
    2. The Society does not tolerate harassment, assault, bullying, abuse or non-consensual activity of any kind.
       1. Where an allegation is made that a member or Committee officer has breached any part of this constitution (in particular 15.2) the Chair has to power to temporarily suspend any member, with immediate effect, for an indefinite period, pending further investigation.
          1. Where the allegation is made against the Chair, the power to suspend as above will lie with the Vice-Chair.
          2. Where the allegation is made against both the Chair and the Vice-Chair, the complaint should be directed to the Students’ Union.
       2. The right is absolutely reserved to the complainant to determine to whom they wish to complain, be that to a member of the Society’s Committee or to the Union.
       3. Where the Committee members do not feel able to adequately deal with the complaint, or have conflicts of interest, the Union may take over the response to the complaint.
       4. When dealing with any complaints, Committee members should remember that the Union is willing and able to advise on the best course of action.
       5. Once an allegation has is made, either to the Committee or to the Union, an Emergency Committee Meeting should be held as soon as reasonably possible to discuss the complaint.
          1. Emergency Committee Meetings should be formed of as many Committee members as possible, the complainant, the accused, and relevant Union officers or officials where possible.
          2. The Emergency Committee Meeting has the power to:
             1. Permanently expel the accused; or
             2. Continue or revoke the temporary suspension; and/or
             3. Issue and officially record a clear verbal warning.
          3. Where any member receives three verbal warnings they shall be summarily expelled from the Society without the need for an Emergency Committee Meeting.
       6. Upon a member’s permanent expulsion:
          1. The accused will be removed from all relevant Societys, including those on Facebook.
          2. The accused will be asked not to attend any events organised by the Society.
             1. Should the accused attend an event organised by the Society, they may be asked to leave, else Campus Security may be called (01273 873333) to remove them.
          3. A formal complaint may be submitted to the Union, via complaints@sussexstudent.com, any officer, official, or staff member, so as to permanently ban the accused from the LGBTQ Room.
    3. It is the role of the Welfare Officers to provide confidential support and information however, if they feel unable to provide support they should point members to other sources of support, such as local organisations and union or university services.
16. Constitution
    1. This constitution may be amended at a quorate General meeting by a simple majority, which must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of those voting at a general meeting. The General meeting procedures in 12.2 must be adhered to. A copy of this constitution and any proposed amendments shall be available at the Student Union Reception, Student Advice Centre c/o Union Welfare Officer, Union Activities Centre c/o Clubs and Societies coordinator, and the LGBTQ+ room.
    2. In extraordinary circumstances requiring an emergency amendment to this constitution to allow its continued operation, the Committee may make an amendment on behalf of the Society, provided all Committee members are in agreement. The wider Society must be notified immediately and written objections submitted to the Chair within seven days.
    3. This constitution shall supersede all previous constitutions of the Society.