

## Imperial College Union Union Council Standing Orders 2023-24

### Standing Order 1 (Nature of the Standing Orders)

1. The rules in these Orders are binding on all present at meetings of Council and, where appropriate, its sub-committees, as set out in their own standing orders.
2. In the event of dispute, the initial interpretation of these Standing Orders shall be made by the Council Chair, whose decision may be challenged under SO15.

### Standing Order 2 (Access to meetings)

1. The time, date and location of Ordinary Council Meetings must be advertised to Union members a minimum of 15 College days ahead of the Meeting.

### Standing Order 3 (Voting)

1. Votes shall be taken on Council business where a decision has not been reached by consensus.
2. Votes on Procedural Motions and votes to accept the minutes of a previous meeting may be taken by a show of hands.
3. Matters for Decision and votes on amendments must be by a poll of individual Union Council Members and shall be recorded either by electronic means, or otherwise in such a way that individual Members' votes may be documented.
4. Individual Council Members' votes, where documented, must be made available to members of the Union, unless Council has resolved by simple majority that a vote shall be secret.

### Standing Order 4 (Order of Business)

1. The order of business shall be:
  - a. Chair's Business
  - b. Presentations to Council
  - c. Matters for Decision
  - d. Matters for Discussion
  - e. Reports
  - f. Where time permits, Any Other Business
2. Chair's Business shall include:
  - a. Approval of the previous Meeting's minutes,
  - b. Notices of removal of Members for lack of attendance in line with SO23,
  - c. Any minor proposed amendments to these Standing Orders,
  - d. Reports from the Chair on Board of Trustees business,
  - e. Updates on matters noted in the action tracker; and,
  - f. A call for Any Other Business to be raised during the meeting.
3. Matters for Decision shall include:
  - a. Any business submitted under SO7.1,
  - b. Any proposed amendments to the Union's Constitution and Bye-Laws; and,
  - c. Any Motions of Censure or No Confidence to be heard.
4. Matters for Discussion shall include any Business submitted under SO7.2.
5. Reports shall include any reports from Officers, Committees, Constituent Unions and other relevant persons and bodies as appropriate and as set out in SO6.
6. Where time permits, at the end of the Agenda there will be an opportunity (Any Other Business) for Members to raise matters arising from discussions during the meeting and informally raise any issues they feel Council should be aware of but which do not warrant a formal paper.

### Standing Order 5 (Paper acceptance)

1. The Council Chair may require that the paper author make amendments to a submitted paper in order for the paper to be accepted. These amendments may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Formatting corrections,
  - b. Grammar, spelling and clarity corrections,

- c. Minor amendments to resolves, to ensure they are in line with Union Council's powers.
- 3. The Council Chair may decline a paper to be accepted to Council for reasons including, but not limited to:
  - a. Submission following the paper deadline (5pm, 6 College days before the Council Meeting),
  - b. Incorrect formatting as outlined in SO12,
  - c. Failure to comply with required amendments to the paper communicated to the author by the Council Chair ahead of the meeting.
- 4. The Council Chair may postpone a paper being brought to Council, due to a large number of time sensitive matters being brought to a given Council meeting.

#### **Standing Order 4 (Reports)**

- 1. Council may request that any Officer of the Union attend a Meeting and present a report.
- 2. Reports must be submitted by 5pm, 6 College days before the meeting.
- 3. Reports may be a general overview of the Officer's activities or specific to a particular topic.
- 4. The Felix Editor may volunteer to attend a meeting and present a report, upon agreement with the Council Chair.
- 5. Termly Standing Reports to Council should be presented at least once every term, at a meeting communicated by the Council Chair, from the following Officers:
  - a. Union President
  - b. Deputy President (Finance and Services)
  - c. Deputy President (Welfare)
  - d. Deputy President (Education)
  - e. Deputy President (Clubs and Societies)
  - f. Constituent Union Presidents, in collaboration with their Executive Committees.
- 5. All decision-making subcommittees of the Union Council must present a report to Council following each meeting. Ideally, the report should be presented at the Council meeting immediately following the subcommittee meeting. However, in cases where there is not enough time between the meeting and the Union Council paper deadline, an exception can be made, and a report can be submitted to the next Council.
- 6. The Council Chair may request that reports are given in a specific format (e.g., oral or written report).

#### **Standing Order 7 (Notice of Business)**

- 1. Matters for Decision:
  - a. Any new Business which is a Matter for Decision must be submitted by 5pm, 6 clear College days before the meeting.
  - b. Papers written as a direct response to another proposed Matter for Decision may be submitted after this deadline, at the discretion of the Chair.
- 2. Matters for Discussion:
  - a. Matters for Discussion must be submitted to the Chair by 5pm, 6 clear College days before the meeting, unless, in the Chair's view, the matter is of a time-sensitive nature and could not have reasonably been submitted prior to the deadline.
  - b. Papers written as a direct response to another proposed Matter for Discussion may be submitted after this deadline, at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3. The Chair shall put all valid Business submitted prior to the deadlines above onto the Agenda for the Meeting unless it is withdrawn prior to the distribution of the Agenda.

#### **Standing Order 8 (Motions which may be Moved without Notice)**

- 1. Procedural Motions may be tabled in the course of debate without notice and without needing to be seconded. Such motions shall not be open for debate unless the Chair opens them to the floor.
- 2. Motions to amend an item, as per SO10, may be called to a vote in the course of debate without notice.

3. Business presented as 'Any Other Business' may be presented without notice.
4. The Chair may at their discretion dismiss any such motion.

#### **Standing Order 9 (Withdrawal of Business)**

1. Any item of Business may be withdrawn by the person who proposed it by informing the Chair either verbally or in writing, prior to the item being put to a final vote.

#### **Standing Order 10 (Amendments to Business)**

1. No amendment to any item under discussion will be allowed which is not related to the issue(s) the paper is intended to deal with.
2. Amendments proposed during the meeting may be adopted either by the proposer of the paper accepting the suggestion or in a vote in accordance with SO3 (3)

#### **Standing Order 11 (Rules of Debate)**

1. Members should refrain from speaking unless called to do so by the Chair, or unless the Member is challenging the ruling of the Chair.
2. It shall be out of order to shout over the current speaker recognised by the Chair.
3. The Proposer of any Business (or a named Secunder if the Proposer is not present) shall be given the first and last opportunities to speak on the matter.
4. Equal time shall be afforded to those wishing to speak for and against the proposal.

#### **Standing Order 12 (Structure of Papers)**

1. Papers must be formatted in the style of the template included in Appendix A of these Standing Orders.
2. The names of a single author shall be listed at the top of a paper. This must indicate the author's Union role(s) and/or the academic department to which they belong. Where appropriate, it may indicate the author's membership of any Clubs, Societies or Projects.
3. If a Paper is a Matter for Decision, the name of one or more seconder(s) must be listed at the top of a paper. This must indicate the seconds' Union role(s) and/or the academic department to which they belong. Where appropriate, it may indicate the seconds' membership of any Clubs, Societies or Projects.
4. If the Paper is to be a Matter for Decision, it must consist of three sections:
  - a. Union Notes: Factual and verifiable information which is relevant to the matter at hand, and which is referenced where possible.
  - b. Union Believes: Positions and/or interpretations of facts the proposer wishes the Union to take on the subject at hand.
  - c. Union Resolves: Details of any actions the Union shall be mandated to carry out on the passing of the Paper. Resolves must be phrased such that Union Council members are voting For or Against the resolve and not for one of two or more optional words to be included in the resolve.
5. Additionally, if the Paper contains a proposal requiring the attention of the Board of Trustees or a request for an elected official to present a report, a fourth section may be:
  - a. Union Requests: Details of any requests for the Board of Trustees to consider and requests for reports from elected officers.

#### **Standing Order 13 (Limits on Length of Meetings)**

1. The meeting shall be deemed to have run to its maximum length when 2 hours have elapsed from the advertised start time.
2. A Meeting may be extended if, when the time limit has been reached, a Procedural Motion to that end is passed in line with SO3 (2) and SO8 (1).

#### **Standing Order 14 (Email votes)**

1. Time sensitive matters, and ratification of the business of a previous inquorate meeting, may be decided by email vote in accordance with SO3, at the discretion of the Chair.
2. All email votes must achieve quorum to be valid.

**Standing Order 15 (Challenging the Chair)**

1. Any decision by the Chair may be overturned via a simple majority vote of Council. This shall be treated as a Procedural Motion that cannot be dismissed by the Chair.

**Standing Order 16 (Disorderly Conduct)**

1. Disorderly conduct includes:
  - a. Persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair,
  - b. Behaving irregularly or offensively,
  - c. Wilfully obstructing the business of Council,
  - d. Otherwise proving a disruption to the orderly conduct of the meeting.
2. A Member engaged in disorderly conduct may be no longer called to speak at the meeting, or required to leave the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.

**Standing Order 17 (Adjournment of Meetings)**

1. The Chair may at any point declare the meeting adjourned, after which no further business may be transacted unless the decision to adjourn is challenged under SO15.

**Standing Order 18 (Powers of Council)**

1. Powers of Council include, but are not limited to resolving to:
  - a. Create or dissolve a working group or subcommittee of Council, and determine the membership and standing orders of this body.
  - b. Action an Officer of the Union to perform a certain task or duty that is within the remit of their role, as interpreted by the Chair.
  - c. Delegate decision-making powers to a subcommittee.
  - d. Create, amend, or annul Union Policy.

**Standing Order 19 (Implementation of Council Resolutions)**

1. The Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that Council resolutions are implemented by:
  - a. Communicating Requests of Council to the relevant Officer or the Board of Trustees.
  - b. Ensuring that new or amended Union Policies are published and that any individuals to whom they are relevant are made aware of them.
  - c. Keeping track of actions made on Officers and obtaining updates on their status.

**Standing Order 20 (Absence of the Chair)**

1. If the elected Council Chair is not present at a Meeting or has relinquished the Chair temporarily due to a perceived or actual conflict of interest, Council shall select from amongst itself an Acting Chair, who shall Chair the meeting for such time until the Chair is able to return.
2. Voting in an election for an Acting Chair shall be held in accordance with the procedures in SO3.
3. Council may not be chaired by a current Officer Trustee.

**Standing Order 21 (Proxies)**

1. Members may delegate their vote in Council, temporarily or permanently, to another Union Member who is similarly qualified to represent their constituency, and who is not already a Member of Council by submitting a written request for such delegation.
2. The delegate may be an elected Union Officer and, or additionally, may have recently held the same role as the individual who is delegating their vote.
3. Council will formally approve any such requests in accordance with SO3 (2) under Chair's Business, so long as Council is satisfied that the proxy is a "similarly qualified" person.
4. Representatives to Council, Officer Trustees, the Council Chair may not proxy their vote under this Standing Order.
5. Council may at any time annul the proxy arrangement in accordance with SO3 (2), in which case the voting rights shall return to the original holder of those rights.

**Standing Order 22 (Shared Positions)**

1. Where a single seat on Council is held by more than one individual, only one of the individuals holding the seat may be the voting representative of this seat at a given meeting. This need not be the same person every meeting.

**Standing Order 23 (Notice of Removal of Members for Lack of Attendance)**

1. Where any Member of Council has not attended Council for the previous two Ordinary Meetings, they shall be deemed to have resigned their seat in line with Union Bye-Law A.3. This shall be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.
2. The Council Chair shall notify Members when their non-attendance of the next Council meeting will result in automatic resignation.
3. Any Council Member, except for Representatives to Council, may ask Council to reinstate their seat on Council at the next meeting following their resignation. This will be decided on by Council in line with SO3.

**Standing Order 24 (Ultra Vires)**

1. Council may not make any Policy which is not relevant to the Union's charitable objectives, or which contradicts the Policies of the Board of Trustees or the Constitution or Bye-Laws.

**Standing Order 25 (Subcommittees)**

1. The standing decision-making subcommittees of Council are:
  - a. Clubs, Societies and Projects Board
2. The standing non-decision-making subcommittees of Council are:
  - a. Community and Welfare Forum
  - b. Taught Academic Representation Forum
  - c. Research Academic Representation Forum
3. All Council subcommittees are Union Meetings as per section C of the Bye Laws, and as such must be minuted.
4. All Members of Council may attend meetings of any Council subcommittee, except where the meeting deals with sensitive information, at the discretion of the subcommittee's chair.

**Standing Order 26 (Coercion)**

1. Voter coercion is defined as the use of force, both physical and inter-personal, to persuade someone to vote in a manner that they would otherwise be unwilling to do.
2. Any resolve of a Motion found to have been passed or rejected where there is evidence of voter coercion shall be deemed null and void.
3. Any member of Council found to have coerced another member of Council shall be considered to have resigned their seat from Council.
4. Complaints regarding voter coercion in Union Council may be made by any Member of the Union where that member suspects that another Member of the Union has used coercive methods to obtain votes from Union Council members for or against a Motion presented at Council.
5. Complaints of voter coercion must be submitted and handled following the Union's Bye-Law G (Complaints).

**Definitions:**

Procedural Motion: Motions including:

- Motion that the matter under discussion be immediately put to a vote
- Motion that a time limit be set for debate on the current matter
- Motion that debate be suspended on the current item of Business and continued at the next Meeting of Council
- Motion that the Meeting be extended.

Matter for Decision: Any Motion calling on Council to discuss an issue with the intention of forming and voting upon a decision.

Matter for Discussion: A Motion for which the views of Council are sought on a particular issue, but Council is not requested to form a decision.

Member: A Union Officer entitled to vote at Council, as defined by the Union Bye Laws.