

SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

2024 / 2025

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Make a copy of this document somewhere safe in your group's drive (File > Make a copy).
2. Rename the document, and replace "[SOCIETY NAME]" with your group's name.
3. Fill in all required sections, indicated by purple boxes, by replacing "___".
4. Once completed, **save the document as a PDF** and submit through the Society Re-Ratification Form.

SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

Ultimate responsibility for the governance and discipline of societies lies with the Activities Officer, who has delegated responsibility to the Activities Development Coordinator.

This document contains your Society Constitution. **There are certain sections that you need to fill out, identified by purple boxes**, which correlate with certain sections in the Constitution. You can also add additional Society-specific policies to your Constitution in the 'Amendments' section if required.

Copies of the Constitution should be made available to all members. The University of York Students' Union will also publish this constitution to your University of York Students' Union web page shortly after ratification.

If you have any queries, please email societies@yusu.org.

WHY DO WE NEED A CONSTITUTION?

The Constitution is an important document which provides the University of York Students' Union with information about your Society. The Constitution also outlines the duties, responsibilities and guidance of your Society to the University of York Students' Union, which all members are expected to follow.

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[University of York Conservative and Unionist Association]

Constitution 2024/25

1. Definitions

- 1.1. The Society in this document will be referred to as the 'Society'.
- 1.2. Those chosen to collectively represent the 'Society', shall be referred to as the 'Committee'.

2. Name of the Society

- 2.1. The Society's name shall be [Question 1]. The Society will be considered a [Question 2] Society and be represented by the relevant member of the Societies Committee. People can join the Society for the cost of [Question 3].

Question 1: Society Name

University of York Conservative and Unionist Association (York Tories)

Question 2: Society Category

Select one category which best describes your Society. View our category definitions [here](#).

☐ Academic & Educational

☐ Arts & Cultural

☒ Campaigning & Political

☐ Faith

☐ Games & Fandom

☐ International

☐ Music & Performance

☐ Special Interest

Question 3: Society Cost

£5.00

This can be free, but a £4.00 minimum applies to be eligible for a University of York Students' Union grant. You can also set up multiple memberships (e.g. termly and yearly)— please provide details.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1. The aims and objectives of the Society are to promote the interests and act on behalf of the Society Members.
- 3.2. To provide an opportunity for members of the Society to meet and participate in the given activities together.
- 3.3. The Society's specific aims shall be:

Question 4: Society Aims

What improvements, changes or differences will your Society make to students? These must not contravene the Union constitution,

- To create an environment for conservative students to interact with other like-minded individuals.
- Maintain a Conservative presence at the University.
- To aid and assist the local conservative association in

or be the same as another Society.

promoting conservative messages.
-To encourage political discourse.

3.4. The Society's specific objectives shall be:

Question 5: Society Objectives

What areas of activity, or overall practical steps will your Society plan in order to accomplish your aims?

-Put on at least one social every week for society members.
-Support Local association at campaigning and leafleting events.
-Make our presence known by maintaining strong social media links.

4. Membership

- 4.1. Membership of the Society will be open to all members of the University of York Students' Union.
- 4.2. Membership of the Society, in addition to section 4.1, will be open to non-University of York Students' Union members who are not subject to disciplinary proceedings or consequent conditions of their membership. This includes students on a leave of absence.
- 4.3. Non-University of York Students' Union members must not exceed 20% of the overall Society membership.
- 4.4. The Society must have a core minimum membership of 10 University of York Students' Union members. If it does not reach this minimum, it will be required to submit proof of its regular activity to the Activities Development Coordinator upon request.

5. Code of Practice

- 5.1. All members must adhere to The University of York Student's Union Code of Conduct at all times. Any action taken by the members on behalf of or while representing the student group in any way will be accountable to the University of York Students' Union Code of Conduct.
- 5.2. All members must adhere to the health and safety rules and procedures of the University of York Students' Union, the student group, and the University.
- 5.3. Participant selection for student group activities should be fair and inclusive to all.
- 5.4. Student groups must adhere to GDPR in order to protect their members' data. They should make members aware of how their data will be used and be able to justify doing so.
- 5.5. Breaches of this code of practice and/or the Code of Conduct can result in student group, University of York Students' Union, or University disciplinary action.
- 5.6. Members must respect the property of the University, the University of York Students' Union, the Society, and of other members.
- 5.7. Participant selection for Society activities should be free and fair.
- 5.8. Socials (and any related activity) must be opt-in only and have no effect on eligibility to hold membership of the Society or a Committee position.
- 5.9. Drinking should not be the main purpose of any social events, and members should be able to participate in all Society activities without drinking alcohol, and without any coercion to drink.
- 5.10. The Committee will ensure that members of the Society should not pressure or coerce any other member into any action with which they feel uncomfortable.

- 5.11. Any action taken by the members on behalf of or while representing the Society in any way will also be accountable to the University of York Students' Union Code of Conduct found in Bye-Law 12.
- 5.12. Breaches of this code of practice can result in Society, the University of York Students' Union, or University disciplinary action.
- 5.13. Societies must adhere to GDPR in order to protect their members' data. They should make members aware of how their data will be used and be able to justify doing so.
- 5.14. [Question 6]

Question 6: Additional Codes of Practice N/A
Additional Codes of Practice for the Society.

6. Society's Committee

- 6.1. The Committee will be collectively responsible for the effective management and day to day running of the Society.
- 6.2. All of the Committee must be current University of York Students' Union members who are enrolled and studying on a University of York programme.
- 6.3. The Committee shall have the power to set Society rules, in accordance with the Societies Constitution.
- 6.4. A new Committee must be democratically elected at least annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 6.5. The democratically elected Committee must at minimum consist of:
 - 6.5.1. President / Chair
 - 6.5.2. Secretary
 - 6.5.3. Treasurer
 - 6.5.4. [Question 7]

Question 7: Other Committee Positions
Other positions on the Society's Committee, if applicable.

- Vice-Chairman
- External Affairs Officer
- Events Officer
- Communications Officer
- Ordinary Officer

- 6.6. The Committee will ensure an up-to-date list of Committee members is provided to the University of York Students' Union within one week of any election.

7. Duties of the Society's Committee

- 7.1. The President/Chair is responsible for:
 - 7.1.1. Providing leadership for the Society.
 - 7.1.2. Society Data Protection— see Section 8.
 - 7.1.3. Being a spokesperson/figurehead and representing the Society to relevant external stakeholders.
 - 7.1.4. Ensuring that Society adheres to the relevant policies and to this constitution.
 - 7.1.5. Ensuring the Society Committee contains officers listed in section 6.5.
 - 7.1.6. Completing Society Officer Training and attending Societies Open Meeting.
 - 7.1.7. Calling and chairing meetings of the Society's Committee.
 - 7.1.8. Publicising the Society.
 - 7.1.9. Any other duties as mutually agreed by the Committee and the President/Chair [Question 8].

Question 8: Society-Specific Duties for the President/Chair

- Shall chair all meetings, or may designate an alternative chair for a particular meeting; unless a motion is carried to the effect that the Chairman should not chair a particular meeting.
- Shall be held responsible for all Association activities and shall delegate responsibilities to the other officers under the broad descriptions of the duties listed for each officer here.
- Shall be the main spokesman for the Association and shall be treated as such in press releases and other external liaisons.
- Shall be chiefly responsible for increasing the profile of the Association on campus.
- Shall be required to stand for re-election should he/she become chairman of another society subsequent to his/her election as Association chairman.
- Shall be a signatory.

7.2. The Secretary is responsible for:

- 7.2.1. Completing Society Officer Training
- 7.2.2. Taking care of Society admin
- 7.2.3. Arranging meetings and booking rooms or venues
- 7.2.4. Creating agendas and keeping minutes of meetings as necessary
- 7.2.5. Communicating regularly with members
- 7.2.6. Being aware of key dates for the Society throughout the year
- 7.2.7. Organising the AGM (Annual General Meeting)
- 7.2.8. Any other duties as agreed by the Committee [Question 9].

Question 9: Society-Specific Duties for the Secretary

- Shall produce minutes and agendas of meetings required by the Chairman to be recorded.
- Shall produce other such documentation as shall be required by, or result from, decisions of Association meeting.
- Shall be a signatory.
- Shall be responsible for publicising meetings and events of the Association to members via e-mail.
- Shall be responsible for keeping a permanent hard copy of society minutes.
- Shall be responsible for maintenance of the Membership database.
- Shall ensure the smooth running of the YUSU website account.

7.3. The Treasurer is responsible for:

- 7.3.1. Administering the Society's finances in accordance with the Constitution, Laws and By-Laws of the University of York Students' Union.

- 7.3.2. Completing Society Officer Training.
- 7.3.3. Learning and understanding the Students' Union financial system.
- 7.3.4. Sourcing and applying for grant funding where necessary.
- 7.3.5. Keeping track of all income/expenditure.
- 7.3.6. Keeping the Committee & members informed of the Society's financial situation.
- 7.3.7. Organising fundraising or sponsorship for the Society.
- 7.3.8. Countersigning every claims form and transport form.
- 7.3.9. Creating a budget for each event.
- 7.3.10. Any other duties as agreed by the Committee [Question 10].

Question 10: Society-Specific Duties for the Treasurer

- Shall be responsible for the maintenance of sound financial practice and for the keeping of the accounts to the standard required for annual auditing and for such financial information as shall be required by Association meetings. The financial year shall end at the end of the Autumn term.
- Shall advise on the financial aspects of policies and actions.
- Shall be responsible for the raising of funds.
- Shall be responsible for money-related matters at Association events.
- Shall be a signatory.
- Shall be required to submit a report to the Committee twice per term detailing the balance of the Association's grant, own funds and any items of expenditure.
- Shall be required to apply for all relevant SU grants that the Association may apply for.

7.4. [Question 11]

Question 11: Duties of other Committee members

7.4.1. Vice-Chairman (Signatory)

- Shall work closely with the Chairman concerning all aspects of the running of the association.
- Shall be chiefly responsible for membership recruitment, including Freshers' Fair. With an emphasis on increasing the number of women in the society.
- Shall be responsible for matters internal to the University administration, the SU and the association.
- Shall encourage members to participate in the democratic processes of the SU.
- Shall be responsible for relations with the society alumni and for encouraging their participation in the life of the society.
- Shall be responsible for the internal discipline of the association.

7.4.2. Communications Officer

- Shall be responsible for publicising the activities of the Association such as meetings, speakers, events etc.

- Shall coordinate relations with the external and campus media.
- shall encourage members' participation in the student, local and national media.
- Shall assist, in conjunction with the Internal Vice-Chairman, in the presentation of candidates endorsed by the society to the campus media during local and national elections.
- Shall be responsible for, in conjunction with other members of the committee, the operation of the social media profile of the association.
- Shall be responsible for maintaining the Association website, in consultation with the rest of the committee.
- Shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Association's digital photo archive

7.4.3. External Affairs Officer

- Shall be responsible for the organisation and coordination of Association campaign activity.
- Shall liaise with constituency and National Party organisations in the execution of the above duty.
- Shall encourage all Association members to participate in campaign activity.
- Shall be responsible for promoting and maintaining links with the local Conservative Associations and the National Party.
- Shall keep the Association updated on matters of National Party policy and activities.

7.4.4. Events Officer

- Shall arrange, organise and co-ordinate Association social events, including the Summer and Christmas balls.
- Shall be responsible for arranging guest speakers.

7.4.5. Ordinary Officer

- Shall generally aid and assist the other Officers in their work.
- May carry out a specific responsibility that may be assigned by the AGM or the committee with the consent of the Officer.

- 7.5. No Committee member should be responsible for case work e.g. giving support and advice to any individual student. If and when these cases present they must be referred promptly to the Activities Development Coordinator who can ensure the proper support is made available.

8. Data Protection

- 8.1. All membership personal data is subject to the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, related legislation and the University of York Students' Union procedures.
- 8.2. The President/Chair is responsible for the safety and security of all membership personal data held outside of the University of York Students' Union software and

systems and must take all reasonable steps to ensure access to the University of York Students' Union software and systems is not shared without the University of York Students' Union's consent.

- 8.3. The President/Chair is required to successfully undertake GDPR online awareness and compliance training supplied by the University of York Students' Union.
- 8.4. The President/Chair must advise the University of York Students' Union of any breaches of data protection as soon as they are made aware of any such breach.
- 8.5. The President/Chair can formally nominate a Data Protection Officer who is responsible for overseeing the Society's compliance to GDPR and the University of York Students' Union procedures. Key responsibilities include:
 - 8.5.1. Ensuring membership personal data including email addresses are private and confidential and is only used for Society membership purposes and contact that would be reasonably expected as part of the membership offer.
 - 8.5.2. Ensuring that all communications are sent via the SUMS Communications platform wherever possible, and not from email accounts. Where this is inconvenient or not possible, the Society must ensure all bulk or emails must only be sent via blind-copy ("bcc").
 - 8.5.3. Obtaining the necessary consent from members to hold and process personal data in relation to membership. Given that a contractual relationship exists when a membership is purchased (whether or not cash changes hands), there is no need for explicit consent to be sought by student groups provided they are only using the personal details of members in relation to reasonable membership activities / communications.
 - 8.5.4. Not sharing membership personal data with any other Society, university department or external organisation without the prior written consent of the data subject or the University of York Students' Union.
 - 8.5.5. Advising the University of York Students' Union of any breaches of data protection as soon as they are made aware of the breach.
- 8.6. Failure to follow the University of York Students' Union's data protection guidance and procedures will constitute grounds for de-ratification and/or disciplinary procedures.

9. Society Finance

- 9.1. All Society income and expenditure shall be conducted through the University of York Students' Union Finance Office. Holding funds externally will constitute grounds for de-ratification and/or disciplinary procedures.
- 9.2. The President/Chair, Secretary and Treasurer shall automatically be signatories to the Society accounts, once the University of York Students' Union has received an up-to-date Committee list during the (re-)ratification process.
- 9.3. Two of these signatories shall be required for each expense claim and for any contract or undertaking, financial or otherwise, on behalf of the Society; one of which must be the Treasurer unless the Treasurer is making the claim.
- 9.4. The Society's accounts shall be available for inspection at any reasonable time by the University of York Students' Union staff and through the SUMS Member Dashboard.
- 9.5. An annual membership fee is required from all Society members, including the Committee unless the Society states otherwise and agrees not to be eligible for a University of York Students' Union grant. The Committee is responsible for determining both this fee and its collection.
- 9.6. University of York Students' Union members shall receive no remuneration from the Society, except in legitimate expenses incurred in connection with the Society business.

10. Meetings

- 10.1. The primary decision-making bodies of the Society are Committee meetings, Annual General Meetings (AGMs) and Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs).
- 10.2. All General Meetings must be open and advertised to all members.
- 10.3. Minutes should be taken at each meeting and published to all members. A copy of the minutes must also be made available to University of York Students' Union staff upon request.
- 10.4. The Committee shall give at least 7 days notice of any General Meeting.
- 10.5. The quorum of a General Meeting shall be 20% of University of York Students' Union members of the Society or 10 University of York Students' Union members of the Society, whichever is greater.
- 10.6. An EGM can be called by the Committee of the Society, Societies Committee, or a petition signed by a petition of 25% of University of York Students' Union members of the Society or 10 University of York Students' Union members of the Society, whichever is greater.

11. Election of the Committee

- 11.1. Only current paid-up members of the Society who are also full members of the University of York Students' Union are allowed to stand for election.
- 11.2. The Committee must be elected by the Society at an AGM (see section 10), which must be held at least once in every 12 month period, in the time period provided by the Activities Development Coordinator unless otherwise agreed.
- 11.3. All members should be made aware of their ability to stand for election and vote.
- 11.4. Only paid-up Society members who are also full members of the University of York Students' Union shall be entitled to vote.
- 11.5. The Committee must be democratically elected in a free and fair election.
 - 11.5.1. All Society members must have the chance to question candidates and submit a vote in private.
 - 11.5.2. Votes may be counted using either First Past The Post or the Alternative Vote/Single Transferable Vote system.
 - 11.5.3. If desired, the University of York Students' Union can provide assistance in the running of any election to ensure fairness or to count votes where necessary.
 - 11.5.4. If any vacancies occur in the Committee during the academic year, they shall be democratically filled as soon as is convenient via an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting).

12. Society Complaints Procedure

- 12.1. This procedure allows members to raise complaints about any issues relating to the Society, including (but not limited to):
 - 12.1.1. The safety of activities.
 - 12.1.2. The standards of instruction.
 - 12.1.3. The standard of equipment used for the activities.
 - 12.1.4. Bullying and harassment.
 - 12.1.5. Disregard for operational policies of the University of York Students' Union including the Equal Opportunities and Safe Space policies.
- 12.2. Misconduct related complaints should be sent to studentconduct@yusu.org, other complaints should first be addressed in writing to the Activities Officer at activitiesofficer@yusu.org.
- 12.3. Some issues, conflicts and disagreements are best dealt with informally by members and committees, outside a formal misconduct process. This usually takes the form of

discussions or mediation between those involved. In no circumstances can individuals or student groups attempt to implement sanctions, this is simply a method for talking through and overcoming issues. Sanctions can only be issued by the University of York Students' Union directly if it is deemed appropriate following a formal misconduct process.

- 12.4. If this initial process does not provide a satisfactory outcome, a formal complaint should be made to our Student Conduct team via our Code of Conduct Complaint Submission Form, triggering the use of the University of York Students' Union's Code of Conduct process. Any queries about this process or a specific complaint can be directed to studentconduct@yusu.org
- 12.5. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions in bye-law 12 supersede this constitution for conduct matters.
- 12.6. The University of York Students' Union reserves the right to refer alleged breaches of the University of York's regulations or policies to relevant bodies within the institution, as appropriate.

13. Dismissal and Resignation of Committee Members

- 13.1. No Committee member shall be deemed to be dismissed unless they have received during their term of office a vote of 'no confidence' from their Society members.
- 13.2. Before a vote of 'no confidence' can be considered against a Committee member, the complainant must have attempted to settle the matter informally. One of the Committee members named in section 6.5 will be responsible for overseeing this informal process, and acting as a mediator when and where they deem necessary.
- 13.3. Any incident which cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this way must be referred to the Activities Development Coordinator, who will facilitate a vote of 'no confidence'. This request must be accompanied by a petition of 25% of the University of York Students' Union members of the Society or 10 University of York Students' Union members of the Society, whichever is greater.
- 13.4. If a 'no confidence' motion is called then a Society EGM (see section 10) must be held, and in order for a vote of 'no confidence' motion to be carried it must be supported by two-thirds of those voting.
- 13.5. If the no confidence motion is successful or a Committee member resigns, then a Committee member must inform the University of York Students' Union immediately. The Society will then need to hold another EGM to re-elect a new person to the position (see section 10).
- 13.6. If the no confidence motion is unsuccessful:
 - 13.6.1. The University of York Students' Union will facilitate support with the Committee to resolve any outstanding issues.
 - 13.6.2. Further 'no confidence' motions must be on different grounds and not within one calendar month of the general meeting at which the last 'no confidence' motion against that Committee member was heard.

14. Suspension and Exclusion of Members

- 14.1. No member shall be deemed to be suspended or excluded without a formal process involving the University of York Students' Union. This is to ensure fairness and transparency of processes.
- 14.2. Any matter which may be considered grounds for suspension or exclusion (for example, gross misconduct) must be referred as a matter of urgency to the University of York Students' Union's Student Conduct team via our Code of Conduct Submission Form, triggering the use of the University of York Students' Union's Code of Conduct process.

Any queries about this process or a specific complaint can be directed to studentconduct@yusu.org.

- 14.3. Individuals and student groups are not permitted to take action themselves and a decision to escalate an incident to the University of York Students' Union will not always result in a suspension or exclusion. The University of York Students' Union will follow the process in the Code of Conduct and take the most appropriate course of action.
- 14.4. For more details about this process, please refer to the Code of Conduct.
- 14.5. Any member facing exclusion from a Society must have a fair hearing at which they have the right to speak in their defence, have a supporter present and have been advised of the allegations made, and supporting evidence disclosed at least 7 clear days in advance.
 - 14.5.1. The panel for the hearing will be chaired by the Activities Officer (or the York Sport President if there is a conflict of interest) with the following additional members: a member of Societies Committee (who is not a member of any other Society in the same category as the Society) and a member of the York Sport Committee, neither of whom should have previous knowledge of the nature of the allegations, and a University of York Students' Union Staff member who will minute the meeting.
 - 14.5.2. Any decision to exclude a member requires a majority vote from the panel and must be communicated in writing, with a statement of reasons, to the excluded member within 7 days.
- 14.6. A member may appeal against any decision to suspend or exclude them on the grounds of lack of adherence to process, provision of further evidence or evidence that the decision was biased or prejudiced. The member must communicate their intention to appeal in writing to the University of York Students' Union.
- 14.7. Any appeal of a decision to suspend or exclude a member must be heard by a panel who were not involved with the original decision, have no prior knowledge of the case and will be chaired by a Full Time Officer. Ideally this panel will also consist of one more member each from the Societies Committee and the York Sport Committee. However the panel will primarily be constituted with a view to fairness and elimination of conflict of interest.
- 14.8. An appeals panel only has the power to uphold or overturn a decision by the initial panel. They may not suggest alternative sanctions.

15. Amendments to the Society Constitution

- 15.1. The Constitution may be amended by two thirds of the members present at an AGM or EGM.
- 15.2. If amended, the constitution shall be re-ratified by the Societies Committee before coming into effect.

16. Dissolution

- 16.1. The Society may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the members in a simple majority vote at an AGM or EGM. Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid shall revert to the University of York Students' Union, in line with charity law requirements.
- 16.2. In exceptional circumstances, the Society may also be dissolved by the Societies Committee if deemed necessary and subject to the approval of the Activities Officer.

17. Declaration

- 17.1. As a Society Committee Member I agree to abide by, enforce and operate in accordance with this Constitution, the University of York Students' Union's Constitution, the University of York Students' Union's Policies and guidelines in the Resource Hub.

Question 12: Declaration

Please state the name and position of each Committee member who has agreed to this declaration. All Committee members must sign this declaration before the constitution is submitted to the University of York Students' Union for ratification.

[illegible]

18. Amendments

Question 13: Additions to your Society Constitution.

If your Society has additional constitutional amendments, please add them to the document white space below. Please ensure each amendment and point is separated clearly, i.e. formatted similarly to the above University of York Students' Union Society constitution.