

**University of Essex
Students' Union
By Laws
June 2021**

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By Law 1

A. Student Parliament

The Student Parliament shall have the authority to:

1. Set Policy for the Union, (pending approval from the Trustees Board),
2. Hold the Students' Union Elected officers to account.
3. Monitor and have input in the progress of the Students' Unions annual plan.
4. Represent the voice of Students.
5. Receive reports from the Trustees at least once a term.
6. No Member may hold more than one seat in Parliament at any one time.
7. Any current registered student of the University of Essex can bring a Policy to Student Parliament at the discretion of the Union Chair, or deputy Union Chair (if applicable), to be voted on.
8. Suggest changes to the By Laws.

Student Parliament will be split by two parts; Parliament and Campus Parliaments.

B. Parliament

1. Student Parliament will meet at least twice a term during term time.
2. Parliament shall be accessible via online means where possible; where impossible, the Union Chair shall explain why this was not.
3. Student Parliament will consist of elected representatives from identified engaged and demographic student groups from all three campuses, all elected Student Community Officers, and all Sabbatical Officers (see appendix 1 for current list of representative groups and numbers).
4. The maximum number of representatives for each identified group will be reviewed at the end of every academic year.
5. Parliament will be chaired by the Union Chair.
6. The agenda will be published 7 days before the meeting and will include details of when and where Parliament will take place.
7. Minutes will be available within 7 days of the meeting taking place, where possible.
8. Parliament will approve the process of the Annual Plan prior to publication.
9. Parliament will receive updates on the Annual Plan at every session.
10. The agenda will be formed from relevant topics and by the Union Chair

C. Campus Parliament(s)

1. There will be a Campus Parliament per campus.
2. Campus parliament(s) will meet at least twice a term during term time, on the same date of the above Parliament.
3. The agenda for each Campus Parliament will be included within the Parliament agenda.
4. The agenda for each Campus Parliament will be formed around the relevant campus and relevant topics.

5. Minutes will be available within 7 days of the meeting taking place, where possible.
6. Campus Parliaments will consist of elected representatives from identified engaged and demographic student groups, and elected Student Community Officers from the relevant campus.
7. There will be Sabbatical Officer attendance at each Campus Parliament, on a rotational basis as required per the agenda.

D. Parliament Catch-up(s)

1. There will be a Parliament Catch-up per campus.
2. Parliament Catch-ups have the following purposes:
 - a. To provide a dedicated time for parliament members and Students' Union staff to socialise.
 - b. To support Parliament members understand the agenda, policies and any other aspect of Parliament.
 - c. To provide guidance and support representatives to make change.
3. Parliament Catch-ups will be held 7 days prior to Parliament and Campus Parliament, where possible; where impossible, the Union Chair shall explain why this was not.

E. Voting (all campuses)

1. Representatives will vote individually (one member one vote)
2. Sabbatical officers will **not** have a vote
3. Student Community Officers **will** have a vote
4. Unless there are reasons accepted by the Union Chair and a majority of the representatives present through a vote, there will be no secret ballots and the minutes should include how individual members voted and sabbatical officer's thoughts and views on the subject.
5. The Union Chair and Parliament Chairs have no vote, unless In the event of a tie. The Union Chair can vote to break the tie at Parliament and Parliament Chairs can vote to break the tie at their relevant Campus Parliament.

F. Calling extraordinary meetings for accountability

1. Decision - should an extraordinary parliament be called?

By law 10 outlines the process Based on the right to reply, statement of fact and investigation the committee will decide whether there is enough reason for an extraordinary parliament to be called. If the right to reply sufficiently explains the issues set out in the complaint, then the process ends and the complainant is informed.

2. Extraordinary Parliament Called

Notice of the extraordinary parliament is sent to all parliament members.

The date, time, statement of fact, complaint and the right to reply from the Officer is circulated to all parliament members for review.

Any questions for the Officer or complainant must be submitted to suparli@essex.ac.uk within 3 working days

G. Accessibility

1. Unless there are reasons accepted by the Union Chair, all Student Parliament meetings will be filmed and available on line for all students to watch
2. Should a member not feel comfortable to discuss a topic while filmed they should request the filming be stopped and this will be subject to approval from the Union Chair.
3. All reasonable attempts will be made to find a room that is easily accessible to all members.
4. Any audio recording needs to be approved by the Union Chair.
5. Printed copies of papers will only be provided if requested in advance of the meeting to meet specific needs outlined in the request.
6. Parliament will be regularly consulted on the time and date of meeting to ensure attendance from the maximum number of members.

H. Role of Representatives from the Identified Groups

1. All Student Parliament representatives are expected to contribute to all student Parliament meetings or submit apologies to the Union Chair within 48 hours,
2. Exceptions can be made with permission from the Union Chair
3. Any Representatives who miss 1 meeting during the academic year, without providing apologies in good time, will receive an automatic censure.
4. Any Student Representative that receives 2 automatic censures will have their right to sit on Parliament withdrawn.
5. Each meeting should see a report on developments on the Students' Union annual plan and representatives are expected to hold officers and the Students Union to account.

I. Elected Officers Role

1. All elected officers are expected to attend Student Parliament or submit apologies to the Union Chair at least 48 hours before the meeting.
2. Exceptions can be made with permission from the Union Chair.
3. Any Elected officers who miss 1 meeting during the academic year without providing apologies in good time will receive an automatic censure.
4. Elected officers receiving 2 automatic censures will be subject to a vote of no confidence within an academic year.
5. Sabbatical and Student Community Officers are expected to provide updates on current or developing "live" issues as required.
6. Sabbatical and Student Community Officers are expected to provide updates on work done in relation to their community at each meeting.
7. Student Parliament cannot make decisions on behalf of the Liberation groups or change decisions or Policies that relate solely to liberation groups.

By Law 2 Union Chair and Parliament Chairs

A. Union Chair

1. A Union Chair will be elected by students from all campuses.
2. The Union Chair will be elected during the sabbatical officer elections (where possible), or selected where elections have proven unsuccessful.
3. The Union Chair will serve for the period of one academic year.
4. If the position is not elected in the 1st election, the position will be included in any subsequent elections until the position is filled.
5. The Union Chair will chair Parliament (By Law 1B).
6. The Union Chair will work with the Students' Union to ensure that Student Parliament Meetings are well run, productive and participative and establish a code of conduct. To do this the Union Chair may choose to:
 - Decide the order of speaking and length of discussion to allow all agenda points to be considered.
 - Where necessary, ask for clarification in order to help proceedings.
 - Temporarily remove any person present in any meeting who is preventing the meeting from proceeding in a fair manner.
 - Ensure any complaints made about elected officers follow the correct procedure, as outlined in bylaw 10
7. The Union Chair will support and guide the Parliament Chairs prior to Parliament Meetings where relevant and required.
8. The Union Chair will also be responsible for the running of the AGM when required.
9. The Union Chair will be a current registered member of the University of Essex.
10. The Union Chair, will ensure that elected officers provide appropriate updates to each Parliament meeting of the Students' Union annual plan and their activities
11. The Students' Union will ensure the Union Chair is supported effectively in their role.
12. In the occasion that the Union Chair is ill or unable to attend, a Parliament Chair will chair Parliament (By Law 1B).

13. Once appointed the Union Chair shall not be able to submit SU ideas or motions to Parliament
14. The Union Chair has no vote during Student Parliaments unless in the event of a tie.

B. Parliament Chairs

1. Parliament chairs shall be elected by relevant campus elections, indirectly elected in accordance with By-law 6.L or selected as a last resort"
2. Parliament Chairs will chair their relevant Campus Parliament (By Law 1C).
3. Parliament Chairs will work with the Students' Union and Union chair to ensure that the Campus Parliaments are well run, productive and participative.
4. The Parliament Chairs will be current registered members of the University of Essex.
5. Parliament Chairs may deputise for the Union Chair when required.
6. If the Parliament Chair is unwell or unavailable, Campus Parliament can select a suitable representative to stand
7. Parliament chairs have no votes during Campus Parliaments unless in the event of a tie.

By Law 3 – Student Ideas

1. Submitting an Idea

- A. Any registered student of the University of Essex (with the exception of the Union Chair) can submit an idea. They can be submitted these using the Students' Union website. The submission must include the name of the student submitting the idea and their student email address.
- B. Ideas must include what the member(s) want to change and why.
- C. The idea must have a title that reflects the proposed changes.
- D. The idea will be assessed by SU staff and given a score. Ideas receiving a high score will need approval from both Trustees and Student Parliament before it will be allowed to go to a student vote. Those receiving a medium score will need to be approved by Student Parliament before going to a Student Vote. Ideas receiving a Low score will not require a vote and will be implemented.
- E. Ideas will not get approved for discussion if the idea submitted has already gone through this process and it has previously been rejected by the Trustee Board or Student Parliament
- F. Once the idea has been approved, all medium or high scoring ideas will be presented to students to allow an opportunity to discuss and vote for the proposal online.

2. Online Discussion

- A. Once approved by Student Parliament the idea will be posted online where discussion will take place for 5 days.
 - i. During this time members will be able to comment on the idea and suggest alterations.
 - ii. It is at the discretion of the proposer of the idea to implement these suggested changes or reject them.
 - iii. If changes are made to the idea these need to be approved by the Union Chair before voting takes place.
- B. Any students deemed making threatening or harassing comments may be referred to the disciplinary process of the Students' Union or to the University's Disciplinary Procedure by the Union Chair.
- C. Once the discussion period is ended, and any changes have been approved by the Union Chair, voting will open for 5 days.

3. Voting

A. Ideas that have been approved will then be subjected to an online vote. This will be a simple 'Yes', 'No' vote.

B. Members will still have the ability to comment on the idea during the voting period but will not be able to suggest changes.

C. Voting will open at 10am on the first day and close at 4pm on the final day. Results will be announced on line following the closing of the vote.

D. Ideas at the end of voting will only be considered if the idea receives at least votes from 3% of the effected students, as agreed at the scoring stage or 25 students, whichever the greatest number is. If the idea meets this requirement one of the following will happen:

The idea will be actioned by the SU if the idea receives 50% +1 or more of the vote in favour. However, in a case where an idea would change the Bye-Laws, Disciplinary Process or supporting documents of the Students' Union a two-thirds majority of votes in favour of the change would be required with at least 3% of all students or 25 students, whichever is the greatest number of students eligible to vote.

D. If the proposer does not successfully achieve the votes required they can either resubmit the idea in the following academic year, or take the idea to referenda (see Bye-Law 7).

4. Liberation/Section Ideas

A. Ideas that relate to a student liberation or section shall only be discussed by self-identifying students, at the discretion of the Union Chair. By law changes are exempt from this and must be discussed and voted for by the whole Student Parliament

B. The idea will follow the same process as listed above.

5. External Campaigners

Only current registered University of Essex students are able to encourage members to vote for a Student Idea. External campaigners are not allowed to campaign for or against a Student Idea.

By Law 4 – Sabbatical Officer Role Descriptions

All representatives shall:

- i. Carry out all duties and responsibilities in accordance with all the Union's Articles of Governance, By laws and policies.
- ii. Be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all Students' Union policy.
- iii. Always behave in a manner that maintains the good reputation of the Union and the office to which they have been elected or appointed.
- iv. Be subject to the accountability procedures outlined in by law 10
- v.
- vi. Represent fairly the opinions and issues of SU Members as a whole.
- vii. Represent the Union and its members' interests in a professional manner, both internally to the University and externally.
- viii. Encourage members to participate in all areas of the Students' Union.
- ix. When necessary campaign on issues identified by members.
- x. Carry out any other duties as may be assigned to them from time to time by Student Parliament, which are reasonably consistent with that representative's position.
- xi. To represent members on relevant internal and external committees.
- xii. Consider the development of the Union's provision to the student body as an integral part of their role.
- xiii. Attend Student parliament and other Union meetings as appropriate and report to those meetings where relevant on their activities and actions, unless prior consent is provided to miss them.

B. All Sabbatical Officers shall:

- i. Be a full trustee of the Union.
- ii. Represent the Union at any and all University meetings relevant to the remit of their role.
- iii. Maintain regular contact with relevant bodies both within the University and externally.
- iv. Work towards achieving the targets as set out by the Trustee Board and Student Parliament
- v. Support the Union and work with relevant staff in delivering on actions and projects in response to membership feedback.
- vi. Be subject to the capability and disciplinary procedures outlined in Disciplinary and Capability Policy for Officer Trustees and by law 10.
- vii. To lead the work in delivering the objectives of the Students' Union as mandated by students via the Students' Union annual plan

PRESIDENT

- To be responsible for overseeing the Students' Union strategy and the development of the Union.
- To represent members at all levels of the University, locally, nationally and internationally
- To communicate regularly with the Union's Elected officers regarding the work of the Union and to lead the work of the Elected Officers.
- To be proactive as a channel of communication to other officers, student members, Students' Union staff and University staff on Union Policy and issues affecting members.
- To be the Chair of the Trustee Board and have ultimate responsibility for the financial security of the organisation
- To co-ordinate, alongside other Officers, campaigns undertaken by the Union
- To be ultimately responsible for overseeing, reviewing and developing the democratic processes of the Union, including but not limited to: Articles of Governance, Bye-Laws, and Elections processes.
- To be responsible for ensuring Elected Officers attend relevant University meetings and ensuring an Elected Officer attends a meeting where the relevant Officer is unavailable.
- To represent the Students' Union on any University committees relevant to the remit of the role, including but not limited to: University Council, and Senate.
- To be the principal spokesperson for the Union dealing with media enquiries
- To be responsible for the work of the Chief Executive Officer as delegated by the Trustee Board.
- To ensure and scrutinise the effectiveness of the Students' Unions Commercial services
- To represent the views of members in relation to the commercial services provided by the Students' Union and the University.
- To choose a deputy in the case of their absence from within the sabbatical team

VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

- Be responsible for overseeing academic policy within the Union and University and representing members accordingly.
- To represent the Students' Union on any university committees relevant to the remit of the role, including but not limited to: Senate, Education Committee, and Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- To ensure the Union addresses academic issues affecting the quality of education received by the members.
- To work to raise awareness of educational issues and gather feedback from the membership where appropriate to ensure members needs are met.
- To ensure the Union influences the decision-making process regarding the provision of academic resources by the University for members.
- To work, with the Union, to support members' involvement in relevant educational surveys and to ensure the Union acts on the feedback received from members.
- To work with the University to ensure that student data is used responsibly and in line with the expectations of members and current legal guidelines.
- To work with the relevant staff to keep the Union informed of current educational activities and policy developments within the University.

VICE PRESIDENT INTERNATIONAL

- Be responsible for representing issues facing our International members and to encourage the participation of these members in the work of the Union and the life of the University.
- To ensure that the Union is effective in its representation of international students within the University and to outside bodies and that the Union is sensitive to these students' culture and beliefs.
- To work with the university on its international partnerships and recruitment, building collaboration wherever appropriate
- To work with the International Students' Association and ensure that their direction is in line with the Students' Unions' objectives
- To be responsible for ensuring that all relevant information about the Union's activities, facilities and services is regularly and effectively communicated to all International members,.
- To work with the Students' Union, and other relevant departments, on ensuring a programme of events is organised specifically for International students.
- To work with staff to ensure that International members receive an effective induction to the Union including pre-sessional students.
- To liaise with SU Advice to evaluate and suggest improvements to the Union's provision of advice and welfare services for its International members.
- To work with SU Advice and other relevant departments to ensure the student experience of International students is considered and improved at a university level.
- To sit on every Big Plan project and to be responsible for the ongoing success of the Big Plan
- Managing the Big Plan milestones
- Day to day oversight of Big Plan projects
- To represent Big Plan projects to Parliament when other Sabbaticals cannot

VICE PRESIDENT SOUTHEND

- To be responsible for representing the members based at Southend Campus.
- To represent the Union on all local external bodies relevant to student needs and issues.
- To be responsible for welfare, and student activities matters on the campus, working with other Officers and Departments where relevant.
- In conjunction with the other Officers, to be responsible for ensuring the voice of Southend members is heard at both Students' Union and University level (where relevant).
- To ensure that issues facing Southend members are communicated to other officers into whose remit that issue may fall, and ensure a collaborative approach to addressing that issue is taken.
- To ensure that members at Southend are represented at all Students' Union meetings.
- To represent the Students' Union on any university committees relevant to the remit of the role, including but not limited to: Southend Steering Group.

VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITY & ENGAGEMENT

- To represent the Students' Union on any relevant committees. Specifically, committees that will directly or indirectly impact our student communities.
- To represent the voice of student communities on all relevant committees.
- To work with all the Student Community Officers (from all three campuses) and relevant Students' Union staff to ensure that they are supported in their work and that the communities are represented to the University effectively
- To support all Student Community Officers to be an effective active part of relevant committees
- To collect issues and concerns from the Student Community Officers and relay them to the appropriate individuals within the University and Students' Union to ensure that they are dealt with swiftly and effectively
- To ensure that there is regular, clear, and engaging communication with our members in relation to engagement and communities' activities and events.
- Agree targets and remit of the Students' Union annual plan with Students' Union staff.
- To inform and influence the process of feedback collection as part of the creation of the Annual Plan.
- To play an active part in the creation and delivery of central campaigns
- To foster good working relationships with key individuals and departments within the university. Including but not limited to: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team, Inclusivity Champions, Staff Forums and Networks, Faith Centre

VICE PRESIDENT WELFARE

- To ensure that the SU understands the welfare issues that members face and works to address these, including working with the University and other external bodies, where appropriate.
- To work to develop and improve the university's welfare support provision, ensuring the best interests of members are met at every stage.
- .
- To work with the appropriate student groups to ensure that the night safety of members is managed effectively and that any concerns and issues are escalated to the appropriate University or Students' Union staff members.
- To work with the University, SU Advice, and the Students' Union, to advertise topical and current issues affecting student welfare, both at the university and nationally.
- To represent the Students' Union on any committee that is seen to fall within the remit of this role.
- To be responsible for representing student views including, but not limited to, mental health, wellbeing and accessibility

VICE PRESIDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Be responsible for supporting the development of student activities To represent the Essex Blades and Societies at all Students' Union, University and external occasions
- To chair meetings of the Essex Blades and Societies including General Meetings and Committee Meetings
- To support the Societies Team and Sports Team to develop in line with student interests. To raise any relevant student issues or concerns surrounding a student's experience to the Students' Union or University staff.
- To lead an annual fundraising project, with the support of the Students' Union.
- To work with the University and Students' Union on employability, ensuring that high quality support and opportunities are made available and that they meet the needs of members.
- To work with VTeam to ensure that volunteering opportunities are made available to members. To ensure that student input into the development, of Sports, Societies and Vteam is considered at every level
- To oversee the development and provision of Student Media , ensuring it remains independent and impartial in its reporting from the Students' Union
- To represent the Students' Union on any committee that is seen to fall within the remit of this role.

By Law 5 – All Other Elected Officer Role Descriptions

A. All representatives shall:

- i. Carry out all duties and responsibilities in accordance with all the Union's Articles of Governance, By Laws and policies.
- ii. Be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all Students' Union policy.
- iii. Always behave in a manner that maintains the good reputation of the Union and the office to which they have been elected or appointed.
- iv. Represent fairly the opinions and issues of SU Members as a whole.
- v. Represent the Union and its members' interests in a professional manner, both internally to the University and externally and be held accountable as outlined in by law 10.
- vii. Encourage members to participate in all areas of the Students' Union.
- viii. When necessary campaign on issues identified by members.
- ix. Carry out any other duties as may be assigned to them from time to time by Student Parliament, which are reasonably consistent with that representative's position.
- x. To represent members on relevant internal and external committees.
- xi. Consider the development of the Union's provision to the student body as an integral part of their role.
- xii. Attend the relevant Student Parliament and other Students' Union meetings as appropriate and report to those meetings where relevant on their activities and actions, unless prior consent has been provided to miss the meeting.

A. All Liberation and sectional officers shall:

- i. Be responsible for representing issues facing the community they represent and to encourage the participation of these students in the work of the Union and the life of the University.
- ii. Ensure that the Union is effective in its representation of the community they represent within the University and that the Union is sensitive to these students' needs and issues.
- iii. Ensure that regular meetings for the community they represent are held during term time, and to support the organisation and running of these meetings.
- iv. Ensuring the community that they represent are aware of activities and events which are relevant to them v. Raise awareness amongst the University community of issues affecting the community they represent

vi. Use events, societies, University and Students' Union staff to build networks and connections for the community

C. Services Student Community Officer

- i. Promote events through Students' Union platforms on various mediums including Social Media and Face to Face
- ii. Encourage students to engage with Students' Union Student Services
- iii. Bring new ideas and feedback from the student body to the Students' Union Student Services department

D. E15 President

- I. Shall represent the students based in Loughton for 10 hours a week.
- II. Be the lead for welfare, equal opportunities and student activities matters on the campuses.
- III. Liaise and support Campus Representative Committees on any campus specific matters, campaigns matters and other Union business as appropriate.
- IV. Be responsible for monitoring the implementation of all Students' Union policy (where relevant) including the equal opportunities policy.
- V. Encourage and support students to organise their own activities and groups on campus.
- VI. Ensure that the students at Loughton are represented at relevant Students' Union meetings.

By Law 6 – Elections

- Elections - including Union Chair, Student Parliament, Sabbatical and Student Community Officers for all campuses

A. Ballot

- i. All Sabbatical candidates shall be elected by cross campus ballot of all members.
- ii. All Student Community Officers shall be elected by the relevant communities on that campus.
- iii. Voting will be restricted by self-definition or using appropriate student data
- iv. All student parliament representatives and chairs shall be elected by relevant communities on that campus or be indirectly elected in accordance with the alternative placement provisions of By-law 6.L

*see appendix for campus specific list of roles

B. The Returning Officer (RO) shall:

- i. be ultimately responsible for calling these Union elections, and must ensure the election is free and fair. The RO shall be responsible for enforcing these regulations.
- ii. be approved by Trustee Board of the Students 'Union and the Council of the University.
- iii. not be a registered student of the University of Essex, member of Students' Union staff or a member of the University of Essex staff
- iv. Confirm in writing that the elections were free and fair and if it was not, what steps should be taken to ensure future elections are free and fair.
- v. No results shall be announced until they have been approved by the RO
- vi. The Returning Officer is responsible for the interpretation of these regulations but in their absence the Deputy Returning Officer is responsible. The ruling of the Returning Officer shall be final.

C. Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) shall:

- i. Be a Member of the senior staff team of the Union shall act as the Deputy Returning Officer.
- ii. will appoint a member of staff of the Union as the Elections Manager, who shall be responsible for the day to day running of the election.

iii. be responsible for assisting the Returning Officer in carrying out their duties.

D. Elections Manager (EM) shall:

i. be responsible for the day to day operations of the elections.

ii. be the first point of contact for candidates, slates, agents and supporters with any questions about the elections.

iii. Assist the Returning Officer in carrying out their duties

E. Election Rules

i. The rules of each Election will be issued in the Election webpage.

ii. The Rules will be determined by the Elections Manager, Deputy Returning Officer and the Returning Officer.

F. Elections Timetable

i. The dates of these elections shall be agreed by the Trustee Board and members notified at least 14 days before the nominations open. This will include details of the times when nominations open and close and where voting will take place as well as a list of all the posts to be elected.

ii. Nominations shall be open for a minimum of five days and the ballot shall take place within 4 weeks of nominations closing.

iii. Notice of all nominated candidates will be displayed within 2 days of the last candidate briefing taking place.

iii. Candidates shall be allowed a minimum of five days to campaign before voting opens.

iv. Any candidate wishing to withdraw from the ballot shall notify the Elections Manager in writing.

v. The counting of votes shall take place as soon as reasonably possible following the conclusion of all outstanding investigations.

vi. The time and location of the vote will be made available once agreed by the RO.

vii. In the event of the holder of a position resigning, or a post becoming vacant, the Returning Officer shall have the power to call a by-election at their discretion. By-elections shall be governed by these regulations.

G. Complaints

- ii. Complaints about the conduct of candidates shall be made in the first instance to the Elections Manager in a written form with accompanying evidence. These will then be forwarded to the Returning Officer.
- iii. The Returning Officer, assisted by the Deputy Returning Officer and Elections Manager, shall investigate all complaints and make their decision according to the seriousness and complexity of the complaint.
- iv. In the event of a candidate or slate being found to have broken one or more of the Regulations, the Returning Officer has the power to:
 - Issue a verbal or written warning;
 - Impose a fine on the campaign budget;
 - Restrict the amount of publicity available to the candidate or slate;
 - Disqualify the candidate or slate, or to take other action as they sees fit.
- v. All rulings made in the case of investigated complaints by the Returning Officer shall be displayed on the website
- vii. Any candidate or member of a slate disqualified by the Returning Officer during an election will not be able to stand for elections in that academic year.
- viii. Any complaint in relation to the conduct of the election or of any violation of the Bye-Laws must be reported to the Returning Officer in writing no later than five working days of the announcement of the election results.

H. Appeals

- i. Appeals against the Returning Officers decision where there is evidence that the decision making process is unfair or seriously flawed, should be addressed to the Registrar and Secretary no later than five working days of the Returning Officers' ruling. The decision of the Registrar and Secretary is final.

I. External Campaigners

- i. Only registered students of the University of Essex and existing sabbatical officers are able to actively campaign in a Students' Union Election.
- ii. External campaigners are not allowed to campaign for any candidate that stands.

All additional information for candidates regarding the elections can be found in the Election webpage

J. Sabb Roles

Sabbatical officers shall conform to the rules set out for SU staff during an election

- (SU rules for SU family members)

K. Right to represent

Where individuals have been found to have “seriously breached” the Student Conduct Regulations, the Students' Union reserves the right to withdraw their right to represent others or participate in subsequent Students' Union's elections. Students will have a right to appeal this decision and this will be outlined in the Elections rules.

L. Student Parliament

I) Where multiple candidates run for a student community officer role and aligning representatives' roles (Appendix 2) remain vacant, all unsuccessful candidates who receive at least 15% of first round votes and obtain more votes than the option to re-open nominations, will, in order of votes obtained, be offered the aligning vacant representative positions until all the relevant positions are filled or all eligible candidates have been placed.

II) Roles may only be recognised as vacant and therefore offered once all successful candidates in all currently active elections have been awarded their position

III) Where multiple officer elections feed into the same vacant representative positions, a ranking of unsuccessful candidates will be made by percentage of votes obtained by the candidate in reference to total votes cast in their race and the process of offering roles will go in order of this ranking

By Law 7 – Referenda

1. Referenda

A. A Referendum can be called by:

- Any student emailing suelections@essex.ac.uk, if they were unsuccessful using the student ideas process outlined in By law 3
- Any Student collecting the signatures of 75 students who are registered members of the University of Essex and presenting them to SU Staff.
- Student Parliament where 75% of the members are in attendance and that the motion for the referendum is supported by 66% of the representatives voting.

B. A timeline for the referendum, which includes amendments, campaigning and voting, will be agreed between the proposer(s) and the Students' Union.

C. A Referendum question must be submitted with a simple 'Two answer question. For example – Yes or No

D. A referendum can only be withdrawn by the person who called for it, unless it must be withdrawn for legal reasons.

- E. The rules surrounding all aspects of referendum will be consistent with By Law 6
- F. Referendum voting shall take the form of a cross campus ballot.
- G. Referendum voting shall last not less than one working day and no more than three working days.
- H. Only registered students of the University of Essex are allowed to campaign for or against a motion
- I. The quorum for a Referendum is 5% of the Full Members of the Union per motion.
- J. Referenda will be decided using a simple majority (a minimum of 50%+1) of voting members).

By Law 8 – Policy Book

1. Students' Union Policy
 - i. When policy is passed by a Student Idea, at an All Student Meeting, at Student Parliament or by referenda, it will be added to the Policy Book, pending approval by the Board of Trustees.
 - ii. It shall remain a policy of the Students' Union for three years or until all actions of the policy have been completed.
 - iii. A Policy Lapse date will be included on all policies included in the Policy Book.
 - iv. Upcoming Policy Lapses shall be a standing item on the agenda for each Student Parliament, where policies that will lapse within 3 months are noted.
 - v. Once the three years has passed or actions have been complete the policy will have been deemed to lapse unless a student wishes to reaffirm the policy for another period by taking back to Parliament to review by manner of a vote by Student Parliament members
 - vi. Students will have access to the policy booklet at all times via the SU website
2. Amending Students' Union Policy
 - i. Students may amend, update or remove approved policy by via student Parliament, SU Ideas, or Referenda.

By Law 9 – Option Out of Union Membership

1. Any student shall have the right to opt out of membership of the Union. Students who exercise this right will not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise by reason of their having opted out of the Union.
2. Any student wishing to opt out should e-mail SU@essex.ac.uk and the opt-out shall be in effect from the moment a response is received confirming the opt out is valid for the remainder of the academic year.
3. Exercising the right to opt-out confers no financial benefit to a student. Students who have opted-out may not hold any representative office within the Union, including Trustee, Sabbatical Officer, Club or Society official, or take part in any aspect of the democratic process
3. Students who have opted out may, however, utilise the facilities provided by the Union, including the Advice Service, commercial outlets.

By Law 10

Elected Officers and Representatives Accountability

The term "Officer" is defined as an elected representative as outlined in By Laws 4 (Sabbatical Officer Role Descriptions) or 5 (All Other Elected Officer Role Descriptions), which includes Sabbatical Officers, Student Community Officers and Parliament Representatives.

Aims of the Officer Accountability processes:

- To ensure that it is accessible for students to hold their Officers to account
- To provide an easy method to bring issues to the attention of students, the officer and the SU
- To ensure that Officers are treated fairly throughout the process

It is important to note that, unless in specific situations (where alleged gross misconduct or harassment has taken place), the complainant is expected to have reached out to the Officer prior to the first stage. There needs to be evidence that the complainant has made the Officer aware of their concerns/ issues and has tried to work with the Officer in relation to these issues.

Steps:

Step 1: Student calls into question an Officer- By emailing the Union Chair and SUParli@essex.ac.uk to outline their concerns in writing and including any evidence to support their allegations. The Union Chair and Engagement Manager will assess whether or not this is an Employment issue or an accountability issue. If it is an employment issue then the details will be passed to SUPED who will follow the Disciplinary Process and this accountability process ends.

Step 2: A Complaints Committee is formed

The Complaints Committee will be formed specifically for the complaint, by the Democracy and Representation Manager.

Suggested Membership: (the relevant Campus Chair, Union Chair and the Student Engagement Manager (responsibility for democracy) any other Officer can be co-opted on to the panel at the discretion of the Union Chair.

Step 3: Complaints Committee investigates the complaint/question

The Complaints Committee receives all information submitted in step 1 and is provided with a Statement of Fact in relation to the Officer's work and behaviour, to date, compiled by the Democracy and Representation Manager. The statement of fact will contain number of meetings attended, number of meetings missed with apologies, number of meetings missed without apology, number of events held, number of training sessions attended (including the total possible) and number of Officer reports submitted.

The Complaints Committee reviews all information and decides whether or not the process continues. Where the process ends here, the original complainant will be supplied with reasons as to why and given the opportunity to submit further evidence if necessary, for the complaint to proceed.

Step 4: Officer is given the right to reply

The Officer will be provided with the full details of the complaint and will be given the right to reply (within 3 working days)

Step 5: Decision - should an extraordinary parliament be called?

Based on the right to reply, statement of fact and investigation the committee will decide whether there is enough reason for an extraordinary parliament to be called. If the right to reply sufficiently explains the issues set out in the complaint, then the process ends and the complainant is informed.

Step 5: Extraordinary Parliament Called

Notice of the extraordinary parliament is sent to all parliament members.

The date, time, statement of fact, complaint and the right to reply from the Officer is circulated to all parliament members for review.

Any questions for the Officer or complainant must be submitted to suparli@essex.ac.uk within 3 working days.

Step 6: Questions are reviewed by the complaints committee and sent to both the Complainant and the Officer.

The Complainant and the Officer have 3 working days to answer the questions in writing to SUparli@essex.ac.uk

Step 7: Extraordinary Parliament

The following is read out:

- Statement of Fact (Union Chair)
- Complaint (Campus Chair 2)
- Officer's Reply (Campus Chair 3)

Union chair reads the questions and the answers

Parliament will then vote to establish one of the following outcomes:

- No further action
- Notice to improve*
- Hold a VoNC by the represented students

Both the Complainant and the Officer will have the right to appeal the application of the process. This needs to be submitted to the chair of trustees or an external

trustee if it is against the chair of trustees and copied to SUParli@essex.ac.uk within 3 working days.

*Notice to improve is a call to action for the Officer to change their approach to the role. Parliament will suggest specific actions that they expect to see within a specific timeframe. At the conclusion of that timeframe, and within the same academic year, the complaints committee will reconvene to discuss whether there is evidence that the actions have been met. If the complaints committee deem that there is no evidence of the actions being met, they can censure the Officer. Parliament will be updated via email.

Step 8: Vote of No confidence within the community

This will be held in the community that the officer represents with the options being "No Confidence" and "Confidence". Only those who identify with that community shall be eligible to vote. Quoracy will be set at 5% of the community (as self-defined at the time of the parliament vote). If there are no student's self-defined to this community, Parliament will agree the quoracy (based on information received regarding community figures established elsewhere).

Mediation:

At any time of this process both parties are entitled to take part in Mediation. The committee may suggest this initially prior to the process continuing.

Mediation will be provided by SU Advice and or the SU Engagement team at a time that suits all parties, however a time frame will be agreed by the committee. Both parties can bring someone for support, but they should not speak. Mediation can be ended by either party if they feel it is not productive after 1 session. Mediation can be ended in a positive outcome so long as both parties are happy. Mediation can be ended by SU Advice and Engagement if it is not productive.

Student community Officer Roles - appendix

The three campuses will decide what roles best support the needs of their students.

Appendix 1

Colchester officers are:

- Trans students officer
- LGBTQ+ students officer
- Womens officer
- Mature Students' Officer
- Black Students' Officer
- Asian Students' Officer
- Post Graduate Taught Officer
- Post Graduate Research Officer
- Disabled Students' Officer
- Services (agreed at November 19 parliament)
- Parent and Carer Officer (agreed at April 20 Parliament)

Southend

Southend has 1 full time paid sabbatical officer and has the following part time positions for their campus :

- Black Students' Officer
- LGBT+ Students' Officer
- Disabled Students' Officer
- Student parents Officer
- Womens Officer

Loughton

Loughton has a Part time paid position for their President and have identified the following part time positions for their campus:

- Black Students' Community Officer
- Global Majority Officer
- LGBTQ+

- Women

Appendix 2

- Colchester Women's officer – Women's representative
- Colchester Mature officer – Mature representative
- Colchester Postgraduate taught and research officers – postgraduate representative
- Colchester LGBTQ+ and Trans officers – LGBTQ+ representative
- Colchester Student with disabilities officer – student with disabilities representative
- Colchester Black and Asian officers – BAME representative
- Union chair – Respective campus chair