

# Manchester Debating Union Constitution

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## Scope of the constitution

The constitution defines the aims and decision-making processes of the society. It also sets out the rules governing the election of committee members and describes the minimum composition of the committee. Any interpretation of the constitution shall be consistent with the Mission Statement of the MDU.

## Mission Statement

The MDU is a place where all the students of Manchester are welcome to engage in free speech, debate and merriment. We aim to produce competitive debaters of high calibre while ensuring that membership of the society is a pleasurable experience for all. We also aim to be a positive non-politically affiliated force within Manchester, fostering partnerships with both the university as a whole and the wider community.

## 1. The Committee

1.1 The purpose of the committee is to further the mission of the MDU.

1.2 The minimum composition of the committee consists of a President, Chairman, Secretary, Publicity Officer and treasurer who shall be elected (2) for 1-year terms. This will be known as the Executive. No person may hold more than one Executive position at any one time; and only one person may hold an Executive position at a time.

1.3 The elected member of the committee may only be dismissed by a motion of no confidence passed by either 2/3 of the committee or 2/3 of the membership at a meeting attended by at least 30 members of the MDU.

1.4 The elected committee members may appoint or dismiss extra committee members as they see fit by a simple majority of the elected committee members with the chairman having the deciding vote. A non-elected committee position may be filled by more than one person, e.g two social secretaries.

1.5 Any proposal, which is approved by a simple majority of the committee, becomes the policy of the MDU. In the case of a tie the Chairman shall have the casting vote. In the case of a position filled by more than one person, the position receives one vote, split between the people filling it; all people in the position must be in agreement, or else their vote is counted as an abstention.

1.6 The committee should maintain a role analysis detailing the key responsibilities of all committee members, which shall be a separate document to the constitution.

1.7 Committee meetings shall be held, as far as is possible, separate from general meetings to maximise committee interaction with the wider society

## 2. Elections

2.1 Before the terms of the Committee expire there will be a general election for the positions detailed in 1.2. at a public meeting. The Chair will preside over the election, unless standing for election or unavailable; in this case, the first person available and not standing for election in the following order: President, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Secretary, Committee member selected by the Executive, member selected by the Executive, will preside over the election. A member of the society, not currently on the Committee, will act as returning officer. The positions will be elected in the following order: President, Chair, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Secretary. Members successfully elected to positions become the Executive Elect and appoint non-Executive Committee members elect in the manner described in 1.4. The current Committee must resign by the end of the academic year.

2.2 Should an elected position (1.2) become vacant for any reason a by- election shall be held under the same conditions.

2.3 All elections in the MDU are by secret ballot, first past the post with the chairman wielding a casting vote in the case of a tie.

2.4 All members of the MDU in attendance are allocated one vote. No other persons shall be entitled to a vote.

2.5 Notice of elections shall be given to all members of the MDU three weeks in advance of elections. Nominations shall be received by the chair from that date until the election.

2.6 Qualifications for elected positions

2.6.1 Candidates must be present at the election, a lifetime member and must be seconded by a lifetime member before being put on the ballot. They must be students at any of Manchester-based Universities.

2.6.2 Any candidate for the position of Chair must have attended and debated at two IVs.

2.6.3 Any candidate for the position of Chair must previously had a role on the House Committee.

2.6.3 Any candidate for the position of President must have previously served one full term on the committee

### **Intersarsity By-Laws**

3.1 The committee shall allocate responsibility for team selection to one or more members of the committee.

3.2 The committee will be informed of decisions regarding selections before anyone else at least 14 days before the competition will take place. Committee members shall then have 72 hours to raise an objection with the chairman. Should two committee members raise an objection the chairman shall convene a special session of the committee where the team makeup shall be decided by a simple majority of all committee members in attendance, the chairman having the casting vote.

3.3 Should they be one of the candidates for team selection, the chairman shall be expected to nominate an impartial committee member to wield the casting vote.

3.4 The member(s) responsible for selection will present a transparent selection process to the committee. This includes justifying any decision in writing at the request of any member of the MDU.

3.5 Where the MDU has not filled the institutional cap 7 days in advance of a competition, members are free to organise their own registration and compete on behalf of the MDU.

### **Constitutional Amendments**

4.1 The constitution shall be amended where a change is approved by 3/4 of the committee. Such changes come in with immediate effect  
Amendments

4.2 The MDU logo is the symbol of the MDU both internally and externally. After a logo has been approved by the committee, it must remain in place for at least 3 years.