

MIDKENT COLLEGE
STUDENT UNION CONSTITUTION



**MidKent
College**

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****Major change is defined as:**

Anything that represents a significant change of working practice, legal requirement, procedure or process within the organisation, or a change that impacts an employee's terms and conditions of employment.

****Minor change is defined as:**

Any change of dates, job titles or terminology that do not represent a significant change to working practice. Examples changes of terminology to reflect current legislation/ DfE/Ofsted such as the change of terminology in the safeguarding policy from peer-on-peer abuse to child-on-child abuse.

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Contents

NAME:	5
WHAT DOES THE UNION DO?	5
MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNION:	5
STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATIVES & STUDENT EXECUTIVE:	5
THE MKC STUDENT UNION EXEC TEAM:	6
CLUBS AND SOCIETIES:	8
EXTERNAL ORGANISATION AFFILIATIONS:	8
COMPLAINTS & REMOVALS:	8
VACANCIES:	9
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION:	9
CHANGING THE UNION:	10
ASKING STUDENTS FOR OPINION:	10
CODE OF CONDUCT:	10
INTERPRETATION:	11
ELECTIONS	11
HOW TO RUN AND REGULATE ELECTIONS:	11
ELECTION TIMINGS:	11
HOW TO APPLY FOR A STAND:	12
PROMOTING STUDENTS TO VOTE:	12
HOW TO VOTE:	12
VOTE COUNTING:	12
RESULTS:	13
COMPLAINTS:	13
STUDENT VOICE ELECTIONS:	13
VACANCIES AVAILABLE FOR POSTIONS:	13
MEETINGS	14
MEETING REGULATIONS:	14
WHO CAN ATTEND STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:	14
WHO MAY SPEAK AT STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:	14
WHO MAY VOTE AT STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:	14
WHO LEADS THE STUDENT UNION MEETING:	14
AGENDA OF THE STUDENT UNION MEETING:	15

JOBS WITHIN THE UNION	15
JOB DESCRIPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS:	15
COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENT UNION:	18
TREASURY & FINANCE:	19
OPT OUT OPTIONS:	19
DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:	19

NAME:

1. The union will be named “MidKent College Student Union”, abbreviated to as MKCSU and referenced as “The Student Union”.

WHAT DOES THE UNION DO?

2. The Student Union promotes the interest of its members through curriculum & extra-curricular activities and encourages students to lead on social sport and charity events. It:
 - 2.1 acts as an integral body that will represent the students in communicating and co-ordinating with the College & external organisations.
 - 2.2 acts as a body which communicates and represents its members to the National Union of Students (NUS).
 - 2.3 leads on and advertises NUS events and campaigns.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNION:

3. All enrolled students at MidKent College will automatically become members unless they choose to opt out of The Student Union.
 - 3.1 College staff can become members of the student union if they are voted in by the Student Executive.
 - 3.2 All members of The Student Union can take part in all of Student Union's activities and events.
 - 3.3 Only Student Union members can stand for election or become Club Officers or take part in Student Voice.

STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATIVES & STUDENT EXECUTIVE:

4. Student Voice representatives will be elected from each progression and performance class. There will be one Student Representative elected, and one Vice Student Representative elected.

- 4.1 The Student Representative and Vice Representative will be nominated by the second week of October.
- 4.2 All representatives will be elected by running a class vote within the student's Progression and Performance classes and overseen by the tutor.
- 4.3 The Student Representative Conferences are formed of the following:
 - i. Student Representatives
 - ii. Student Governor
 - iii. Student Union President & Vice President
 - iv. Student Engagement Team
 - v. The Curriculum Managers of Departments
 - vi. Managers of Support Departments
- 4.4 In the event of a tie during Progression and Performance class nominations, the Progression and Performance Tutor is to make the decision on whether the students should be renominated or whether both parties shall represent the class.
- 4.5 All members of Student Voice will be expected to undertake training within the academic year.
- 4.6 All Student Representatives should meet at a conference three times in an academic year.
- 4.7 Should an emergency Student Voice meeting need to take place, it can be called by the President and the majority of the Executive Officers, but needs to be confirmed by the Student Engagement Co-Ordinator.
- 4.8 If a Student Voice exceptional meeting needs to take place, it must be held within 14 College working days and should only address those concerns for which the meeting was raised.

THE MKC STUDENT UNION EXEC TEAM:

5. The Executive Team of the Student Union has the responsibility to lead and maintain the Student Union according to the constitution and following Executive and Student Voice meetings.

- 5.1 The Student Engagement Team and the Executive Team will receive a report from the President with the details of Student Union events and activities each term.
- 5.2 The Executive Team will consist of the following Senior Union Officers on both campuses (excluding the President, who will represent both).
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice President
 - iii. Welfare Officer
 - iv. Events Officer
 - v. Sustainability Officer
 - vi. Employability Officer
 - vii. LGBTQ+ Officer
 - viii. EDI Officer
 - ix. 18+ Student Officer
- 5.3 The Executive Officers will be elected mid-October.
- 5.4 The President and Executive Officers will be elected and serve a term of one academic year.
- 5.5 The purpose of the Executive Officers will be:
 - i. to communicate between members of The Student Union, management at Midkent College, the Student Engagement Team and other external organisations.
 - ii. to participate in NUS, Kent Further Education (KFE) and internal College events to represent the Union.
 - iii. to create individual reports on what each role has achieved to feed into the principal and vice principal.
 - iv. to organise the student union's per termly executive meeting.
- 5.6 All members of the Executive Student Union will be expected to meet within a period of every 10 college working days. The President is expected to be the Chair of each meeting alongside the Student Engagement Team.
- 5.7 The minimum attendance for each meeting will be 50%.
- 5.8 Any member of the Executive Student Union who does not attend three consecutive meetings without submitting prior notice to the President will be at risk of losing their place on the Executive Student Union.

- 5.9 All members of the Executive Student Union will have at least 85% attendance as well as no outstanding disciplinary record within the last academic year.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES:

6. Clubs and societies may be created by members pending approval from the Student Engagement Team, provided they have at least five signatures, and have a Designated Club Officer who will liaise with the Vice Present and Student Engagement Team.
- 6.1 The role of the Club Officer will be to take a register each time an event takes place as well as reporting any inappropriate behaviour during the event / activity.

EXTERNAL ORGANISATION AFFILIATIONS:

7. If external providers are to be involved, the Club Officer will obtain approval from the Student Engagement Team.
- 7.1 When engaging with external providers the College must be presented with the organisation's details and information, affiliation, and potential costs (if applicable). This information shall be provided in the Union's report.
- 7.2 If members of the Union are not happy with the standard of the external organisation, they are within their right to create a petition to the President, requiring a minimum of 50 signatures, to review engagement with the external provider. A referendum shall be held to see whether the external organisation shall continue providing enrichment activity within the College.

COMPLAINTS & REMOVALS:

8. If a member of the Union wishes to make a complaint about an individual member or any of the Committee Team, they shall follow the correct complaints procedure and will be referred to the constitutional complaint and removal policy.
- 8.1 Executive Team Officers may be removed by:
- i. a 70% vote within a Student Voice meeting.
 - ii. a referendum of the members of The Student Union.

- iii. breaching previously mentioned disciplinary agreements or removal from the College.
- 8.2 Student Representatives for Student Voice may be removed by:
- i. The Student Engagement Co-Ordinator with approval from their line manager.
 - ii. a breach of previously mentioned disciplinary agreements or removal from the College.
- 8.3 Any removal will be overseen by the Student Engagement Team.
- 8.4 Any member of the Student Voice Committee or other union position shall relinquish their position if they have been absent from three consecutive meetings without an appropriate reason for their absence.
- 8.5 Any resignation will be written to the President with immediate effect and the President must submit the resignation to the Student Engagement Team.

VACANCIES:

9. If a position was to become vacant, the Executive Team will vote for a Temporary Officer to fill the position until specific elections are able to take place for the role or until the next round of elections.
- 9.1 Any member who intends to take up an honorary role must email the President confirming which role they intend to fill.
 - 9.2 If multiple members intend to fill an honorary position, a vote from the Executive Team will decide who is successful.
 - 9.3 The President shall have the final decision in case of a tie-break.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION:

10. At any Student Union meeting, including Student Voice, minutes will be recorded by a chosen member of the Executive Team. These minutes will then be distributed accordingly.
- 10.1 Any member of the Union can attend Student Union meetings, although only specified members are able to vote at the meeting.

10.2 The constitution and strategic plan will be made available via MyDay and student platforms.

CHANGING THE UNION:

11. Any changes to the constitution must either be voted through by a minimum of 70% of the Executive Team or through referendum.

11.1 At the start of every academic year, the constitution will be evaluated in case of amendments needed.

11.2 All staff within the Student Engagement Team can amend the constitution in the absence of the Student Executive Team.

ASKING STUDENTS FOR OPINION:

12. A referendum will be called if 70% of the Student Voice Representatives vote in an agreement, and the President may also call a referendum if they have received a petition which includes the names and IDs of 50 students who are members of the Union.

12.1 The referendum, similar to elections, will be supervised and run by the Student Engagement Team. The Student Engagement Team, where appropriate, will decide the wording of the question.

12.2 The referendum votes will be collated within two working days and the Student Engagement Team will announce the results with utmost priority.

CODE OF CONDUCT:

13. The Student Union will follow the Midkent College Code of Conduct Policy.

13.1 All members of The Student Union are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and may face disciplinary action and could be at risk of losing their place within The Student Union permanently if they do not follow the Code of Conduct.

INTERPRETATION:

14. In the event of a disagreement over the wording of the constitution, the President will decide on the ruling of the constitution.

14.1 In the event the President is unable to resolve the disagreement, the Student Engagement Team will support to find resolution.

ELECTIONS

HOW TO RUN AND REGULATE ELECTIONS:

15. It is the responsibility of the Student Engagement Team to support and run each election at the start of the academic year.

15.1 Only members of the Union who have been students for at least one year are able to apply for President and Vice President positions.

ELECTION TIMINGS:

16. All elections will run at the start of the academic year.

16.1 All elections will run from September – October as follows:

- i. Submissions for union positions will start from the first week in September until the first week in October.
- ii. After submissions close, there will be two weeks of campaigning.
- iii. All votes will be completed and calculated by the Student Engagement Team no later than the second to last week of October.
- iv. All results will be announced during the last week of October.

16.2 The positions available are the following:

- i. President
- ii. Vice President
- iii. Welfare Officer
- iv. Events Officer
- v. Sustainability Officer
- vi. Employability Officer

- vii. LGBTQ+ Officer
- viii. EDI Officer
- ix. 18+ Student Officer

16.3 Members elected to Executive Team roles will have a position for one academic year before re-election.

16.4 All dates of elections will be finalised by the Student Engagement Team before the start of the academic year.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A STAND:

17. Liaise with the Student Engagement Team to promote roles at specific events led by the Student Engagement Team. There is a Microsoft form available. Please contact Paige Collins for access.

PROMOTING STUDENTS TO VOTE:

18. The timings of elections will be decided by the Student Engagement Team.

18.1 The Student Engagement Team will promote the roles of the Union and encourage students to vote.

18.2 Within Progression and Performance classes, students will discuss Student Union roles and be encouraged to vote by tutors.

HOW TO VOTE:

19. The Student Engagement Team will arrange the process for voting.

19.1 The Student Engagement Team will ensure that all members of the Union are able to vote.

19.2 All members of the Union can vote for every position.

VOTE COUNTING:

20. It is the responsibility of the Student Engagement Team to inform students of the timings of the vote count and results.

20.1 The votes will be counted and verified by the Student Engagement Team.

20.2 The votes will be kept and secured safely for the rest of the academic year in case of appeals.

RESULTS:

21. The Student Engagement Team are responsible for declaring the results of the Student Union elections, and all elected candidates will be informed within two college working days of the outcome of results.

COMPLAINTS:

22. In the event of any complaint or appeal regarding the Student Union elections, the student making the complaint or appeal will be heard by the Student Engagement Team and the final decision will be agreed with Emma Mernagh and communicated to them.

STUDENT VOICE ELECTIONS:

23. All student representatives will be elected by their peers within their Progression and Performance study.

VACANCIES AVAILABLE FOR POSTIONS:

24. If 70% of the required number of the executive positions fall vacant, then a follow-up election can be arranged by the Student Engagement Team.

MEETINGS

MEETING REGULATIONS:

25. The following meeting regulations are applicable to all meetings that run within the Student Union.

WHO CAN ATTEND STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:

26. Any Student Union member can attend Student Voice and Executive meetings.

WHO MAY SPEAK AT STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:

27. Any Student Union member can speak at Student Voice with confirmation from the Student Engagement Coordinator.

27.1 Any Student Union member can speak at an Executive meeting.

27.2 If there is a chair present at a meeting, they are responsible for deciding when students are allowed to speak.

27.3 Any Student Voice Representatives and Club Officers can request a meeting with the Executive team if they are unable to raise concerns in any other meetings.

WHO MAY VOTE AT STUDENT VOICE & EXECUTIVE MEETINGS:

28. Only members of Student Voice can vote at Student Voice conferences, and only the Executive team can vote in Executive meetings.

WHO LEADS THE STUDENT UNION MEETING:

29. All meetings will be led by a member of the Executive team with the support of a member of the Student Engagement Team.

AGENDA OF THE STUDENT UNION MEETING:

30. The agenda for all meetings will be in the following order, or similar:

- i. Concerns for the meeting
- ii. Reports from the Student Union team
- iii. General discussions
- iv. Other reports
- v. Any Other Business
- vi. Summary

JOBS WITHIN THE UNION

JOB DESCRIPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS:

31. Roles within the Executive team:

Student President:

- i. Lead the Student Union.
- ii. Ensure the decisions and actions of the Executive Team meetings and Student Voice meetings are carried out.
- iii. Promote The Student Union.
- iv. Promote Student Union events and other activities run by the enrichment team.
- v. Stay up to date with news and opportunities from the NUS.
- vi. Liaise with the Student Engagement Team and College Executive Team, where appropriate.
- vii. Communicate with the Vice President to ensure that other Executive Team members can carry out their roles.
- viii. The Student President will automatically become a Student Governor.
- ix. The Student President will be expected to attend all Governing Body meetings, unless there is a valid reason they are unable to attend.

Vice President:

- i. Focus on running & organising day-to-day events on the specific Campuses.
- ii. Communicate with Club Officers to ensure that clubs are running, and communicate with the Student Engagement Team if any concerns / issues arise.
- iii. Keep regular communication with the President regarding how successful the Union is running on the specific Campuses.
- iv. The Student Vice President will automatically become a Student Governor.
- v. The Student Vice President will be expected to attend all Governing Body meetings, unless there is a valid reason they are unable to attend.

Welfare Officer:

- i. Help organise and run events regarding student welfare with the Student Engagement Team, which includes but not limited to Mental Health Week.
- ii. Keep up to date with NUS campaigns regarding student welfare.
- iii. Maintain and update notice boards and digital spaces with welfare awareness information.
- iv. If any concerns are raised directly or indirectly with the Welfare Officer, the Welfare Officer is to refer these to Student Welfare departments and should not try to intervene on their own.

Events Officer:

- i. The Events Officer is expected to act as the chair in the Student Union Executive meetings.
- ii. Promote clubs and activities running within the College.
- iii. Participate in promoting and running the process of union elections, alongside the Student Engagement Team.

- iv. Work alongside the Social Officer to ensure events and clubs are sufficiently publicised throughout the College.

Sustainability Officer:

- i. Promote the importance of sustainable living on a personal level with students and the College as an organisation.
- ii. Work closely with the Sustainability department to help promote events and information regarding sustainability.
- iii. Collaborate with the Social Officer to promote the sustainability work students and the College participate in by broadcasting the information via College platforms.

Employability Officer:

- i. Work alongside the Careers department to promote, when necessary, employability opportunities.
- ii. Visit external organisations with the Careers department to promote The Student Union within the College.

LGBTQ+ Officer:

- i. To ensure that all views of LGBTQ+ are represented at the Union and College level.
- ii. Communicate with LGBTQ+ organisations to help promote events and information that furthers the voice and experience of LGBTQ+ students.
- iii. Work with the Student Engagement Team to help create notice boards advertising events that include LGBTQ+.
- iv. Lead, alongside the Student Engagement Team, an LGBTQ+ enrichment club.
- v. Promote the work of the LGBTQ+ team within the Union.

EDI Officer:

- i. Ensure that the views and experiences of minority groups are represented at college and union level.
- ii. To support the Student Engagement Team to run feedback sessions to continue improving the experience within the College.
- iii. Work alongside the Student Engagement Team to create notice boards to advertise events that include minority groups.
- iv. Promote the work of the EDI team within The Student Union.

18+ Student Officer:

- i. Communicate with 18+ students to ensure their views and desires are represented at the Union and college level.
- ii. Work alongside the Student Engagement Team to ensure that 18+ students are included in enrichment activities.

COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENT UNION:

Student Engagement Team:

- i. Support The Student Union and Executive team.
- ii. Designate a member of staff to work alongside the Vice President for the specific campus.
- iii. Provide support to organise elections and transition the Union into the next academic year.
- iv. Ensure that The Student Union is being run appropriately and that the correct rules and procedures are being followed as stipulated by the constitution.
- v. Obtain feedback from the Executive Officers regarding their roles and how they are dealing with their responsibilities.
- vi. Work alongside Club Officers to ensure that clubs are running effectively and that all students feel included within the clubs.

All staff within MidKent College:

- i. Work with and support The Student Union with its events and elections.
- ii. Give advice to members of The Student Union, where appropriate.
- iii. Where possible, act on feedback and suggestions that have been made by The Student Union.

TREASURY & FINANCE:

32. All financial requests are to be made through the generic Student Enrichment budget. The Student Union will approach Paige Collins, who will ensure the expenditure is appropriate and within budget, and will complete the order on behalf of The Student Union.

OPT OUT OPTIONS:

33. Any students are within their rights to opt out of their Student Union membership.

34. Any student who has opted out of the Student Union are within their rights to still participate in Student Union run events, clubs and societies.

35. All students who have opted out of the Student Union are unable to vote or stand for position with the Student Union, under any circumstances.

36. Students who wish to opt out must email the Student Engagement Team via the following email address: studentengagement@midkent.ac.uk

37. All students who have opted out of the Student Union must not be discriminated against in anyway.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:

38. All members of the Union are expected to follow the Student Union Constitution as well as MidKent College rules and Code of Conduct.

39. If a member of the Union is involved in any serious breach of behaviour, the Student Engagement Team are within their rights to investigate and pass details on to necessary staff members.