

EDUCATION ACT 1994: CODE OF PRACTICE IMPLEMENTING SECTION 22

AUG 2024 - JUL 2025

Requirements under the Education Act 1994 - section 22	University of Bristol	Bristol Students' Union's	Any changes or updates in 2024/25	RAG Rating
	Assurance Mechanism	Assurance Mechanism		
(2a) the union should have a written constitution	<p>Under Ordinance 12, the University of Bristol Students' Union is constituted as a charitable company limited by guarantee.</p> <p>The University Board of Trustees is required to ensure that a written constitution is in place, which is the Articles.</p>	<p>Bristol Students' Union (SU) Articles of Association (Articles) are the written constitution of the Union and are published on the Bristol SU Website.</p> <p>Any amendment to the SU's Articles shall require</p> <p>q) the prior approval of University Board of Trustees; and b) the prior approval of Student Council; and</p> <p>c) a special resolution of the Company Law Members (who are the SU Trustee Board).</p> <p>Bristol SU has a set of Byelaws which set out further rules for membership, elections, referenda, democratic meetings, Union Officers and student groups.</p> <p>The Byelaws may only apply to the extent they are not inconsistent with the Articles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles 	
(2b) The provisions of the constitution should be subject to the approval of the governing body and to review by that body at intervals of not more than five years	<p>The University Board of Trustees reviews the Articles at intervals of not more than five years, when the SU reviews them.</p> <p>Any amendments to the Articles require the prior approval of the University's Board of Trustees.</p>	<p>The Articles set out a requirement to review them at least every 5 years</p> <p>The SU would need to seek approval of the University Board of Trustees for any amendments to the Articles before approval of Student Council and the SU Trustee Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Articles were last reviewed, amended and approved by Bristol SU Trustees, Student Council and University Board of Trustees in February 2021. The Articles are next scheduled for a full review around 2026/27. There have been no amendments to the Articles in 2024/25. 	
(2c) a student should have the right: (2ci) not to be a member of the union, or (2cii) in the case of a representative body which is not an association, to signify that they do not wish to be represented by it, and students who exercise that right should not be unfairly disadvantaged, with regard to the provision of services or otherwise, by reason of their having done so.	<p>The University are required to ensure that all full and part-time students at the University are entitled to become members of the Union (by becoming a member of the charitable company by which it is constituted), unless they give notice in accordance with the Articles that they choose not to be a member of the Union.</p> <p>The University publicises that students can 'opt-out' of membership of the Students' Union at student registration.</p> <p>If students opt out at registration, then the University would not receive their data.</p> <p>The University are required to ensure 1) the union shall not charge a membership fee for being a member of the Union (clubs and</p>	<p>If any student wants to 'opt-out' of SU membership they need to write to the Chief Executive of the SU as mentioned on the website.</p> <p>A record of this is kept by the SU in Airtable. We keep their first name, surname and academic email for the year so we can make sure their data isn't processed by our systems when we receive it from the University.</p> <p>Opting out of membership is confined to that Academic Year. Opt-out is also mentioned in the Articles and the Byelaws.</p> <p>If students opt out but still want to use union services Bristol SU will need to process some personal data for the purposes of service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024/25 the SU ran a process to elect student representatives on Senate, and this is reported to the University Governance team (this happens every year) Two students asked to opt-out of the SU in 24/25 We currently do an Annual Compliance Statement which is published on the SU website, this will be reviewed further over the next academic year. 	

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	<p>societies of the Union may levy a membership fee on their members).</p> <p>2) all students are entitled to use the Union services and facilities even if they have opted out of membership of Bristol SU.</p> <p>The responsibility for 1 and 2 above lies with the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, together with the Executive Director of Education and Student Experience (Academic Registrar), in liaison with the CEO of the SU.</p> <p>As stated in the Byelaws, students who are not members of the Union are eligible to stand for election as student representatives on Senate.</p>	<p>Students who have opted out of Student membership may continue to access services and facilities as for all current students</p> <p>Bristol SU do not charge a membership fee for being a member of the Union (but do for clubs, societies, and other related activities).</p>		
(2d) appointment to major union offices should be by election in a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote	The University is required to ensure the procedures relating to major union office elections are set out in the Articles and the SU complies with this requirement.	<p>It is set out in the Articles and Byelaws that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voting must be by secret ballot <p>All student members are entitled to vote (unless a student's studies have been suspended). It is an SU Trustee responsibility to ensure that all elections take place fairly and properly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The election to major union offices took place in March 2025 by secret ballot. • Democratic Standards Committee and Trustees approved the Code of Conduct/Election rules for the major union offices 2025 election. 	
(2e) the governing body should satisfy themselves that the elections are fairly and properly conducted	<p>The University, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, is required to ensure that the elections are fair, democratic and properly conducted. The SU elections report goes to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Secretary & Director of Governance • University Legal Contact of the SU Trustee Board. The Uni. Sec. and Director of Governance reports this to the University Board of Trustees which delegates scrutiny to the Audit & Risk Committee. 	<p>Bristol SU ensure that all elections (whether carried out by referendum or, secret ballot) are fairly and properly conducted as stated in the Articles and Byelaws.</p> <p>Bristol SU Trustees appoint an external Returning Officer to monitor the conduct of elections to major union offices to ensure they are fairly and properly conducted.</p> <p>The Director of Impact and Influence at the SU produces an elections report and attaches the Returning Officer's report, which highlights that the elections are fairly and properly conducted</p> <p>The SU Trustee Board receive this, and it goes to the University Board of Trustees, after which it is published on the SU website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NUS was the Returning Officer in March 2025 elections. • The Returning Officer monitored the conduct of the elections and ensured the elections were fairly and properly conducted. • There were 26 complaints and 1 appeal. The Director of Impact and Influence produced a report which included the Returning Officers Report. This report was approved by SU Trustee Board and it was submitted to the university. • The University Secretary and Director of Governance informed the University Board of Trustees of the conduct of the elections via the University Secretary's Report at the Board meeting on 18th July 2025. 	
(2f) a person should not hold sabbatical union office, or paid elected union office, for more than two years in total at the establishment	The University Board of Trustees is required to ensure this is provided for under the Articles. The University Board of Trustees reviews the Articles at intervals of not more than five years, when the SU reviews them.	<p>This is provided for in the Articles. Student members must be eligible students on Union Cloud to run in the election, which the SU checks.</p> <p>The SU Liberation & Campaigns Team communicate this information to potential candidates, who sign a candidate declaration which includes the line "I am currently a Full Member of Bristol SU" (this does not include Associate Members or those whose studies are currently suspended)</p> <p>As part of the candidate declaration, candidates confirm that they have not held paid elected office at Bristol SU for more than 1 year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information was included in the candidate information in the March 2025 elections. As part of the candidate declaration, candidates in March 2025 confirmed that they have not held paid elected office at Bristol SU for more than 1 year. Bristol SU staff checked the students were eligible students 	

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(2g) the financial affairs of the union should be properly conducted, and appropriate arrangements should exist for the approval of the union's budget, and the monitoring of its expenditure, by the governing body	<p>Bristol SU Director of Finance submits the annual accounts and report and the budget to the University: a) Chief Financial Officer b) Director of Governance as soon as is reasonably practicable following the approval by Bristol SU Trustees. This is then presented to the University Board of Trustees for approval (budget only) on the recommendation of the University's Finance & Investment Committee.</p> <p>The financial management of the Union is monitored on behalf of the University Board of Trustees by the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Financial Officer • University Finance Contact of the SU Trustee Board (the Group Finance Director) <p>In accordance with the Articles, the University Board of Trustees approves the budget for the Union. In 2024, the University and the SU agreed a multi-year budget with SU based on certain conditions. This was reported in the University's budget paper presented to trustees in November, and University trustees also reviewed the detail as submitted by the SU at the following board meeting in January 2025.</p> <p>Given that the agreement and all the conditions stand, it was agreed in Spring 2025 that the SU would update the University trustee board in the next budget paper, and confirm that the arrangement remains unchanged. The SU will not be required to prepare a separate paper to the University trustee board. The University trustee board will continue to annually review the SU's annual financial statements, in case the actual performance materially deviates from the agreed budget. This will provide the University trustees with assurance that the multi-year agreement is functioning as expected.</p> <p>A detailed budget proposal will come forward to the University trustee board once the 3-year arrangement expires, for the University trustees to approve. The University and the SU will decide closer to the date whether that is a one-year arrangement, or again a multi-year one.</p>	<p>Bristol SU Trustee Board monitor the SU finances through the monthly Management Accounts. They are sent to the Trustee Board each month and the most recent accounts are discussed at the SU Trustee Board subcommittee – Finance, Audit, Risk and Governance (FARG)</p> <p>Bristol SU Trustee Board approve the budget annually in Jun. Bristol SU Trustee Board approve the annual report and accounts annually in Oct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University Finance Contact attended the finance items at Bristol SU Trustee meetings in 2024/25. The University Finance Contact received the monthly management accounts in 2024/25. • Bristol SU Trustee Board approved the budget at the SU Trustee Board meeting on 19th Jun 2025 • The University and University Board of Trustees approved the 2024/25 budget at the University Board of Trustees meeting on 18th July 2025. • Bristol SU Trustee Board approved the annual report and accounts at the SU Trustee Board on 24th Oct 2024 • The University and University Board of Trustees discussed the SU 2024/25 annual report and accounts at its meeting on 22nd Nov 2024. 	
(2h) financial reports of the union should be published annually or more frequently, and should be made available to the governing body and to all students, and each such report should contain, in particular	The University is required to ensure Bristol SU complies with the requirements of the Companies Act and Charities Act in keeping financial records and the audit of accounts.	<p>Bristol SU publishes the annual report and accounts (in SORP format) on the Bristol SU website. These are made available to all students. The annual report and accounts is externally audited and sent to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University 	The 2024/25 annual report and accounts was submitted to and published on Companies House and Charity Commission website and published on the Bristol SU website . These were submitted to Companies House in Nov 2024 and	

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(2hi) a list of the external organisations to which the union has made donations in the period to which the report relates, and (2hii) details of those donations	The University Secretary & Director of Governance is responsible for this. The Board of Trustees receives and approves the SU annual report and accounts annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies House Charity Commission <p>There is a section in the Report on external organisations and it would be listed if the SU has made a donation in the period to which the report relates</p>	Charity Commission (with the Annual Return) in Apr 2025	
(i) the procedure for allocating resources to groups or clubs should be fair and should be set down in writing and freely accessible to all students	The University is required to ensure that the procedure for allocating resources to groups or clubs should be fair, set down in writing and accessible to all students. The information is also publicly accessible.	The grants criteria and process are set out in student-friendly language on the SU website. The SU's Byelaw 9, student groups, sets out the SU's entitlement to award grants, and confirms the Officer oversight of those decisions. Section 9 of the byelaws includes clauses on how assets and funds are redistributed in the event a group disaffiliates or fails to affiliate.		
(j) if the union decides to affiliate to an external organisation, it should publish notice of its decision stating (ji) the name of the organisation, and (jii) details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made, to the organisation, and any such notice should be made available to the governing body and to all students	The University is required to ensure that Bristol SU makes its decision to affiliate to an external organisation available to students. The AMM information is made available to the University via the Bristol SU website.	<p>Bristol SU publishes notice of NUS affiliation at the Annual Members Meeting for approval.</p> <p>Affiliations must be approved annually at the Annual Members Meeting, as set out in the Byelaws and Articles</p> <p>The AMM information is made available to students via the Bristol SU website.</p>	NUS affiliation was approved at the AMM in 2025.	
(k) where the union is affiliated to any external organisations, a report should be published annually or more frequently containing: (ki) a list of the external organisations to which the union is currently affiliated, and (kii) details of subscriptions or similar fees paid, or donations made, to such organisations in the past year (or since the last report) and such reports should be made available to the governing body and to all students (l) there should be procedures for the review of affiliations to external organisations under which (li) the current list of affiliations is submitted for approval by members annually or more frequently, and (ii) at such intervals of not more than a year as the governing body may determine, a requisition may be made by such proportion of	The University is required to ensure that no affiliation to any organisation may be made or continued unless it is approved at least once in every calendar year by a referendum or otherwise in accordance with the Education Act. The annual accounts and report are published on the Bristol SU website for students and sent to the University and University Board of Trustees.	<p>Bristol SU publishes notice of all affiliations to an external organisation on its website, stating the name of the body and the total payments to them. NUS affiliation is shared and noted at the AMM each year and any discussion is recorded in the minutes which are published on the Bristol SU website.</p> <p>The Byelaws also specify that a referenda be called every three years on affiliation to NUS and this takes place during the major union office elections in March.</p>	The affiliations for 24/25 are published on our website Affiliations list 2024/25 @ Bristol SU .	

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members (not exceeding 5 per cent.) as the governing body may determine, that the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation be decided upon by a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote				
<p>m) there should be a complaints procedure available to all students or groups of students who</p> <p>(mi) are dissatisfied in their dealings with the union, or</p> <p>(mii) claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right referred to in paragraph 2ci or 2cii above</p> <p>which should include provision for an independent person appointed by the governing body to investigate and report on complaints</p>	<p>The University has a separate Complaints Policy. The University is required to ensure Bristol SU has a Complaints Policy which is followed and reviewed every few years to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The University could provide an independent person to investigate and report on complaints relating to the SU if necessary.</p>	<p>Bristol SU has a Complaints Policy, a Member Code of Conduct, Student Group Code of Conduct, Member Disciplinary Policy & Procedure and Safeguarding Policy which are separate from the University. The SU Trustee Board approve amendments to these.</p> <p>They are all on the Bristol SU website and available to students.</p> <p>The Governance and Learning & Development Manager is the SU Complaints Manager who manages the formal complaints.</p> <p>Some Bristol SU staff have been trained as investigating officers to investigate complaints and Bristol SU uses independent external organisations to investigate complaints if needed.</p> <p>An assurance report on how complaints are managed is sent annually to the SU Trustee Board.</p> <p>An Internal Audit on the SU's Complaints Policy and processes took place in May 2023 by the University of Bristol Internal Audit Team. The SU received a reasonable assurance status.</p>	<p>The Complaints Policy was revised by Atkinson HR in Jul 2024 and approved by SU Trustee Board in Aug 2024. All the other related policies and Code of Conducts mentioned were also revised and approved in Aug 2024.</p> <p>An assurance report on how complaints are managed was sent to the SU Trustee Board in Dec 2024</p> <p>Most of the actions from the Student Complaints Internal Audit in 2023 have been completed over the last year or so.</p>	
(n) complaints should be dealt with promptly and fairly and where a complaint is upheld there should be an effective remedy	<p>The University is required to ensure that Bristol SU has a fair Complaints Policy and procedure that ensures complaints are dealt with promptly (where they can) and effectively. From 2025/26 onwards, the SU will append to its annual report a formal statement confirming that a) the complaints process has been followed consistently; b) that all complaints were handled promptly and fairly, and; c) that effective remedies were implemented where complaints were upheld, if appropriate.</p> <p>The responsibility for this area is owned by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Education, together with the Executive Director of Education and Student Experience (Academic Registrar), in liaison with the CEO of the SU and the University's legal team.</p>	<p>Bristol SU ensures that the Complaints Policy governs the procedure for complaints.</p> <p>SU staff and UoB staff know where to find the Complaints Policy and how people can complain. The policy is available on the SU website.</p> <p>Bristol SU ensures that timelines for individual complaints seek to resolve promptly (where they can) and fairly, with effective remedies.</p> <p>Students wishing to make a complaint complete an online form.</p> <p>The SU Complaints Manager manages the process</p> <p>There is a Complaints database with a day tracker to help with prompt resolution.</p>	<p>In 2024/2025 Risk Assessments now take place on complaints and if there is a safeguarding concern, a risk assessment panel meets to decide if a precautionary measure is needed</p> <p>The SU Complaints Team meet monthly with the Student Resolution Service (SRS) and a Partnership Agreement between the University and SU is now in place and has been added to the MoU</p>	
22.4 The governing body of every establishment to which this Part applies shall as regards any students' union for students at the establishment bring to the attention of all students, at least once a year:	The University is required to have (and has published) a free speech statement and policy available to all students and to provide an annual Prevent return to the Office for Students. These	<p>This document is published annually on the Bristol SU website annually, and is approved by the University Board for approval once a year.</p> <p>The Bristol Freedom of Speech Code of Practice and External speaker Code of Practice are on the SU website.</p>	This Code of Practice was last published on the Bristol SU website in Apr 2024	

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<p>a) the code of practice currently in force under subsection 3</p> <p>b) any restrictions imposed on the activities of the Union by the law relating to charities.</p> <p>c) where the establishment is one to which section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 applies (freedom of speech in universities and colleges), the provisions of that section, and of any code of practice issued under it, relevant to the activities or conduct of the union.</p>	<p>are available on our public facing website and are approved by the Board of Trustees annually.</p> <p>The University co-created the University Free Speech Policy/Process with Bristol SU and it is available on the University of Bristol website as well.</p> <p>Under section 22.4b of the Education Act 1994 (EA1994), the University is obliged to draw to the attention of students the restrictions imposed on the activities of the Student Union by the law relating to its charitable status. The student regulations (including the EA1994) are incorporated into the Student Agreement, so all registering students are deemed to have constructive knowledge of the Freedom of Speech policy.</p> <p>The University is required to ensure that resources provided to the Union through the University of Bristol should be used only for charitable purposes, in representing and furthering the interests of students.</p>	<p>Bristol SU co-created the University Free Speech Policy/Process with the University.</p> <p>Bristol SU published 'Free Speech and External Speaker – Key Information' explaining in student-friendly language Bristol SU's policy and practice around Freedom of Expression. This addresses standards and requirements expected in student-friendly free speech FAQs. It links to the University Freedom of Expression Code of Practice, which we operate under. The SU free speech policies mirror the University policy.</p> <p>The SU draws attention to this to students in our annual email about the Annual Members Meeting (AMM). Bristol SU ensures, as part of the re-affiliation process, that student group presidents (or equivalent) confirm that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Member and Student Groups Code of Conducts • Agree to uphold them • Agree to ensure members understand and abide by it <p>Bristol SU ensures the SU Development Team review and approve all constitutions annually, addressing any stated activities that are not permitted.</p>	<p>The University Governance team will publish this Code of Practice on the University website in July 2025.</p> <p>All financial resources provided to the Union were used for the SU's charitable purposes in 2024/25. UoB Board of Trustees scrutinises the budget and annual accounts annually.</p>	
<p>22. 5 The governing body of every establishment to which this Part applies shall bring to the attention of all students, at least once a year, and shall include in any information which is generally made available to persons considering whether to become students at the establishment</p> <p>a) information as to the right referred to in subsection 2ci and 2cii, and</p> <p>b) details of any arrangement it has.</p>	<p>The University is required to ensure the SU publicises the option for current or potential students to opt-out of being a member of the SU.</p>	<p>Bristol SU website publishes that students have the right to not be a member of the Union and can 'opt-out' of membership.</p> <p>Bristol SU students opting out of SU membership will be unable to vote or stand in Bristol SU elections and may not hold Committee positions reserved for full members. All other SU services and opportunities are available to them.</p> <p>An internal process for students who opt-out has been created and that students know what opting out of membership to the SU means and what services/facilities they can access</p> <p>Bristol SU has arrangements in place via Associate Memberships, for people who are not student members, to have access to some SU provisions. There is specific reference for students who are suspended and their rights in the byelaws</p>	<p>Two students emailed to ask to opt out in 2024/25</p>	