


Student Council

Bristol SU's Guide to
Student Council



Student Council is your chance to make a difference and set the agenda to improve student lives! If you're interested in learning more about democracy at Bristol (and eating free pizza) then why not come along?

Student Council is the main representative forum of the Students' Union.

During the event, members discuss and vote on items (called motions) submitted by you (students)! Any motions that pass become active SU policy for three years. These policies then direct the focus for our team of seven SU officers.

So, don't miss out on the opportunity to have YOUR say and exercise your Democratic Rights!



Meeting Agenda

- A Welcome from the Chair
- Explanation of Student Council and Slido
- Updates from the Full-Time Officers and Questions
- NUS Conference Report
- Affiliations

MOTIONS

Motion 1

- Natural (Committee) Selection

Motion 2

- Remove the Colston Dolphin from the University Crest and Stop Selling Merchandise Featuring It
 - Motion 2 Amendment

Motion 3

- Motion 3: Standing Committee Changes for the better

Close / Any other business

Digital Voting

As part of our efforts to make our democratic events more accessible, and easier to take part in, we're trying **Digital voting!**

This means that if you're a **current-year student rep** you'll be able to cast your vote on motions online. This will be done using **Slido** – an interactive Q&A and polling platform for live and virtual meetings and events.

If you can't join the Student Council in person, we will be running the audio and video feed for the meeting through Teams. You will then be able to vote using Slido.

Those wishing to speak for or against a motion and any amendments **must join the event in person.**

However, **voting will be done via Slido for everyone** – whether you're joining online or in person.

Joining Student Council Online

So, how do you go about attending Student Council online?

- Well, we'll be running an audio and video feed from the Student Council meeting through Teams. You can join through this [Online Student Council link](#).
- You can then head over to Slido on your computer, or phone, by going to slido.com The meeting code is #4336 698.
- Enter your University of Bristol email address (the one that looks like ab12345) and then check your email for a secure pin.
- Input the pin into Slido and you're in! You can use the Q&A function to ask questions during the meeting or vote to support, oppose and abstain on motions once voting opens for each one.

Joining Student Council in Person

If you'd like to speak for or against a motion, or just enjoy in-person democracy and free pizza (we know we do!), then come along to **G42 Powell Lecture Theatre in H.H Wills Physics Library**. **You'll still vote using Slido**, but you don't need to join the Teams call.

- Please note that you'll need to bring a device (a phone, laptop, or tablet) with an internet connection, and have access to your University email inbox.
- Head over to Slido on your computer or phone by going to slido.com and using the meeting code #4336698.
- Enter your University of Bristol email address (the one that looks like ab12345) and then check your email for a secure pin.
- Input the pin into Slido and you're in! You can use the Q&A function to ask questions during the meeting or vote to support, oppose and abstain on motions once voting opens for each one.
- Has Slido told you you're not able to join the event? Go and chat with our tech team at the helpdesk and they'll get you in.

What if I can't make it to Student Council?

If you're a student council voting member and can't make it to the student council in person or online, don't worry! You can still have your say.

You can give your vote away to someone else on behalf of you if you can't attend. This is a proxy vote!

Because voters are approved in advance with digital voting, the **deadline for letting us know about proxy voting is 12:00 midday on 24 April**. Please email bristolsu-democracy@bristol.ac.uk and include your name and University email address, as well as the proxy voter's name and email address.

"What if I am a student council voting member for more than one role?"

Even if you are a student council voting member for more than one role, therefore sitting in more than one position of influence, you still only get one vote.

So, if you can't make it to the Student Council and hold multiple positions, you can only give one proxy vote to someone.

Ask the Officers



Student Council is your chance to find out if officers have implemented their manifestos and plans for change. You're also able to question their responses to reactive challenges this year.

Have their intentions created results? Are there other changes you would like to see? If so, let them know!



Izzy Russell: Student Living Officer

Izzy represents you in all areas related to living in Bristol, including your accommodation, health and wellbeing, finance, and interaction with the local community. As part of this, they will work to make sure that you have access to good advice in these areas and are represented to student support services.

[Check out what Izzy has been up to here: bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/student-living](https://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/student-living)

Responsibilities include:

- Working for the SU and university buildings (including housing) to be sustainable and accessible.
- Fighting for student rights.
- Making sure that students' interests in health and well-being are represented within the University support services.
- Supporting and developing the Sustainability Network, Fundraising and Volunteering Network, Wellbeing Network, and other Networks as appropriate.

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

“Do you have an example of when you have fought for student rights, especially in terms of accommodation?”





Adam Michael: Union Affairs Officer

Adam represents you and your interaction with the SU. This involves making sure that our communication and services are effective, accessible, and relevant for everyone. As Union Affairs Officer, Adam also works to represent the interests of all students to university executive management.

[Check out what Adam has been up to here: bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/union-affairs](http://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/union-affairs)

Responsibilities include:

- Looking after democracy and representation in Bristol SU.
- Making sure that students are at the heart of Union decision-making.
- Responsible for how students interact with the Union, including effective communication channels and oversight for Union services such as those provided for societies, and volunteering and fundraising (RAG).
- Working to explore the development of student societies.

Example of what you could ask them at Student Council:

“What have you done this year to increase the informal way SU officers receive feedback?”





Saranya Thambirajah: Equality, Liberation, and Access Officer

So that everyone is represented at our SU and Uni, Saranya works to make sure that all students, particularly underrepresented or marginalised groups, are represented on issues related to their experience at the University. This is so that these interests can then be addressed in the development of Union and University policies.

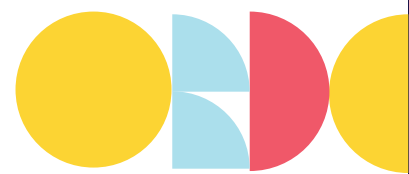
[Check out what Saranya has been up to here: bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/equality-liberation-and-access](https://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/equality-liberation-and-access)

Responsibilities include:

- Working to ensure that Bristol is an inclusive, safe, and accessible university for all students.
- Giving a platform to the voices of students from marginalized backgrounds and identities.
- Working with networks and societies to centre student experiences in the SU and the university. For example, supporting and developing Women's, Black Students, BAME, LGBT+, Trans, Disabled Students, Multifaith, and Widening Participation Networks.
- Working with the Sport and Student Development and Union Affairs Officers to support campaigns, activities, and research into diverse student experiences to ensure any barriers to participation are removed.

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

"What work have you done to champion the voice of students from marginalized backgrounds? Have they felt heard as a result?"





Pat Gibbs: Sport and Student Development Officer

It is important to develop the opportunities that you and your peers have, to make sure that you can engage in a variety of sports. For this reason, Pat liaises with the University Centre for Sport, Exercise, and Health and oversees the organisation and promotion of sports clubs, the varsity series, and sports participation activities.

[Check out what Pat has been up to here: bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/sport-and-student-development](https://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/sport-and-student-development)

Responsibilities include:

- Representing sports societies and student groups and their members who are represented throughout the university community, in the SU, and beyond.
- Ensuring that students have access to recreational sporting opportunities.
- Representing the interests of students on matters of personal development.
- Promoting the importance of co-curricular participation and skills development.
- Working with the Equality, Liberation, and Access Officer and relevant Chairs of Networks to ensure that the Union's Equality Policy is upheld in all Member-led sporting activities and to ensure any barriers to participation are alleviated.

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

"Have you created any sporting opportunities for individuals who normally face participation barriers?"





Nicole Antoine: Undergraduate Education Officer

Nicole represents your learning and teaching experiences if you are an undergraduate student, as well as making sure that you receive sufficient academic and welfare-related support. She also leads and empowers undergraduate Course and Faculty Reps so that their own interests are represented within the University Student Services.

[Check out what Nicole has been up to here: bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/undergraduate-education](http://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/undergraduate-education)

Responsibilities include:

- Representing undergraduate students on academic and welfare matters
- Ensuring that undergraduate students are represented at every level of Bristol SU and the University.
- Leading and empowering undergraduate academic elected representatives (Course and Faculty Reps).
- Working with the Postgraduate Education Officer to represent, empower and champion academic societies.
- Supporting and developing the Education Network and other Networks as appropriate.

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

“How have you increased student awareness of important academic advice that is available to them?”





Bakhtawar Javed: International Students' Officer

Bakhtawar represents all aspects of the international student experience. They champion the inclusion of international Members (EU and non-EU) and campaign against discrimination and barriers within both the University and the Union that impact international students.

[Check out what Bakhtawar has been up to here:](https://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/undergraduate-education)
bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/undergraduate-education

Responsibilities include:

- Helping to represent the academic interests and beyond of all International Students
- Working to create better facilities and support provisions for international students
- Increasing the representation of international students across the SU/university
- Works with the Full-time Officers and the relevant Chairs of Networks to ensure that the interests of international Members are addressed in the development of Union and University policies.
- Works with the Sport and Student Development and Union Affairs Officers to ensure that Union and University activities, democracy, and facilities are accessible and engaging to international Members.

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

“What have you done to make sure that international students have access to good advice and information on matters relating to their University experience?”





Timber Hill: Postgraduate Education Officer

Timber works to represent you, if you are a postgraduate student, to the Uni and SU - especially in terms of research academic and welfare matters. They will make sure that all postgraduate students are represented at every level of the SU and university.

[Check out what Timber has been up to here:](https://bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/postgraduate-education)

bristolsu.org.uk/voice/officers/postgraduate-education

Key responsibilities:

- Representing postgraduate taught and research students on academic and welfare matters
- Ensuring postgraduate students are represented at every level of the SU and university.
- Supporting the postgraduate student network to offer a variety of social environments to postgraduate students
- Helping to shape and inform regulations for Postgraduates within the university
- Shaping a more inclusive across the SU for postgraduate students

Example of a question someone may ask them at Student Council:

“Have you conducted research into how the cost-of-living crisis affects Post Graduate Research? If so, what did you find and what will you be doing to help?”



How does Student Council actually work?



Student Council is a chance for you to get your voice heard directly and help set the agenda of your Students Union!

It happens twice a year, once in TB1 and again in TB2. Ahead of both of these meetings, you can submit your ideas/suggestions (which are called motions). These then get debated in council.

Although all students can submit motions and attend the meeting, **only course reps, faculty reps, network chairs, society presidents, volunteering project coordinators, or club captains can vote on motions.**

All Bristol students can attend Student Council to watch the debates and see which motions have been voted in (passed). These motions are designed to improve students' lives.

This is your chance to make a long-lasting and far-reaching change at Bristol.



What happened in the run-up to Student Council?



In weeks preceding the meeting, a window opens for idea submissions, or '**motions**', and these will get debated between you and other Course Reps, Faculty Reps, Network Chairs, Society Presidents, Volunteering Project Coordinators, or Club Captains during the meeting.

After this, an amendments window was opened which allowed other students to change the actions (of a motion) if they didn't agree with them, or if they felt the wording was not quite right. **You will now get a chance to vote on these amendments.**

Student Council is your student democratic space. No matter who you are, if you are a Bristol student, you get to have your say about what the SU cares about!.



What is a motion?

Sadly, we're not talking about the nightclub.

A motion is the formatted way that a student's idea comes to us. It will include a background explaining why they are sending it, a purpose to describe its intent, and any actions that give clear guidance on how we can enact the idea. The motion is then sent to Democratic Standards to be approved by the Student Council.

At the meeting, these actions will be displayed on a PowerPoint for each motion that is discussed.

*While we are here, you may find it useful to check out the **following terms**:*

- **Policy** – when a motion is passed by students, it becomes policy. This is in place for 3 years at the Students Union and can be renewed at the Annual Members Meeting.
- **Amendment** – a suggestion from another student to a student's motion, which can “amend” what exactly the motion may enact. You'll vote on this before you vote on the motion because it'll change what it says!
- **Chair** – the person at the front leading the meeting.
- **Democracy Desk** – a group of elected students, Democratic Standards Committee, who you can ask procedural questions to any time.



More useful terms!

- **Abstain** – When you decide not to vote for or against a motion. Your abstention won't be counted as a vote.
- **Action** – What a motion is setting out to do if it passes.
- **Byelaw** – One of the important governing documents for the SU, advising how to go about doing things as a Students' Union.
- **Democratic Standards Committee** – A student committee elected by you, that makes decisions on the procedures for our Democratic Events.
- **Proposer & Secunder** – At Student Council, it is vital that all motions have two students. A proposer is the person who “proposes” a motion, and the seconder is the second student who supports it.
- **Quoracy** – The minimum amount of students/voting members we need to conduct a Student Council or make a vote on something.
- **Referendum** – Should a student wish, they can take a motion's actions to an all-student referendum. This has to be requested by Democratic Standards Committee during Council.
- **Speech For** – When someone speaks “for” the motion in support.
- **Speech Against** – When someone speaks against a motion.



How is the meeting structured?



Firstly, those who introduced the motion ideas get to speak to Student Council attendees to propose and convince others to pass the motion.

Then, the Chair will allow someone to speak against the motion if they don't agree with it.

If you didn't propose it, you will be able to ask any questions you have about the motion to its proposer, but mainly just to further clarify the idea – not to deliver an opposition speech against it! This is then rinsed and repeated until we need to hold a vote!

There might be a chance that the Chair thinks there needs to be another round of arguments. This is because sometimes an idea might be quite complex, so they want to make sure it's heard fairly.



Breaking a motion into parts

When you're looking at the Actions displayed on the PowerPoint, you might notice some things that you want to happen – but not every action that is listed. If so, you can speak to the **Democracy Desk** before the vote has started, and ask for a motion to be broken into parts. This means Council will vote on each action separately rather than all together.

Here's an example:

The Motion: *“A Warmer University”*

The Actions:

- **Action 1:** To give everyone a free hat so they're warm in the winter
- **Action 2:** Make sure heating is on in all student study spaces during the day
- **Action 3:** To ensure university halls remained heated

You might think that two of the actions make sense but think **Action 1** is *a bit silly*.

So, you can approach the Democracy Desk so that everyone votes on each Action, not all of them grouped.



Why it is important to debate?

Imagine if the SU suddenly decided it was against their practice to ever support the football or to never host events past the month of March. It would feel pretty unfair, right?

You can have your say and change this decision through debate – which is designed as a chance to hear from everyone. This way, we can carry on being a Union for all Students!

Even if a motion that is a ‘good thing’ is proposed in the meeting, it may take SU time away from other valuable things. So, the debate is a great opportunity to establish current SU priorities.



Will there be a referendum?

If something is seriously contentious, and you think that it needs even more students to help make a change, then you might propose it goes to Referendum. This means you have to:

1. Have this voted on by Council/AMM attendees
2. Have a question agreed with Democratic Standards Committee
3. The question must be in a “Yes/No” binary

Hopefully, this handy guide has answered some of your questions about Student Council and what to expect. But it's a confusing topic!

If you ever have any further questions or would like to find out some extra info that hasn't been included, then send an email over to

bristolsu-democracy@bristol.ac.uk

Also, feel free to check out our Democratic Events webpage, which provides even more detail about Student Council!



Student Council Motions: April 2024



Natural (Committee) Selection

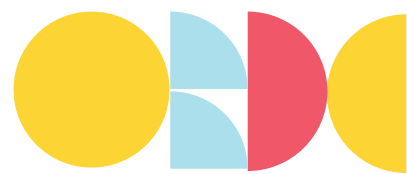
Proposer: Adam Michael

Remove the Colston Dolphin from the University
Crest and Stop Selling Merchandise Featuring It

Proposer: Jae-Hyun Jo

Standing Committee Changes for the better

Proposer: Adam Michael



Natural (Committee) Selection

Proposer: Adam Michael Second: Alyssa Chandiramani

Background

The Democratic Reforms Select Committee (DRSC) has played a prominent role in getting us to where we are in the review, including 2 papers with recommendations, and are currently in production of a third. Their involvement helped shape the motion that was passed in February to change a chunk of our representation structure. This needs to be protected and continued as the review goes into further stages that cover academic rep and FTOs.

Purpose

1. To ensure that students are the loudest voice in the room as the representation review progresses
2. Ensures a perspective from students who are engaged in democratic structures

Actions

1. The Union Affairs Officer to form the Select Committee throughout the lifespan of the Representation Review on an annual basis as reasonable.
2. The Union Affairs Officer and the Select Committee to take into consideration the work done by the previous year's select committee
3. The Select Committee's input to be factored into any decisions made by the SU regarding the Representation Review
4. Any reports produced by the Select Committee to be made accessible to all members of the Standing Committee, and upon request; any voting member of Student Council.



Remove the Colston Dolphin from the University Crest and Stop Selling Merchandise Featuring It

Proposer: Jae-Hyun Jo Second: Elena Taylor

Background

1. The University of Bristol committed itself to anti-racist action in 2023 through the Reparative Futures Programme and removed the Colston dolphin from its logo accordingly.
2. Although the University mentions the crest in its report, and though the crest still features the Colston dolphin, there have not been any public discussion nor action regarding the crest.
3. The crest, although not officially the University logo, is still frequently used to represent the University. For example, merchandise featuring the crest is sold by Bristol SU.

Purpose

1. To promote the welfare of Bristol Students by pressuring the University to follow through fully on its commitment to anti-racism.
2. To ensure that Bristol SU does not profit from the University's history of racism by selling merchandise featuring Colston's emblem.

Actions

1. For officers of the SU to lobby the University to pursue steps to remove the dolphin from its crest.
2. For the officers to publicise any response they receive from the University to the student body.
3. For the SU to cease the sale of all products featuring the Colston dolphin on its store and develop new designs in its stead that can represent all Bristol students.
4. For the SU to commit itself to not using any imagery depicting the dolphin in any capacity and to not use any racist imagery.



Amendment to Motion 2:

Remove the Colston Dolphin from the University Crest and Stop Selling Merchandise Featuring It

Amendments proposed:

Original Action:

1. For officers of the SU to lobby the University to pursue steps to remove the dolphin from its crest.

Amended Action:

1. For officers of the SU to lobby the University to access the possibility and conditions of removing the dolphin from its crest, and to publicise a report on the issue after discussing the topic with the University.

Original Action:

3. For the SU to cease the sale of all products featuring the Colston dolphin on its store and develop new designs in its stead that can represent all Bristol students.

Amended Action:

3. For the SU to reduce the sale of all products featuring the Colston dolphin on its store and develop new designs in its stead that can represent the wider community of Bristol Students, while retaining different designs of the products for choices for customers.

Original Action:

4. For the SU to commit itself to not using any imagery depicting the dolphin in any capacity and to not use any racist imagery.

Amended Action:

4. For the SU to commit itself to not using any imagery depicting the Colston dolphin individually and to not use any imagery embracing racism.

Additional Action:

5. For officers of the SU to lobby the University to reveal the breakdown of money used in changing the university's logo in February this year, and the person(s) who designed the new logo, as a follow-up on the university's logo-changing process.



Standing Committee Changes for the better

Proposer: Adam Michael Second: Pat Gibbs

Background

1. As part of the SU's ongoing representation review, and through gathering student feedback on Standing Committee, we've found that the name 'Standing Committee' hasn't worked in making students understand its function.
2. Standing Committee is currently a sub-committee of Student Council, although this is written in the byelaws, it does not always translate well in practice
3. Standing Committee's processes could be clearer for students, to ensure accountability of student leadership
4. Standing Committee is currently meeting once a month as per Byelaw 16.6(c). This does not adequately give Full-Time Officers enough time to ensure updates on their impacts, and can result in poorer updates for student leadership



Purpose

1. To make "Standing Committee" more accessible and relevant to student leaders
2. To better hold the Full-Time Officer Team to account to student leadership
3. To rejuvenate the committee's function as a forum to continue action on democratic policy from Student Council and Annual Members Meeting



Actions

1. The name “Standing Committee” to be replaced with “Student Representatives Assembly” and change its name in the byelaws where relevant
2. To change Byelaw 6.16(c) from “The committee must meet at least once per month during the Academic Year.” To “The Assembly must meet at least 2 times in the first term and 3-4 times in the second term during the Academic Year”.





Bristol SU