


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 a cohort of students who have taken a representative and leading role in our democracy. The formal meeting from this cohort is also called Student Council and it's 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
- NUS Conference Report
- Updates from the Full-Time Officers and Questions
- Explanation of Student Council and Slido
- Ratification of April Student Council

MOTIONS

1. NUS representative Update
2. Representation Review
3. Financial Support for International Students
4. Free Circuit Laundry
5. Introduction of an anti-Palestinian racism definition to Bristol
6. Adjusting Graduation Ceremony Dates
7. Proposition for the SU to support the Divest Borders Campaign
8. Accessibility for students with disabilities at University of Bristol
9. End All Forced Swimming Experiments at the University of Bristol
10. Easier Access to Support Services for International Students

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 #1667414.
- 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 **the Anson Rooms in the Richmond Building**. **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 #1667414.
- 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 9am on 14 November**. Please fill in the [Proxy Voters Registration Form](#) by the deadline.

“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!



Lucy Pears: Student Living Officer

Lucy 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, she 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 Lucy has been up to here](#)

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?”





Katie Poyner: Union Affairs Officer

Katie 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, Katie also works to represent the interests of all students to university executive management.

[Check out what Katie has been up to here](#)

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?”





Linlu Ye: Equality, Liberation, and Access Officer

So that everyone is represented at our SU and Uni, Linlu 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 Linlu has been up to here](#)

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?"





Ella Lovibond: 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, Ella 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 Ella has been up to here](#)

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?”





Mia Stevens: Undergraduate Education Officer

Mia 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 Mia has been up to here](#)

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](#)

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?”





Gurvin Chopra: Postgraduate Education Officer

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

[Check out what Gurvin has been up to here](#)

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!

Ahead of the 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:

November 2024

NUS Representative Update

Proposer: Katie Poyner

Representation Review

Proposer: Katie Poyner

Financial Support for International Students

Proposer: Tamie Karunaratne

Free Circuit Laundry

Proposer: Elliot Green

Introduction of an anti-Palestinian racism definition to Bristol

Proposer: Mia Goldberg

Adjusting Graduation Ceremony Dates

Proposer: Tamie Karunaratne

Proposition for the SU to support the Divest Borders Campaign

Proposer: Tamryn Nicol

Accessibility for students with disabilities at University of Bristol

Proposer: Fateh Mohit Whig

End All Forced Swimming Experiments at the University of Bristol

Proposer: Agnes Sales

Easier Access to Support Services for International Students

Proposer: Bakhtawar Javed



NUS Representative Update

Proposer: Katie Poyner Second: Linlu Ye

Background

1. As reported in the 23/24 NUS Conference Update, the National Union of Students has undergone a structural reform which was voted on by delegates.
2. The main change is that instead of electing NUS delegates in our TB1 elections who then attend a conference in the Spring, any student who has already been elected to a role can become an NUS Rep and it will be up to the Officer Team to decide who is in the best position to represent Bristol SU at any upcoming event.

Purpose

1. To make sure that our byelaws are up to date, there are some edits and additions that need to be made.

Actions

1. To amend the byelaws to align with new NUS practice as enumerated below:
 1. Delete Byelaw 3.1.d
 2. Delete Byelaw 3.15 – remove and replace with
'15. Students may not hold two Union Officer roles, as outlined in Byelaw 8, concurrently. Students may therefore only be a candidate for one position across any election in a single academic year, with two exceptions:
 - a. A student can be a course representative and/or school representative, alongside one other Union Officer role - as outlined in Byelaw 8 - so long as they are not in a Full Time Officer role - as outlined in Byelaw 8.8 - 8.15.
 3. A student may run for up to two Student Community Organiser roles concurrently, but if they are successful in more than one Community Organiser election they must promptly inform the Deputy Returning Officer of which role they wish to take up, and the role not chosen will be awarded to the next best placed candidate
 4. Delete Byelaw 8.1.e
 5. Delete Byelaw 8.9.h
 6. Delete Byelaw 8.26-29 – and replace with Heading 'NUS Reps'
- '26. All elected Union Officers are eligible to be NUS Reps or select relevant NUS Reps if necessary, who represent Bristol SU at any NUS conference or meeting.
27. In the first instance, the Union Officers have the decision about who attends in accordance with the NUS Rep entitlement.
 - a. If a unanimous decision is not agreed, the decision will fall to Student Rep Assembly.
28. NUS Reps will be responsible for
 - a. promoting Bristol SU and its priorities to any NUS-run national spaces
 - b. facilitating students to raise issues to NUS
 - c. reporting back to students about any developments'



Representation Review

Proposer: Katie Poyner Seconded: Linlu Ye

Background

1. Bristol SU aims to review its representation systems and processes around every 5 years. This is so that we can ensure we are making change in the most effective way possible and keeping up with the realities of what students are facing.
2. A review was conducted last year by an independent external organisation, gathering together qualitative and quantitative data from students, student representatives and staff, as well as best practise from across the sector. A motion was passed at February AMM 2024 as the first part of actioning this review [See "[Liberating the Structure](#)"] Based on the findings of the external review, the motion passed at AMM by students and ideas from across the sector we are bringing the final changes to our roles to student council for your approval.



Purpose

Section 1: Liberation and Campaigns

1. Through Bristol SU's representation review, students gave us some non-negotiable views and values; these have remained at the heart of these proposals. Paying students in elected, part-time officer roles for their labour, creating spaces and structures for discussion and organising, especially for students who would prefer not to be in elected roles and ensuring clear campaigning structures for liberation, and ensuring intersectionality.
2. To change our structures and support the recommendations of the review, we have considered different ways empowering our student body to make change. A concept that we believe will enable us to do this is Community Organising, a technique popularised by Citizens UK (who run lots of national campaigns, such as the Living Wage Employer Campaign). Citizens UK was formed based on learning from the change makers of history like the Chartists, Suffragettes, the US Civil Rights Movement and Bristol Bus Boycott.
3. Bristol SU will hold elections for six Student Community Organisers who will be paid through a stipend (a payment paid in instalments across the year) to work on building power through existing student communities and campaigns. They will follow the principals of Community Organising to find commonalities in students' self-interest to build strong and robust campaigns that create change across the intersections of the university. They will work together, with our Full Time Officers and with student communities.
4. They will be trained by the SU in how to organise and when advertising these roles, we will identify key skills of organisers.



Representation Review

Proposer: Katie Poyner Seconded: Linlu Ye

Purpose

5. We also wanted to ensure that a focus on liberation isn't lost and that the team of organisers reflects the student communities at the University of Bristol. For the Student Organiser roles students will be able to apply for 2 roles out of the 6, rather than 1 so that we are championing intersectionality.

6. Networks as we know them have also created rich communities and connections for many students – we don't want to lose this. Across the last decade, some networks have also been integral to amazing pieces of campaign work, like the Gender Expression Fund. However, the Networks as a whole aren't fulfilling the campaigning purpose that they were set up for and are currently restricted by not having society status. With society status, they will be able to fundraise for themselves, find sponsorships and control their own budget, have social media accounts, conduct their own elections and have their own committees. They will still be able to campaign and we anticipate that they will be a vital community for the Student Community Organisers to work with. The SU will therefore support currently existing networks to transition into being constituted as student groups.

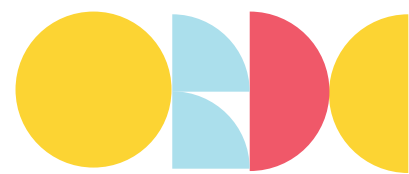
Section 2: Academic Representation

1. We will incorporate School Representatives into the structure, as whilst they exist within our partnership with the University the roles have grown and evolved and now need to be recognised in our byelaws.
2. At Bristol SU, we elect Faculty Academic Representatives, as well as course reps, at all levels. Each course is a community thus we intend for the Student Community Organisers to work with Faculty Academic Representatives to understand the issues students are facing and help them work together to build power and get the best outcomes for all.
3. The University is also moving to create 3 faculties out of the current 6, and we need some flexibility to ensure our Academic Representative structures, reflects the needs of students and the university.
4. We also intend to pay Faculty Academic Representatives in line with the Student Community Organisers, recognising that their work goes beyond what a voluntary role should entail and taking into account the feedback in the external review.



Actions

1. For Bristol Students' Union to support the current Networks to gain society status
2. To amend the byelaws to enact the vision described above
3. To empower the Union Affairs Officer and ELA Officer to amend the names of newly created roles until the 20th January 2025, to ensure that the names accurately reflect the groups they seek to represent.
4. To enact the byelaw changes outlined in the motion, available [here](#).



Financial Support for International Students

Proposer: Tamie Karunaratne Seconder: Bakhtawar Javed

Background

1. Disparity in Financial support at the University of Bristol: The University of Bristol Bursary offers financial support to UK undergraduates from households earning £50,000 or less, covering living costs and assessed through the Student Loans Company. International students are not eligible for such a bursary and there are no specific bursaries/scholarships available for current international undergraduate students.

2. Other Universities have scholarships/bursaries for current international students

The University of Liverpool's Global Advancement Scholarship provides international students with £3,000 off tuition in the first year and £1,000 reductions in the second and third years for maintaining first-class honours. This shows how other universities support international undergraduate students.

Purpose

- Financial Support for International Students: The motion aims to alleviate the financial burden on international students by securing 1-2 dedicated scholarships or bursaries, providing essential financial assistance.
- Promotion of Welfare and Academic Performance: By reducing financial stress, this initiative will promote the overall welfare of international students, contributing to improved academic performance and stability.
- Alignment with SU Charitable Objectives: This action aligns with the SU's charitable objectives by enhancing students' wellbeing and their academic performance.

Actions

1. Bristol SU to lobby the university to create a bursary or scholarship for undergraduate international students
2. After the bursary has been created, SU to lobby the university to launch a campaign aimed at securing external sponsors
3. Bristol SU to promote the campaign through student networks and partnerships with alumni and local businesses to increase sponsorship opportunities.
4. Bristol SU to collaborate with the University's international office to explore potential funding options and partnerships with global educational foundations.



Free Circuit Laundry

Proposer: Elliot Green Second: Lucy Pears

Background

Students in university-owned accommodations are not allowed to dry their laundry in their rooms or kitchen, and this means they are forced to pay for drying. Washing machines and dryers are owned by external companies, meaning students have to pay separately for their washing on top of their accommodation fee.

Purpose

This motion will promote students' physical health, wellbeing, and education. Some students may be hesitant or unable to afford to regularly wash their clothes, which can cause hygiene or health issues. Spending money on laundry may mean students find it more difficult to cover the costs of other necessities such as food. Finally, the cost of circuit laundry may be preventing students from engaging in societies or other events.

Actions

1. At the end of the current circuit laundry contract (2028), the SU living officer at the time should work with the university so that the contract is not renewed, and instead the university should purchase its own free to use washing and drying machines for each accommodation.
2. Lobby the university to provide alternative funding for laundry for the next three years, such as giving all students credit allowance into their Washnet account.



Introduction of an anti-Palestinian racism definition to Bristol

Proposer: Mia Goldberg Second: Maaria Ali

Background

1. There are students who have not received extensions on deadlines or received extenuating circumstances despite having family who are directly affected by Israel's invasions of Gaza and Lebanon.
2. There are students who have been subject to racism on campus due to their Palestinian heritage, or for showing support for a ceasefire - this motion would ensure that the University makes a conscious effort to prevent this.

You can read testimonies from students about anti-Palestinian racism they experienced in the [complete motion here](#).



Purpose

1. The implementation of an anti-Palestinian racism definition into the University would promote the safety and inclusion of Palestinian students from racism on campus
2. The definition, as well as the acknowledgement of the Palestinian state and the current invasion and focus groups would increase the likelihood of approval of applications for extenuating circumstances from Palestinian students

What is our definition of Anti-Palestinian Racism? It is based on the ACLA report *Anti-Palestinian Racism: Naming, Framing and Manifestations*.

Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians. This can include:

- Denying and the Nakba of 1947 and 1948 and ongoing violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, occupied Palestinian territories and Gaza.
- Failing to acknowledge Palestinians' cultural identity as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging to occupied and historic Palestine.
- Failing to acknowledge the human rights and equal dignity of the Palestinian people.
- Denying the existence of a Palestinian people, their human rights, their right to self-determination, or their historical connection to the land
- Excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinians perspective or Palestinians
- Defaming Palestinians or their allies such as being inherently anti-semitic, a terrorist or terrorist sympathizer, or opposed to democratic values.
- Not allowing the Palestinian narrative or silencing Palestinians or their allies.
- Dehumanising Palestinians by reducing them to a monolithic group as Palestinians come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.



Introduction of an anti-Palestinian racism definition to Bristol

Proposer: Mia Goldberg Second: Maaria Ali



Actions

1. Bristol SU to lobby the University to adopt the following anti-Palestinian racism definition: Anti-Palestinian racism is a form of anti-Arab racism that silences, excludes, erases, stereotypes, defames or dehumanizes Palestinians. This can include:

- Denying the Nakba of 1947 and 1948 and the ongoing violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.
- Failing to acknowledge Palestinians' cultural identity as an Indigenous people with a collective identity, belonging to occupied and historic Palestine.
- Failing to acknowledge the human rights and equal dignity of the Palestinian people.
- Denying the existence of a Palestinian people, their human rights, their right to self-determination, or their historical connection to the land
- Excluding or pressuring others to exclude Palestinians perspective or Palestinians
- Defaming Palestinians or their allies such as being inherently antisemitic, a terrorist or terrorist sympathizer, or opposed to democratic values.
- Not allowing the Palestinian narrative or silencing Palestinians or their allies.
- Dehumanising Palestinians by reducing them to a monolithic group as Palestinians come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

2. Bristol SU to work with the university to ensure they are considering the extenuating circumstances of Palestinian students

3. Bristol SU to lobby the university to recognise the ongoing genocide of Palestinians, and to support and ensure the welfare of students.

4. Bristol SU to work with the university to create focus groups in order to better understand and help/protect Arab students due to the current invasions of Gaza and Lebanon



Adjusting Graduation Ceremony Dates

Proposer: Tamie Karunaratne Second: Joshua Man Yu Ng

Background

1. Graduation is a significant milestone for all students, yet many international students face challenges in attending ceremonies due to scheduling conflicts with visa regulations, travel limitations, or cultural observances.
2. Current graduation dates do not align with the academic schedules, and are scheduled when the visas have already expired.
3. This means that International students have to go back to their home countries, apply for a visit visa, fly over to the UK again and book in a hotel to stay which is very costly on top of the exorbitant fee they have already paid.
4. Due to such expenses many international students are unable to attend their Graduations.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this motion is to lobby the University to accommodate the international students when they are scheduling the winter graduations.
2. Adjusting graduation ceremony dates to accommodate international students is vital for inclusivity and ensuring that all graduates can celebrate their accomplishments.

This motion seeks to create a more welcoming environment for our diverse student body.

Actions

1. Review Current Dates: SU Officers to lobby the University to conduct a review of the current graduation schedule to identify conflicts and issues faced by international students.
2. Gather Feedback: SU Officers to implement a survey or focus groups to gather input from international students regarding their experiences and preferences for graduation dates.
3. Propose Alternative Dates: Based on collected feedback, SU Officers should propose alternative graduation dates to the University that would maximize attendance for international students.
4. Engage with Administration: SU Officers to initiate discussions with university administration to present findings and advocate for changes in the graduation schedule.
5. Collaborate with Student Organizations: SU Officers to work alongside International Student Network, BAME network and other relevant groups to build a coalition advocating for this change.
6. Raise Awareness: SU Officers to launch a campaign to raise awareness about this issue among the student body and gather support from local and international communities.



Proposition for the SU to support the Divest Borders Campaign

Proposer: Tamryn Nicol Second: Nyameye Bentil

Background

The Divest Borders campaign was originally initiated by People & Planet, the largest student network in the UK campaigning for social and environmental justice. The aim of the campaign is to challenge and dismantle the financial structures that enable the Border and Surveillance Industry (BSI)—a system that profits from the criminalization and dehumanization of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. The campaign calls for universities and other institutions to divest from companies involved in border control, arms manufacturing, and surveillance technologies that are complicit in human rights abuses against vulnerable displaced individuals.

As a University of Sanctuary, the University of Bristol has a moral and ethical responsibility to support refugees and asylum seekers. However, its current investment practices contradict this obligation. The university's fund manager, Rathbone Green, has invested £1.5 million on the university's behalf in companies such as Microsoft, Accenture, Experian, and RELX, all of which are linked to the Border and Surveillance Industry. These companies profit from technologies and systems that track, detain, and deport refugees and migrants, contributing to the violation of human rights.

These investments are inconsistent with the university's commitment to providing a sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers and does not reflect true solidarity with the Sanctuary scholars at the university. For example, Accenture creates biometric systems that unjustly collect and store the personal data of asylum seekers, while RELX's subsidiary, LexisNexis, provides data to immigration enforcement agencies such as ICE, aiding in deportations.

The Divest Borders campaign calls on the University of Bristol to divest from these unethical investments and redirect funds to programs and services that benefit students and the refugee community on campus. This motion seeks to align the university's investment practices with its Sanctuary status and its values of inclusivity, human rights, and ethical responsibility.



Proposition for the SU to support the Divest Borders Campaign

Proposer: Tamryn Nicol Second: Nyameye Bentil

Purpose

1. Urge the University of Bristol to divest from the Border and Surveillance Industry (BSI), an investment made without students' explicit consent, which conflicts with the University's Sanctuary status.
2. Ensure that funds are reinvested into ethical companies that align with values of social justice, sustainability, and human rights, ensuring that future investments support industries that contribute positively to society. This can take place by providing the
3. current fund manager with a list of 71 unethical companies that should not be invested in/should be divested from, or by the university selecting a more ethical fund manager.
4. Reform the university's Ethical Endowment Policy to ensure that the university can no longer invest in the Border and Surveillance industry long-term.

Actions

1. Official Endorsement: The Student Union should officially endorse the Divest Borders campaign and publicly advocate for the university to divest from the Border and Surveillance Industry. This includes making a formal statement calling for the university to revise its investment portfolio in accordance with its status as a University of Sanctuary. List of companies is below in Appendix A.
2. Lobbying and Engagement with University Leadership: The Student Union should actively engage with the university's Board of Trustees, Endowment Office, and other relevant decision-makers to push for divestment. This includes presenting student feedback, campaign data, and formal motions to those in charge of the university's investment portfolio.
3. Collaboration with Other Student Groups: Facilitate collaboration between various student groups and other activist organizations to build a coalition advocating for divestment. Joint events, awareness campaigns, and petitions can help strengthen the collective voice.
4. Awareness Campaigns and Educational Events: Host workshops, panels, and informational events to educate the wider student body on the ethical issues related to the Border and Surveillance Industry. These efforts should focus on explaining how university investments contribute to human rights violations and why divestment is a necessary response.
5. Monitoring and Reporting: Establish a system for tracking the university's progress in responding to the demands of the Divest Borders campaign. The Student Union should aid STAR in regularly report on meetings, decisions, and any progress made in pushing for divestment to ensure accountability.



Accessibility for students with disabilities at University of Bristol

Proposer: Fateh Mohit Whig Second: Raisha Jesmin Rafa

Background

1. Education is a fundamental right for everyone, but it is an inaccessible environment.
2. High dropout rates among students with disabilities.
3. Not too many students with disabilities studying law.
4. Take strides towards achieving UoB's 2030 vision and strategy for the well-being of staff and Students.

Purpose

1. Improve pavements on campus (in consultation with City Council).
2. Make the doors automatic/ lighter
3. Have a source café in every department so that students, especially those with disabilities who cannot go out, have a place where they can eat/ drink/ relax.
4. Make sure that ramps are properly constructed and are slip-free (no moss/ made of anti-skid material)
5. Have accommodation for students coming with caregivers (not just partners and children) (family accommodation)
6. Have wheelchair sports/ some form of physical activity for people with disabilities.
7. Have students with other disabilities as a part of the UoB community.

Actions

1. Lobby the University to consult with the City Council to improve pavements on campus for people with disabilities. This includes having tactile tiles for students with low vision/ blindness.
2. Work with university departments to have better accessibility features for students with disabilities – e.g. Ramps, automatic doors, tactile tiles/ braille usage, tables reserved for people with disabilities (with enough space for wheelchair users to roll in)
3. SU to lobby the University to conduct accessibility audits yearly.
4. Work with Source Cafes to make their cafes accessible to all students.
5. Lobby the UoB to educate staff and students about disability and the rights of people with disabilities in line with what the university does for racial issues.
6. To lobby University to have more accessible Muslim prayer facilities across campus.



End All Forced Swimming Experiments at the University of Bristol

Proposer: Agnes Sales Second: Hugh Pender

Background

1. In the forced swim test, experimenters place rats or mice into inescapable beakers of water and watch them desperately swim in search of an escape. The erroneous assumption is that the time it takes for the animals to stop swimming and start floating can tell us something about human mental health conditions. Workers remove the animals from the beaker and later decapitate them.
2. This test has been conducted at the University of Bristol since at least 2008 and continues today, despite being shunned by many within the global scientific community. The Home Office recently banned its use as a model of depression or for studies of anxiety and its treatment and stated its intention to eliminate it from the UK in the near future. This move was unprecedented and highlights the concerns surrounding the test.
3. More than half of the UK's Russell Group universities – including Durham University, King's College London, the University of Liverpool, the University of Manchester, the University of Nottingham, the University of Sheffield, and the University of York – have rejected the forced swim test, as have the University of St Andrews and the University of Brighton, among others. The University of Bristol must follow suit. It's one of the last academic institutions to conduct the test in the UK.
4. The test has been banned outright in New South Wales and curtailed across the rest of Australia.
5. Bristol Central MP Carla Denyer and West of England Metro Mayor Dan Norris both publicly oppose the test. The Labour Party intends to work towards phasing out all animal testing.
6. Almost every major pharmaceutical company has stepped away from the forced swim test.

Purpose

1. To ensure Bristol SU is an effective channel for its members by making the student body's views on the forced swim test known to the university
2. To promote the well-being of students, who might not know that the university may be using their money to torment small animals with this experiment

Actions

1. SU officers to ensure that all University of Bristol students are informed about the cruelty involved in the forced swim test by e-mailing them about this issue.
2. SU officers to raise a motion as a talking point at the Senate
3. In collaboration with VegSoc, SU officers to campaign for the university to stop using the forced swim test



Easier Access to Support Services for International Students

Proposer: Bakhtawar Javed Seconded: Linlu Ye

Background

1. International students often face unique challenges when transitioning to a new academic environment, including cultural differences, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with available resources.
2. Anecdotal Feedback from international students indicates that many find it difficult to access and navigate support services such as mental health and wellbeing, academic advising, and healthcare.
3. This difficulty impacts their overall student experience at the University causing additional stress.

Purpose

Improving access to support services for international students is essential for their success and well-being at the university.

1. By having a one stop shop and first point of contact for students, the University can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that makes it easier for international students to access existing support services available at University.
2. This will in turn lead to less levels of stress and better academic performance.

Actions

1. Assessment of Current Services: Bristol SU's Research and Insight Team to conduct focus groups to identify specific barriers international students face when accessing support services. Analyse feedback to determine which services are underutilized and why.
2. Awareness Campaign: SU International Students' Officer to launch an awareness campaign highlighting available support services tailored for international students. SU to utilize multiple platforms (social media, campus events, flyers) to disseminate information.
3. Dedicated Support Staff: SU International Students' Officer to advocate for the hiring of dedicated staff members who specialize in supporting international students, including multilingual advisors in Wellbeing Services.
4. Orientation Programs: SU's International Students' Officer to work in partnership with University to enhance orientation programs to include specific sessions for international students, focusing on navigating support services, cultural adaptation, and academic expectations.
5. Peer Mentorship Program: SU's International Students' Officer to lobby the University to evaluate the existing peer mentorship program and make improvements where needed.
6. Feedback Mechanism: SU's International Students' Officer to lobby the University to create a feedback mechanism for international students to share their experiences and suggestions regarding support services.





Bristol SU