

Resolutions for Conference 2024

As approved by the Trustees 30 April 2024



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Special resolutions

75% approval needed to implement change

Resolution A

Approve an official change to the name of our elected Student team from Central Executive Committee to Student Leadership Team.

What will change in the Articles?

Throughout our Articles of Association, each mention of the term Central Executive Committee, shall be replaced with the term Student Leadership Team.

Why is this being proposed?

To make it easier for OU Students to identify with their elected representatives. The elected students from 2022-24 term are particularly passionate about this name change being made official as they have commented how much easier it is for them to explain their roles to students.

Historically, the elected team were called the Central Executive Committee. This name was given to our elected executive to differentiate them from the other Nation based committees. Our structure changed in 2016, when our Nation Committees ceased to be, but the name Central Executive Committee remained. Consultation with current students revealed that they did not identify with this name, nor did they understand the relevance of this team for them.

Since the 2016 elections, we began using the term Student Leadership Team (SLT) and during our current 2022-24 term we have referred to the team as the Student Leadership Team in all but our legal governing documents. Since making this change, we have seen a positive response and our recent Annual Membership Survey (Autumn 2023) shows increased awareness of the Student Leadership Team, though more work needs to be done in terms of ensuring the role of the team and their remit is clear. In advertising elections for the Student Leadership Team this year we have seen an increased number of students nominating themselves for a position and voting.

Resolution B

Amend Article 26 to introduce an additional 3-5 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Representative positions on the elected team to provide better representation for the active groups of the Association.

What will change in the Articles?

Article 26 currently details the composition of the elected team. We are asking for the following addition to be made:

26.1.6 Between three and five representatives with defined remits as agreed in the Bye-Laws to support underrepresented students.

Why is this being proposed?

By approving these 3-5 additional elected roles we hope to ensure that minoritised voices will be guaranteed a space on our elected team. The Association plans to align these roles to active groups within the Association which would currently add three roles to feed into our Vice President EDI; one Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Representative, one LGBT+ Student Representative and one Disabled Students Representative.

By adding these 3-5 positions to our governance structure, we can help futureproof this change to support the introduction of more groups should the need arise.

Our current VP EDI proposes this change to:

“Ensure that all of the student groups are represented by their peers who can provide the perspective on the experience of marginalised students and the barriers they may face as well as helping to build a truly inclusive community. EDI is embedded in the Association's work but it is a wide remit that can present everchanging challenges, but with the addition of the EDI reps we can respond to these effectively and with the sensitivity and knowledge a lived experience can bring. Having more support for the support groups can also allow for these to grow and provide a thriving community as well as ensure that specific areas of work within the OU is truly representative of the students involved eg. the Race Equality Charter, the disabled student commitment etc”.

Resolution C

Implement a change to Article 20 to allow Student Leadership Team elections and Student Trustee Elections to run in alternate years.

What will change in the Articles?

Article 20 currently states that:

- “The Student Trustees shall remain in office for a term of two years commencing in accordance with the Bye-Laws.”
- We are asking students to implement the following change to the wording of Article 20:
- “The Student Trustees shall remain in office for a term of up to two years commencing in accordance with the Bye-Laws.”

Why is this being proposed?

We are requesting a small change of wording in our Articles to give us the flexibility to run a one year Student Trustee Term in 2026. Doing so will allow us to move the Trustee and Student Leadership Team elections into alternate years to allow us to focus on the difference between these two important elected positions since they have very different responsibilities.

Our current set up; hosting one election every two years, means bye-elections or co-options often have to be added to the annual calendar which often means staff and students do not have the capacity to support these additional processes as much as they'd like.

The added benefits include:

- Planning for an annual election will mean staff capacity is pre-allocated and will allow for capacity and planning to fill vacant roles via election each Mar-May.
- Election campaigns can focus on the roles available, being clear of the roles and responsibilities of the team being elected e.g. Trustees are legally and financially responsible for the running of the organisation and the Student Leadership Team are elected to represent the student voice and hold the University to account for the student experience.
- Capacity to fully induct both teams with relevant training and support.

How would this look in the future?

- 2024 - Student Leadership Team and Student Trustee Elections (2-year terms)
- 2026 - Student Leadership Team (2-year term)
Student Trustee Elections (1-year term)
- 2027 - Student Trustee Elections (2-year term)
- 2028 - Student Leadership Team Elections (2-year term)
- 2029 - Student Trustee Elections (2-year term)
- 2030 - Student Leadership Team Elections (2-year term)

Ordinary resolutions

Simple majority needed

Resolution D

Students are asked to vote on a motion to rebrand the OU Students Association to be known as the OU Student Union (OpenSU).

What will change in the Articles?

Historically, making OU students aware of the Students Association has been one of our biggest challenges. Elected Student Leaders and Association staff regularly report having to explain to students and other stakeholders (sometimes including OU staff) that the Students Association is 'like a Students Union'.

The Board of Trustees and elected Student Leadership Team are keen to hear your views and are therefore asking you to vote on this motion. You are voting to support or oppose the Association trading under a new name identifiable as a Student Union. We are not asking you to legally change the name of the Students Association within the Articles.

Voting in favour of this resolution would indicate to the Board of Trustees that you support a rebrand to allow the Students Association to engage with professional consultants to develop a new brand in conjunction with students and key stakeholders.

Research with OU students has revealed the following:

- Consultations with 93 student members across the Nations and online found that 62% of students preferred the term Students Union to Students Association.
- The Student Leadership Team discussed the results and proposed that Conference's view is sought to give a stronger indication of student opinion on the matter. The Board of Trustees agreed with this approach.
- Rebranding the Association is an opportunity to raise awareness of who we are and what we do.
- The name 'OpenSU' was proposed by students.

Resolution E

Approve a motion to support the Students Association to campaign for the University to better support diagnosis of Neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD where students are seeking a diagnosis to support their study.

What will change in the Articles?

This has been proposed by our Student Leadership Team in response to students sharing with us how difficult it has been gaining diagnosis of Neurodivergent conditions and this has often negatively impacted their studies.

Students have commented how difficult it has been to gain additional support which would have made a huge difference to their experience at the OU. Wait times for diagnosis are currently at an all time high and NHS waiting lists are ever increasing. The Student Leadership Team believe The Open University should be doing more to support students awaiting diagnosis.

Resolution F

Approve a motion for representatives of the OU Students Association to campaign for the University not to reduce the existing curriculum, even when making financial cuts, but rather to find ways of preserving and, wherever possible extending, the curriculum.

What will change in the Articles?

This Conference recognises that one of the University's strengths is the breadth and depth of its curriculum and that a richer curriculum, with more choice, is likely to be more attractive to prospective students than a thinner one.

We believe this could be achieved in part by offering some Level/Stage 3 modules on a biennial or cyclical basis and our current STEM rep on the elected Student Leadership Team encourages you to vote to support this motion to protect the OU curriculum!

Resolution G

Vote to ratify the minutes of the 2022 biennial Conference.

[Minutes available here](#)

Resolution H

Receive the report of the Trustees and the CEC on the Association's activities since the 2022 biennial Conference.

[Link to Trustee Report](#)

[Link to CEC Report](#)

Resolution I

Receive the accounts of the Association for the completed financial years since the previous biennial Conference (2021-22, 2022-23).

[Link to accounts](#)

Resolution J

Vote to approve the re-appointment of Haysmacintyre to act as the Association's auditors.

Following the Board's approval in December 2021, Conference 2022 delegates approved Haysmacintyre as the Association's auditors for a 5 year term, commencing with the 2022-2023 accounts. They took over from James Cowper Kreston following a competitive tendering process in the Autumn of 2021. In accordance with our Articles, Conference delegates are nevertheless required to approve the re-appointment of auditors.

Siobhan Holmes, our audit partner at Haysmacintyre, supported us with the change in format of our Trustees report for 2022 - 2023, including an introduction from the Chair of Trustees, President and Chief Executive. The report provides a greater emphasis on reporting our impact, with summarised highlights as well as more detail to suit different audiences.

The audit process itself went smoothly and the statutory accounts were completed according to the timetable, despite a few issues in the planning and completion stages with resourcing and changes in processes within Haysmacintyre. Siobhan has assured us that these issues have been addressed.

Resolution K

Conference delegates are asked to vote to approve the continuation of our affiliation with National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) www.ncvo.org.uk
NCVO champions volunteering organisations, helping over 17,000 membership bodies to thrive by providing them with expert support and advice, keeping them up to date with news and developments in the sector and providing affordable and relevant training events and best practice guidelines that they can have access to. We continue to benefit from discounted training for staff and volunteers, as well as access to a range of tools and guidance.

The current agreement ends 31 July 2024 (3 year subscription £1,473).
Date of Affiliation: August 2015

Resolution L

Conference delegates are asked to vote to approve the continuation of our affiliation with Charity Finance Group (CFG).

The Charity Finance Group (CFG) www.cfg.org.uk

CFG is a charity that champions best practice in finance management in the voluntary sector. They work to ensure issues facing the charity sector are understood and accounted for by government. Being a member provides the Students Association with access to events, training, networking, a monthly magazine and specialist helplines.

The current agreement ends 31 March 2024 (1 year subscription £455).
Date of affiliation: April 2016

Resolution M

Conference delegates are asked to vote to approve the continuation of our affiliation with Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM).

Association of Volunteer Managers <https://volunteermanagers.org.uk>
This is a network of volunteer management professionals with whom we can share good practice. It also provides access to resources and guidance, discounted events and conferences and mentoring for volunteer management professionals.

The current agreement ends 4 May 2025 (1 year subscription £500).
Date of affiliation: April 2024

Resolution N

Conference delegates are asked to vote to approve the continuation of our affiliation with WonkHE.

WONKHE SUs <https://wonkhe.com/subscription/sus/>

This provides briefings, training, resources and guidance keeping us informed about government policy and other things impacting Higher Education, supporting our representation, campaigning and policy work.

The current agreement ends 31 July 2024 (1 year subscription £4,330).
Date of affiliation: August 2023