

Standing Orders - August 2026

These Standing Orders should be read in partnership with the Articles of Association of Durham Students' Union and any appendices and annexes attached herewith. Terms used in these Standing Orders shall be as defined in the Articles of Association.

Please note that the 'Beliefs Book', Assembly and Elections processes are all being redeveloped across 2026/27 - these Standing Orders will continue to be updated with new links and approved processes. Please contact su.president@durham.ac.uk with any questions.

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1. Rights and Benefits of Membership

Durham SU is a democratic, Member-led organisation.

All Members are entitled to take part in Durham SU's democracy and join any student group registered by Durham SU.

No restriction to participation in Durham SU's democracy is permitted, unless explicitly within the Articles of Association or Standing Orders.

Any restriction to participation or leadership within a student group must be authorised by the Board of Trustees.

[The Board of Trustees](#) may approve and publish policies from time to time, which will further articulate the rights and responsibilities of Members, including a Code of Conduct for Members with an appropriate disciplinary process.

- [Code of Conduct for Members](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Code of Practice](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

Any Member may opt-out of their membership for an academic year by [writing to the Chief Executive](#), who will then notify the University Secretary. Any non-member will not have the rights and benefits of membership. Any non-member will not have the rights and benefits of membership.

2. What Students Believe

'Beliefs' are Durham SU's policy statements, created democratically by the students' union's members to reflect the representational will of students, and direct Durham SU's work.

Durham SU's Beliefs are available to all students in a Beliefs Book on the Durham SU website, which clearly articulates the opinions of Durham SU on all matters of student life. The Beliefs Book¹ guides student leaders in representative and campaigning activity.

The Beliefs Book will be reviewed by the Officer Committee annually and adopted at its first meeting as the policy of Durham SU.

The Board of Trustees has sole discretion to adopt, implement or refuse any Beliefs in furtherance of their duties, but will strive to respect the democratic intent of students.

Any Student Member can submit proposals for a Belief. Any Belief which seems to concern the Common Rooms, Colleges, or collegiate experience at Durham University, will be considered by the Common Rooms in advance of any decision.

In order of precedence, Beliefs are created by:

- A referendum.
- Two-thirds majority of a meeting of an Assembly.
- The Officer Committee.

¹ In development for 2026/27 Academic Year – contact su.president@durham.ac.uk for more information.

3. Assembly

Assembly can be convened at the request of the Board of Trustees, or by 50 students via petition.²

50 Student Members are required for a quorate Assembly, and any Student Member in attendance is eligible to vote.

Assembly is the way that students can:

- Create [Beliefs](#) that reflect the views of Durham students, and guide elected Officers and other student leaders in their representative and campaigning activity.
- Refer a Vote of No Confidence in an Officer to a [referendum](#).
- Consider questions about Durham SU's governance, as directed by Article 7.6.

A Belief proposal taken to a meeting of Assembly, which doesn't achieve a two-thirds majority, may be put to referendum by a simple majority of Assembly.

The President will Chair meetings of Assembly, unless they are absent or unable to do so because of a conflict of interest, in which case another Officer will act as Chair.

The Secretary to Assembly is the Chief Executive, who will support the Durham SU President to make meetings of Assembly as accessible and participative as possible, and will publish an Operational Procedure for meetings of Assembly³.

² In development for 2026/27 Academic Year – contact su.president@durham.ac.uk for more information.

³ In development for 2026/27 Academic Year – contact su.admin@durham.ac.uk for more information

4. Democratic Participation; Elections & Referendums

Elections

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Returning Officer, who must not be a member of Durham SU. The principal duty of the Returning Officer is to promote and safeguard the interests of the electorate in fair elections and referendums.

The Returning Officer will report to the Board of Trustees on the extent to which each election has been fair, and the Board of Trustees will make this report available to the University Secretary.

The Chief Executive is the Deputy Returning Officer and will publish guidance for the good conduct of elections⁴, which must include:

- How to stand in an election.
- Expectations for campaigning.
- The voting process.
- How complaints can be made.
- How outcomes will be decided.

In elections which are not cross-campus elections, such as student group elections, the Chief Executive is the Returning Officer, and will appoint a Deputy Returning Officer.

Durham SU elections:

- Use the single transferrable vote, and
- Include method by which voters can showcase dissatisfaction with the available candidates.

Durham SU Officers:

- Are paid under a contract of employment with Durham SU.
- May serve for no more than two years in total.
- Are elected in the manner shown in the table.

Office Elected	Eligibility to Stand	Eligibility to Vote	Process for Election
Full-Time Officers			
President, Education Officer, Community Officer	Any member, subject to being able to serve as a trustee of Durham SU.	Any member.	Cross-campus ballot.
Part-Time Officers			
Faculty Presidents	Members registered to a programme in a Faculty.	Members registered to a programme in a Faculty.	Cross-campus ballot.
International Students Officer	Members who are not UK fee paying students.	Members who are not UK fee paying students.	Cross-campus ballot.
Postgraduate Taught Officer	Any member who is registered to a postgraduate taught programme.	Any member who is registered to a postgraduate taught programme.	Conference.

⁴ Guidance will be published ahead of the March 2027 Officer Elections, contact su.admin@durham.ac.uk with any queries.

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Postgraduate Research Officer	Any member who is registered to a postgraduate research programme.	Any member who is registered to a postgraduate research programme.	Conference.
Welfare Officer	Any member.	Welfare volunteers.	Conference.
Societies Officer	Any member.	Any member who is also a member of a Durham SU registered student group.	Conference.
Liberation Officer	Any member.	Any member.	Cross-campus ballot.
Common Rooms Officer	Member of the JCR or MCR Presidents Committee.	Members of the JCR or MCR Presidents Committee.	Conference.

Referendums

A referendum is a vote of Durham SU's members, which may be called to:

- Create a [Belief](#) of Durham SU's members.
- Consider a Vote of No Confidence in a Durham SU Officer.

A referendum to create a Belief may be called by:

- The Board of Trustees.
- A simple majority of an Assembly.
- Any student member who can demonstrate the support of 1% of Durham SU's members for the question, in a secure petition.

Referendums require participation from 5% of members in order to be determinative, and need not be restricted to a 'Yes' or 'No' outcome, and may be used to rank preferences.

A referendum to declare 'No Confidence' in a Durham SU Officer may be called by a two-thirds majority of a meeting of an Assembly, and is the only way in which a Durham SU Officer can be removed from office on a political question.

The Board of Trustees will decide whether the reasons stated for a lack of confidence are proper to be considered by Assembly, and a referendum, in advance of the question being put to students.

The Deputy Returning Officer will determine:

- The exact language of any question put to referendum, to ensure that any question can be resolved with an unambiguous outcome.
- The electorate for the referendum; in general:
- All students are eligible to vote on any question which would create a belief of Durham SU.
- Eligibility to vote on any question of confidence is reserved to the students who are eligible to elect the Officer.

5. Representation

[Representatives on Durham University programmes](#), and in Departments, and in Faculties are appointed annually, and supported jointly by Durham SU and Durham University to ensure that students have an impactful and meaningful voice in the university.

Representatives are guided by Durham SU's Beliefs Book⁵

The Secretary to Assembly will publish:

- A full list of available roles.
- Role descriptions.
- Guidance, training and development.
- Expectations that students should have of representatives.
- Expectations that Durham SU and Durham University should have of representatives.

All representatives are expected to attend university meetings and committees, and communicate with, and seek feedback from, students on their academic experiences.

Non-attendance at relevant meetings may be cause for removal from position.

The Officer Committee will appoint one student from each Faculty to serve on the [Senate of Durham University](#), to join the Durham SU President, Education Officer and Community Officer. The appointed members should reflect the diversity of Durham students, with respect to student status and demographics matters.

⁵ In development for 2026/27 Academic Year – contact su.president@durham.ac.uk for more information.

6. Student Groups

- 6.1 Durham SU registers Student Groups, further to Articles 1(d) and 1(g), because we want to provide opportunities to advance education through providing infrastructure for students to lead social education for each other, as well as to have fun.
- 6.2 'Student Groups' is a term which includes all Societies, Clubs, Associations, Media Student Groups, Fundraising Student Groups, Campaign Student Groups, and any other organised group of students which seeks to register their activity with Durham SU.
- 6.3 All registered Student Groups are the same legal entity as Durham SU. Each Student Group is ultimately the responsibility of, and therefore accountable to, the Board of Trustees.

Regulation

- 6.4 All Student Groups are registered under the [Student Group Agreement](#), which is an appendix to this Standing Order. The Student Group Agreement will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Student Groups Committee, which will make recommendations on any changes and developments to Assembly and to the Board of Trustees through the Officer Committee. Compliance with the Student Group Agreement is a condition of registration.
- 6.5 The Student Groups Committee and the Board of Trustees will agree a [model constitution](#), which all student groups must adopt as a condition of registration. The model constitution has sections which must not be deviated from without the support of the Board of Trustees, but most parts can be freely changed by the membership of the student group, in the way specified in the model constitution.
- 6.6 The Board of Trustees will agree a funding framework for Student Groups, in consultation with the Officer Committee, which will be reported to the University Secretary.

Registration

- 6.7 Student Groups Committee will formally accept an application for a Student Group to be entered onto the Register, on the condition that:
 - 6.7.1 The aims and objectives of the Student Group are consistent with Durham SU's aims and objectives.
 - 6.7.2 A Registration Risk Assessment has been accepted by the Secretary to Student Groups Committee.
 - 6.7.3 The Student Group is committed to, and acts in compliance with, the Student Group Agreement.
 - 6.7.4 The Secretary to Student Groups Committee, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, confirms that Durham SU has capacity to support the Student Group effectively.
- 6.8 Student Groups Committee will remove a Student Group from the Register if:
 - 6.8.1 The Student Group is not viable.
 - 6.8.2 The Student Group is confirmed by the Secretary to Students Group Committee to be in substantial breach of the Student Group Agreement.

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- 6.9 The Board of Trustees, acting reasonably, may suspend or terminate registration of any Student Group.

Representation

- 6.10 The Community Committee will approve Student Group 'categories' which will be collectives of Student Groups with similar aims and objectives or ways of working. Student Groups Committee.
- 6.11 The Student Groups Committee reports to the Community Committee. The Societies Officer will chair the Committee, and other members will be the Community Officer, and one Chair of a Student Group from each category.
- 6.12 The Chairs of Student Groups in each category will nominate one of their peers to attend meetings of the Student Group Committee.
- 6.13 Student Groups Committee has power as defined in this Standing Order and exists to represent student priorities for the development and support of student groups to Durham SU and Durham University.
- 6.14 All Student Group Chairs will be invited to come together at least once annually to consider matters of importance to student groups in general.
- 6.15 Chairs of Student Groups in categories may come together as and when they consider it necessary, to consider matters of importance to their student groups, with the specific considerations that:
- 6.15.1 Liberation Student Group category meetings shall also include the Liberation Officer who will chair the meeting.
 - 6.15.2 International Student Group category meetings shall also include the International Students' Officer who will chair the meeting.

Standing Student Groups

- 6.16 A Student Group may apply and be designated at point of registration as a Standing Student Group, subject to approval by the Student Groups Committee. A Standing Student Group: 20
- 6.16.1 Is exempt from conditions of registration relating to minimum membership numbers.
 - 6.16.2 May specify criteria for membership, subject to approval by the Student Groups Committee following advice from the Secretary to Student Groups Committee.
 - 6.16.3 May only be removed from the register by Assembly, on a recommendation from the Student Groups Committee, or by the Board of Trustees, acting reasonably.
- 6.17 A Standing Student Group may be general in nature, but categories of Standing Student Groups include:

Liberation Student Groups

- 6.18 Liberation Student Groups are a particular category of Standing Student Group, which provide representation, social opportunities and activities, and appropriate support, for students who self-identify as a member of the community represented by those Associations. A Student Group may apply, and be designated at point of registration, as a Liberation Student Group.

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- 6.19 Any student who self-defines as a member of the community represented by the Liberation Student Group is a full member, entitled to all the benefits of membership. A Liberation Student Group may restrict its membership on this basis, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.
- 6.20 Liberation campaigning at Durham SU supports and fights for the rights of students who self-identify as Trans, LGBT+, Working-Class, People of Colour, Women or Disabled.

Fundraising Student Groups

- 6.21 Fundraising Student Groups are a particular category of Standing Student Group, which exist further to Durham SU's objective to raise funds for charitable purposes under Article 9.7. A Student Group may apply, and be designated at point of registration, as a Fundraising Student Group.
- 6.22 A Fundraising Student Group is required to comply with specific external regulations which maintain public confidence in charitable fundraising, and must therefore undertake annual training, development, and reporting as required by the Board of Trustees.

Media Student Groups

- 6.23 Media Student Groups are a particular category of Standing Student Group. A Student Group may apply, and be designated at point of registration, as a Fundraising Student Group.
- 6.24 A designated Media Student Group is required to comply with specific regulations which maintain public confidence in the media, and must therefore undertake annual training, development, and reporting as required by the Board of Trustees.