

DURHAM SU ASSEMBLY

There will be a meeting of Assembly at 1800 on Thursday 23 November, PG21, Pemberton Rooms, Palace Green.

Please try and arrive at the meeting from 1745, for a prompt start at 1800.

AGENDA

1. OPENING OF MEETING (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES)

To receive apologies, conflicts of interest, notification of any other urgent business not on the agenda.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS ON 25 MAY 2023 (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES) UA/2324/02

To accept the minutes as an accurate record of the previous meetings.

3. ASSEMBLY TRAINING (ELLIE SCORAH, 15 MINUTES)

To receive a presentation on training for assembly members.

4. CHAIRS ELECTION (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES)

To elect the Chair of Assembly for academic year 2023/2024.

Routine business items

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT (GARETH HUGHES, 10 MINUTES)

To receive a presentation on Assembly and Committees in the 2023/2024 academic year.

6. RATIFICATION OF RETURNING OFFICER AND APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES) UA/2324/03

To ratify Peter Robertson as Returning Officer and appoint new lay trustees to the Durham SU Board.

7. ASSEMBLY ELECTION RETURNING OFFICER REPORT (CHAIR, 5 MINUTES) UA/2324/04

To note the returning officer report for the Assembly Membership Election 23/24.

8. UPDATE QUESTIONS (CHAIR, 10 MINUTES)

To receive questions on updates provided by the officer team, committees, and associations:

https://durhamuniversity.sharepoint.com/:f/t/AssemblyUpdates/ErguyLWqEMBCsYKpfZI4NI4Butv6uVammlQAR_0517nJSg?e=l7GJfi

**A comfort break of 10 minutes will be held, before returning to discussion items.*

Items for discussion:

9. RATIFICATION OF DURHAM ESTRANGED AND CARE EXPERIENCED ASSOCIATION (DEACE) (ISI ALI, 10 MINUTES) UA/2324/06

To ratify the approval of DEaCE as a recognised association of the Durham SU Assembly.

10. TREATMENT OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DURHAM UNIVERSITY (OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER, 10 MINUTES) UA/2324/05

To discuss a motion on the Treatment of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Durham University.

11. REVIEW OF DURHAM SU ELECTED STUDENT OFFICER STRUCTURE (PRESIDENT, 10 MINUTES) UA/2324/07

To discuss a motion on the Durham SU elected officer structure.

12. AFFORDABILITY AND STUDENT INCOME DEFINITIONS DISCUSSION (PRESIDENT, 10 MINUTES) UA/2324/08

To discuss affordability and student income at Durham University.

13. SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE (10 MINUTES) UA/2324/09

To discuss a motion on solidarity with Palestine.

Assembly is committed to making its meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. If you consider yourself to have any access or reasonable adjustment needs, don't hesitate to get in touch with the SU governance account: dsu.governance@durham.ac.uk at least 2 days in advance of the meeting to ensure arrangements can be made.

DURHAM SU ASSEMBLY

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING 25 May 2023

The Learning Lounge, Dunelm House

1. OPENING OF MEETING

AK opened the meeting, welcoming members, and attendees, explaining zoom etiquette, outlining that no offensive or unacceptable behaviour would be accepted and would result in being removed from the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS ON 9 MARCH 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING

There were no amendments to the minutes of the last meetings.
Minutes from the last meetings were approved.

Routine business items

3. SECRETARY'S REPORT

RECEIVED: a presentation on Assembly and Committees in the 22/23 academic year.

4. NUCLEAR WEAPONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

RECEIVED: an update report from the Nuclear Weapons Policy Task and Finish Group Report.

A written update had been provided to members of assembly in advance of the meeting. Any questions can be email to Jack Ballingham directly.

5. NUS CONFERENCE UPDATE

RECEIVED: an update on the recently attended NUS Conference.

A verbal update was provided by SU President, Joseph McGarry.

6. NUS LIBERATION CONFERENCE UPDATE

RECEIVED: an update on the recently attended NUS Liberation Conference.

7. OFFICER UPDATES

NOTED: updates from the SU Officer Team on their priorities for the year. Updates were provided by:

Joe McGarry, SU President
Laura Curran, Welfare and Liberation Officer

Apologies from:

Josh Freestone, Undergraduate Academic Officer
Jack Ballingham, Opportunities Officer

8. COMMITTEE UPDATES

NOTED: updates from Committees:

JCR PresComm
Assembly Procedures Committee
Student Group Committee

Apologies: DUCK, MCR PresComm, SU Rep Committee, Academic Affairs Committee

Officer Scrutiny Committee members had not yet been elected, so no update was provided.

9. ASSOCIATION UPDATES

NOTED: updates from Associations:

Trans Association
Durham People of Colour Association (DPoCA)
International, Students' Association
Working Class Students' Association

Apologies: LGBT+ Association, Women's Association, Mature Students' Association (MATSA), Students with Disabilities Association (SwDA)

****ACCESS BREAK****

Items for discussion:

10. PROPOSED STUDENT GROUP GOVERNANCE CHANGES

APPROVED: proposed changes to Student Group governing documents.

The Welfare and Liberation Officer presented the proposed changes in the absence of the Opportunities Officer and said that there were 3 documents to be considered and any comments or questions should be sent to Jack Ballingham directly after the meeting via email.

There were no speeches opposing the changes.

AK moves to vote.

Assembly resolved to approve the student group governance changes.

11. POLICY REVIEW

RATIFIED: the renewal of policies presented by Assembly Procedures Committee.

Assembly Procedures Committee recommended the following:

The below policy's relevance **be debated** by members and its re-ratification be voted on separately from all other policies:

<u>Condemn the actions of the Durham Union Society</u>
--

Assembly members debated the continued relevance of the above policy.

AK moves to vote.

Assembly agreed that the policy will be not be removed and will be re-ratified and continue into the next academic year.

The below policies **be allowed to lapse** and have provided a reasoning for each:

Policy	Date Expired	Reasoning
Procedural Motions	8/11/22	Procedural motions now in Standing Orders
Creating an Open Forum	4/2/22	Superseded by Standing Order changes
Amendment to Standing Order D	29/10/22	Superseded by Standing Order Changes
Referendum on DSU Affiliation with NUS	11/3/22	No resolution agreed; thus no actions due.
Signing the UN Sustainable Development Goals Accord	8/11/22	SDG Accord signed
Voting Records	3/6/22	Superseded by Standing Order changes
Membership of Assembly	4/2/22	Superseded by Standing Order changes

Assembly ratified that the above policies be allowed to lapse.

Assembly Procedures Committee recommended the below policies for **re-ratification** based on continued relevance, ignoring their expiry dates:

Policy	Notes
UCU Anti-Casualisation	Works alongside later policy position
International Tuition Fees	
Future of DU Bilateral Agreements	
Policy Position on UCU industrial Action	
Postgraduate Access and Participation	
Mo Mowlam	Proposed 18 th College means this remains relevant
Antisemitism at Durham University	Definition agreed at Trustees Board, retained due to Resolves 2
Support for Direct Action Against Rising Accommodation Fees	
Support Access to Free, Safe and Legal Abortions	
Lobby Landlords to Accept International Guarantors	
Durham University is Institutionally Disablist	
Fight the Housing Rush	
Finding a Silver Lining	
Cut the rent	
Join the Lift the Ban Coalition	
Stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine	
Harm Reduction Policy and Practices	
Unaffordable Housing	
Pro-Choice Stance on Abortions	
Mitie Must Fall	Partially complete, retained due to Resolves 3
Declaration of Climate Emergency	
Divest from Barclays	
Climate Emergency	
Fossil Free Careers	

Assembly ratified that the above policies be re-ratified and agreed that expiry dates will be ignored moving forward.

TO: Assembly

FROM: Board of Trustees

RE: Ratification of Returning Officer and Appointment of Lay Trustees

DATE: 23 November 2023

Ratification of Returning Officer

Assembly is asked to appoint Peter Robertson, Director of the NUS Charity as the Returning Officer.

Mr Robertson has returned elections in students' unions many hundred times as a senior manager in the national union. He was previously Chief Executive of Liverpool Guild of Students and Kings College Students' Union, and has a strong background in oversight and management of democracy in students' unions. He exceeds the qualifications necessary to return Durham SU's elections. On Friday 8 December the Board will consider the nomination for Returning Officer.

Assembly is asked to ratify Peter Robertson as the Returning Officer.

Trustee Appointments

Assembly is asked to ratify the appointment of two new lay trustees to the Durham SU Board of Trustees, in line with Article 51 of the Durham SU governing document.

A panel of three current trustees met to interview candidates in August 2023: Clare Powne (lay trustee) chaired the panel, with Benjamin Thomas (student trustee), Deborah Acheampong (Welfare and Liberation Officer).

The trustees unanimously recommend that Assembly ratify the appointments of Liam Isaac and Rob Drury:

Liam Isaac has wide experience of student services and enrichment and will add value in Durham SU's work in bringing students together through societies and social activity. Liam is a graduate of Collingwood College and started his career in student-led sport at Newcastle University Students' Union. He now works in the management team at Newcastle University Sport and focusses on partnerships and external relationships.

Rob Drury has a wide professional experience but adds value to the Durham SU Board because of his strengths in human resources, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Rob is a consultant with higher education organisation Halpin but started his career at the students' union at the University of East Anglia. Rob has supported the Turnaround Board at Suffolk Students' Union with his expertise in people and human resource management.

Returning Officer's Report Durham Students' Union

Election	Assembly Membership Election
Returning Officer	Peter Robertson, NUS Charity Director
Deputy Returning Officer	Gareth Hughes, Chief Executive
Dates of Nominations:	09/10/2023 - 19/10/2023
Dates of Voting:	23/10/2023 - 26/10/2023
Number of Candidates:	32
Number of Votes:	149
Number of Complaints/Appeals:	0

Returning Officer's Comments/Recommendations

There are no further comments or recommendations.

Confirmation of Fair Election

I hereby declare that this election was run in a fair and democratic manner which satisfies the stipulations as laid out within the 1994 Education Act.

Returning Officer Signature and Date

Signed: 
NUS Charity Director and National Returning Officer

Date: 30/10/2023

TO: Assembly

FROM: Opportunities Officer

RE: Treatment of Generative artificial Intelligence at Durham University

DATE: 23 November 2023

Assembly Notes:

1. Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) is a form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that generates human-like responses based on a prompt (Note: this policy generally refers to text based GAI)^[1]
2. GAI can assist in the generation and development of ideas, offering substantial support to students in their academic pursuits^[1]
3. Concerns have arisen regarding GAI's use in academic assignments, particularly in regards to plagiarism, authenticity, and the genuine development of knowledge and skills^[2]
4. The lines between legitimate use of GAI and academic dishonesty are becoming blurred, especially when students are unclear on the boundaries between acceptable use of AI tools and fraudulent practices^[2]

Assembly Believes:

1. The ethical usage of GAI can serve as a key learning tool, aiding in the development of ideas and facilitating a deeper, and sometimes faster, comprehension of subject matter
2. There's a fine line between GAI acting as a tool for learning and it undermining the educational process via plagiarism and/or the acquisition of marks disproportionate to the amount of individual effort
3. Establishing clear guidelines on the acceptable use of GAI in academic assignments is imperative to uphold academic integrity and ensure a fair, equitable learning environment
4. The use of GAI should enhance, not replace, individual critical thinking, creativity, and the genuine acquisition of knowledge and skills
5. A single university-wide policy on the use of GAI is not viable because the opportunities and risks of its use vary significantly between departments, faculties, and assessment formats

Assembly Resolves:

1. To encourage the University at a Faculty level to develop and disseminate general guidelines on the use of GAI in academic settings, outlining the highest extent to which these technologies may be used, the penalties for misuse, and how students can properly cite the use of GAI in their work
2. To further encourage the University at a Department level to develop and disseminate clear guidelines on the use of GAI in academic assignments and assessments, outlining the extent to which these technologies may be used, resources on how to ethically use GAI in their subject, and any deviation from the faculty penalty policy
3. To request the Students' Union maintain a webpage regarding the capabilities, limitations, and ethical implications of GAI and hosting up to date links to any and all University policy, guidance, and training that is available
4. To lobby the University not to implement GAI detection tools, if there is potential for the system to unfairly impact and accuse non-native English speakers (or of the language the assessment is in) or those with other disadvantages that may make their work appear to a system as similar to what GAI produces
5. To encourage the University to promote the ethical use of GAI as a supplementary academic tool, fostering a culture of innovation, honesty, and creativity; and, to ensure that students feel they do not have to hide their use of GAI in case of unfair, or harsher marking.
6. To ensure the Academic Affairs Committee monitors, evaluates, and reviews the impact of GAI on the academic environment, proposing amendments to this policy as necessary to adapt to the evolving landscape of AI technologies on a regular basis (at least once per year)
7. To support the University in the development of alternative assessment formats that are less susceptible to being undermined by GAI and more accessible to students experiencing disadvantage with the current assessment format.

[1] Appendix A: AI in Education: Academic Rep Briefing Doc; Durham Students' Union; Olivia Flavell;

[2] <https://dcad.webspace.durham.ac.uk/2023/01/24/ai-the-future-of-assessment-in-higher-education/>
<https://web.archive.org/web/20231103104338/https://dcad.webspace.durham.ac.uk/2023/01/24/ai-the-future-of-assessment-in-higher-education/>

Appendix A:

AI in Education: Academic Rep briefing doc

What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence is the ability of a computer to mirror and perform tasks that are typically associated with humans. Generative AI is likely the form of AI that most are familiar with, this generates human-like responses from a prompt (i.e., produce a CV template for an internship).

Strengths and Limitations

There is much debate on whether AI is a help or a hinderance in HE but it can be a valuable tool if used appropriately, some of the reported strengths are:

- AI can reduce inequalities of access to knowledge
- There are many uses for AI that can encourage creativity
- It can help with getting words down on a blank page/structuring essay

However, AI is not perfect and thus, should not be heavily relied upon when completing assessed work with limitations being:

- They can often provide out of date information about a certain topic that is unreferenced and plagiarised
- There are concerns over copyright and intellectual property both on using copyrighted information, but also if you upload a journal article/information you have paid to access or something that contains sensitive information – this information is then taken into the AI's systems and shared with others
- These tools can also be riddled with bias as they simply reproduce patterns of text taken from the internet
- Hallucinations – Chat GPT in particular can insert sentences that are completely made up

What is DU's stance on AI?

Durham University stated in their Teaching and Learning Handbook that:

"The requirement that submitted work must be a student's own means the inappropriate use of generative AI in the production of assessed work is likely to constitute academic misconduct"

[\(6.2.4.1: Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism\)](#)

However, the University does not plan to use Turnitin's AI detection feature – in line with Cambridge University.

Guidance for students

With the University making their stance on AI clear, the guidance is to avoid using generative AI tools as much as possible when writing formative and summative assessments and particularly during online exams.

With resources such as Chat GPT taking large volumes of unreferenced information from the internet, using it to contribute to or write portions of assessments will likely lead to the document being flagged as plagiarised. If you are unsure whether it is appropriate to use AI for a particular assessment, please get guidance from the module convenor or from your department.

As said above, it's best to avoid generative AI tools when it comes to writing assessed work, especially with Chat GPT as it is not able to produce a nuanced discussion that is expected of students at a university level. However, there are some useful ways that AI technologies can simplify certain processes.

- **Essay plans:** the worst part of starting to write is the blank page, Chat GPT can produce a skeleton structure that you can use to get started.
- **Proof-reading:** Grammarly or Chat GPT can highlight any spelling errors – please do proof-read your own work alongside the help of these tools and use the University guidance -
 - *"Where departmental handbooks advise students that it is acceptable practice to use a commercial proof-reading service, clear guidance should also be provided as to the level of assistance that is acceptable and what level of assistance goes beyond this and amounts to "contract cheating" and hence plagiarism."*

In general, it is good practice to keep record of the following if at any point you are suspected of academic misconduct:

- Keep copies of your drafts along with lecture notes and further reading.
- Prepare yourself to explain your argument and how you came to your conclusions.
- Avoid using Chat GPT or other AI tools to enhance your work – i.e., to improve the language/add sentences or phrases you don't fully understand.

Suspected misconduct

If you suspect that someone is using generative AI to complete their assessments then this can be reported directly to the department or to the module leader.

How is the HE sector responding to AI?

Many university's have developed policies outlining their approach on AI, some are more accepting than others. For example, Nottingham University includes a section on how to reference the use of AI in written assessments; whereas, Oxford and Cambridge issued a university wide ban on any form of AI use during assessments. One reason for the resistance has come from university staff fearing that students will use the software during assessments and pass with minimal effort and not actually understand the content.

There are some positive reactions to the potential of AI becoming more widely used in HE, for example, the Lancaster SU developed a framework to guide the university in its approach to AI, these include:

- Staff understanding how to use AI and teaching students how to use it for both HE and employability purposes
- Guidance for AI should be developed by each department and updated/circulated for each assessment
- Consider developing alternative teaching methods (i.e. verbal assessment)

This also brings into question whether HE pedagogies should be revolutionised to be progressive and able to adapt to many forms of learning, along with updating forms of assessment to reflect this. The work done by the Lancaster SU indicates that students also want universities to adapt to AI supplementing their learning, not just using the software to get a better grade as many believe the standard of work they produce is much higher than that of AI software. There is also a positive response from the Russell Group, with all 24 universities' VC's supporting 5 new principles that support the integration of AI whilst upholding academic integrity.

How can DU do AI better? (Discussion)

- *How do you think DU should approach the use of AI?*
- *Do you think AI is a useful tool for HE?*
- *Is there a centralised approach to take?*

Direction of AI at DU (Discussion)

- What are your personal thoughts on using AI for assessments?
- Should AI be incorporated into assessments?
- Should the University consider teaching students how to use AI?
- Should AI be banned all together?

Useful resources

Blog post by DCAD's Matt Wood accessible here: <https://dcad.webspace.durham.ac.uk/2023/01/24/ai-the-future-of-assessment-in-higher-education/>

Article by UG Academic Officer Will Brown accessible here:

<https://www.palatinete.org.uk/artificial-intelligence-at-university-a-guide-to-using-chatgpt-for-work/>

Article by the Russell Group on principles of AI use in education accessible here: <https://russellgroup.ac.uk/news/new-principles-on-use-of-ai-in-education/>

Journal article by Chan, C. (2023) on a potential policy framework for HE accessible here:

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00408-3>

Article by Elena Rodríguez Falcón on AI prompting a more progressive approach to learning:

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/ai-should-cause-us-to-adopt-more-progressive-approaches-to-learning/>

Article by Matt Woodrow on students wanting advice on how to use AI in their work: <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/ai-should-cause-us-to-adopt-more-progressive-approaches-to-learning/>

TO: Assembly

FROM: Board of Trustees

RE: Ratification of Durham Estranged Care Experienced Association (DEaCE)

DATE: 23 November 2023

Assembly notes

At present, no organisation exists within the Durham University structure to represent and provide a voice to EaCE students.

The current support offered to Estranged, Care Leavers and Care Experienced (EaCE – see table of definitions below) people within Durham University currently falls below the standards set by many other institutions across the country. Many universities across the countries have slowly, but surely acknowledged the additional barriers that arise with having experience of the care system or being estranged from various or all family members.

Durham University currently has very few student-run initiatives that offer events outside of term time. Durham University tends to not only have shorter terms but runs on a very ‘termly’ schedule. Once term ends, undergraduate students who remain, tend to be those who have nowhere else to go.

Stand Alone charity reports that over 70% of estranged students report experiencing isolation¹. A report from the higher-education policy institute showed that 48% of care-experienced student say they felt lonely all or some of the time, compared to 26% of their peers². This disproportionate experience in feelings of loneliness would be one of the primary issues the Association attempts to tackle.

In addition, lobbying the University for wider external support that cannot be achieved through students alone is essential. Especially when it comes to support for prospective students. Nationally, 13% of care experienced young people go to university by the age of 19, compared to 43% of their peers³. Within County Durham itself, this number drops 9%.

Following on from this, the Office for Students (OFS) details how students who are estranged from their parents are considerably less likely to be awarded a 2:1 or a first and are more likely to drop out⁴. OFS also present similar findings for those who are care-experienced, showing that the dropout rate for students who had spent time in care was 5.6% percentage points higher than for students who had not been in care.⁵

¹

theandalonepledge.org.uk/images/theandalonepledge/filer/NUS_Estranged_Students_Solidarity_Campaign_Guide_2018_.pdf

² <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/07/21/breaking-new-ground-understanding-care-experienced-students/#:~:text=Whilst%20the%20report%20highlighted%20no,to%2026%25%20of%20their%20peers.>

³ <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/07/21/breaking-new-ground-understanding-care-experienced-students/#:~:text=Just%2013%25%20of%20care%2Dexperienced,to%2043%25%20of%20their%20peers.>

⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/new-data-highlights-equality-gaps-for-estranged-students/>

⁵ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/press-and-media/care-leavers-more-likely-to-drop-out-of-university/#:~:text=The%20report%2C%20which%20looks%20at,had%20not%20been%20in%20care>

In relation to housing and accommodation, those who are care experienced or estranged are more likely to feel the effects of the housing crisis to a higher extent compared to those with a more typical student experience. In Scotland, it has been reported that 1/3 of estranged students had experienced homelessness, 29% of care experienced students, and 12% of overall students⁶. This trend is reflected once again in work produced by first star scholars UK. They highlight the fact that 25% of care leavers experience homelessness within the first 2 years of independence⁷.

Another avenue of stress for EaCE students is finance, like the majority of students. However once again, the statistics show that the situation is slightly worsened due to the realities EaCE students find themselves in. Unite Foundation report that 62% of EaCE students stated having the ability to simply earn money was one of their main concerns, with another 50% worrying about affording the essential supplies and/or food⁸. Palatinat also reported that the 'full student loan only covers 44 weeks of the year' and where estranged students receive no financial support at all and are fully reliant on these loans, more work needs to be done⁹.

In December 2020, Springer Link shared research which looked at the 1010 registered care experienced students in 2017-2018, six months after their graduation. The findings showed that these students were older on average, twice as likely to be over the age of 25, disproportionately black, Asian or mixed ethnicity, and 5.9% more likely to be unemployed, having an employment rate of 60.9% compared to 66% for other students.

Assembly believes

The Durham Estranged and Care Experienced Association will allow the voices of EaCE students to be raised and represented within Durham University. This is especially necessary given the low numbers of these students within the community.

Establishing an Association will solidify a consistent space for long-term support for EaCE students, so that no other Estranged or Care Experienced student has to go through the challenges that arise with being EaCE alone, again.

Assembly resolves

To ratify the Durham Estranged and Care Experienced Association (DEaCE), with constitution as attached, and therefore amend standing order G10 to include the Durham Estranged and Care LeaversE Association.

Appendix 1: Table of Definitions

Estranged (Student Finance England definition)	A student who is irreconcilably estranged from their entire family. Proof is required from the student in this regard and cases are reviewed on a case by case basis. ¹⁰
Estranged (Association definition)	Anyone who is estranged from any number of their family members. This includes students who are financially estranged (fully self-funded but still in touch), students who have turbulent relationships with certain family members, as well as students

⁶ [https://www.gov.scot/publications/experiences-estranged-students-further-fe-higher-education-review-literature/pages/7/?fbclid=IwAR0acZZJdYDyltS-NimiUf47sdo0KzVvwMLut4ev0f9HmGXeLk5TxI9-uko#:~:text=In%20Scotland%2C%20a%20third%20of,\(NUS%20Scotland%2C%202022\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/experiences-estranged-students-further-fe-higher-education-review-literature/pages/7/?fbclid=IwAR0acZZJdYDyltS-NimiUf47sdo0KzVvwMLut4ev0f9HmGXeLk5TxI9-uko#:~:text=In%20Scotland%2C%20a%20third%20of,(NUS%20Scotland%2C%202022))

⁷ <https://firststaruk.org/whats-at-stake/?fbclid=IwAR1tZvbsTGsDoFAn-YSksO8JLLEBNQ06kzjlo5kgvmo7Tx48TzmP0mhdX0Y>

⁸ Unite Foundation article

⁹ https://www.palatinat.org.uk/durham-su-to-establish-new-association-for-estranged-and-care-experienced-students/?fbclid=IwAR2FvNCywMqMkFeXCB_UU7GDQ97yPANmeF4SRYiYbodnyxZlkevMVStoMEs

¹⁰ standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide/#irreconcilably-estranged

	who are irreconcilably estranged from their entire family.
Care Experienced (Association definition)	Any student who has spent anytime whatsoever interacting with social services. Any student who was under kinship care, in which a student is looked after by someone besides their biological parents. Unaccompanied child asylum seekers i.e. individuals granted asylum into the country without guardians, usually from countries experiencing war.
Care Leaver	A subset of care experienced. These students would typically have spent at least three months in the care system and will have a relevant representative from their respective council to support them in their higher education journey.

APPENDIX 2

ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

Adopted on [28/10/2023]

1. NAME, AIMS AND ORGANISATION

- 1.1 The Association is called [Estranged and Care Experienced], but in this Constitution will be referred to as simply **the Association**.
- 1.2 The Association exists to provide representation and, where appropriate, support social opportunities and activities for students who identify as [Estranged or Care Experienced, **Estranged** is defined as - > Anyone who doesn't have contact with ones entire family, or certain members. We also extend the definition to include those who are 'financially estranged' from their families, so must fund everything in their university career alone. Also, those who **wish** to become estranged but can't due to maybe financials stressors or cultural clashes within the individuals family life, and their adult-decisions. **Care Experienced** is equally as nuanced, but our definition incorporates those who spent **any** time whatsoever in either a care home, under foster care, or interactions with the social services. People who grew up in **Kinship care** are also included (this is when an individual is raised by maybe a family relative or close friend, but not their biological parents). We also include **unaccompanied asylum seekers** (children who received asylum into the country without parents).].
- 1.3 The students who are represented by the Association are 'Marginalised, oppressed or disadvantaged in society as a result of an element of their identity and within their University experience due to the way in which they access their education'.
- 1.4 The aims of the Association are
 - 1.4.1 [Create and foster a long-term community of people who identify as EaCE]
 - 1.4.2 [Campaign the university to provide appropriate support for Estranged and Care Experienced, from financial to pastoral and accommodation support]
 - 1.4.3 [Set up a biweekly support group/drop in session for EaCE students.]
 - 1.4.4 [Offer support for **outside** of term time, as well as **during** term time.]

(the **Aims**).
- 1.5 In order to achieve its Aims, the Association may:
 - 1.5.1 [Book a room in Elvet Riverside for the biweekly support group]
 - 1.5.2 [Liaise with the various university departments from the counselling service, careers and enterprise team, Equality and Diversity team, first generation scholars network initiative, various colleges, the SU, various academic departments, external charities (such as Stand Alone and Unite Foundation) and students themselves and really give a voice to EaCE students to find out what they would find useful to support them through their university journey.]
 - 1.5.3 [Provide out-of-term care packages to those who remain in the city of Durham.
 - 1.5.3 Carry out such other activities which the Committee (defined in clause 6) believes will help the Association to achieve its Aims, and which are agreed in advance with the Student Groups Committee.

- 1.6 The composition, work and organisation of the Association shall be governed by this Constitution and by the Student Groups Agreement entered into between Durham SU and the Association. If there is a conflict between the two then the Student Groups Agreement will prevail.
- 1.7 The Association will be overseen on a day-to-day basis by the President (with support from at least one other Committee member), and the President shall be directly answerable to the Student Groups Committee, Assembly and the Durham SU Board of Trustees. Notwithstanding this, the Committee is collectively answerable to Durham SU as the body with ultimate responsibility for compliance with the law and with the regulation of the Charity Commission.

2. RELATIONSHIP WITH DURHAM SU AND DURHAM UNIVERSITY

- 2.1 The Association shall at all times comply with and conduct itself in accordance with the terms of the Student Group Agreement and all relevant Durham SU or Durham University (the **University**) regulations, rules, standing orders, policies, procedures and codes of practice etc in force from time to time including but not limited to:

2.1.1 The Durham SU complaints procedure;

2.1.2 The agreement in place between Durham SU and the University regarding the use of the University's name;

Collectively referred to in this Constitution as the **Rules and Regulations**.

- 2.2 The Association shall not, and shall not purport to, make or enter into any commitments for and on behalf of Durham SU or the University except as otherwise agreed in advance with Durham SU and/or the University (as applicable).
- 2.3 The Association recognises that it does not have permission to use the University's logo.
- 2.4 Neither Durham SU nor the University shall be held liable for any debts/financial liability of the Association unless otherwise agreed in writing and unless such liability arises from an act or omission on the part of the Association as authorised by Durham SU and/or the University (as applicable).

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Who can be a member of the Association

1.1.1 All members of Durham SU, who define their identity as that represented by the Association, may be a member of the Association (hereafter referred to as "**Student Members**"). Student members must join the Association on the Durham SU website in order to be an official member.

3.1.2 Persons who are not members of Durham SU may, at the discretion of the Association, become members of the Association (hereafter referred to as "**Associate Members**") provided that they self-define as part of the group represented by the Association. An Executive Committee Meeting of the Association will consider Associate Membership.

3.2 Minimum membership numbers

3.2.1 There must be at least [3.] members at all times. If the number of members falls below this number, the existing members must immediately notify the Student Groups Committee who will meet with the Association Committee to develop a support plan to increase membership. The Association will continue to exist during this time and

will retain all democratic rights as provided in the Standing Orders but will be required to use any funds solely for the purpose of increasing membership.

3.3 Membership fee

3.3.1 Members will not be required to pay an annual fee to the Association.

3.4 Membership entitlements

3.4.1 All members shall be entitled to attend all Association events (subject to availability and any lawful restrictions that the Officers (defined in clause 6) may impose from time to time), unless the event is restricted to a sub-section of the Association's membership.

3.4.2 All members shall be entitled to Association privileges that the Committee may arrange from time to time [such as welfare advice, student finance England support, or signposting support to a relevant member of university staff that can support a specific EaCE member and their specific issue.

3.4.3 All members shall be entitled to attend the Association's General Meetings and Annual General Meetings ("**AGMs**") and put forward agenda items to be considered, although only Student Members can vote at these.

3.5 Member responsibilities

3.5.1 Members must not act in a manner which brings, or is likely to bring, the Association, Durham SU and/or the University into disrepute. (Note that this does not prevent any member or the Association from being critical of the Association, Durham SU and the University in order to hold them to account and effectively represent their members).

3.5.2 Each member must, as a condition of membership, sign/agree to a declaration (which will generally be incorporated into the online membership purchase process) confirming that they will, at all times:

- (a) comply with the terms of this Constitution, the Durham SU Code of Conduct, the relevant Rules and Regulations, and all relevant laws and regulations (including but not limited to the General Data Protection Regulation); and
- (b) act in the best interests of the Association and Durham SU and uphold the Association's Aims and the objects of Durham SU.

This does not prohibit the Association from holding different policy positions to Durham SU, so long as those positions do not contravene Durham SU' policies of procedures.

4. GENERAL MEETINGS

- 4.1 A General Meeting may be held at any time during the University's term time.
- 4.2 [A General Meeting must be held at least [once every University term].
- 4.3 All members [who have Identified as EaCE or have joined the association] shall be entitled to attend a General Meeting and, if they are Student Members, they shall also be entitled to vote at a General Meeting (subject to the Conflicts of Interest section below).
- 4.4 The Durham SU Board of Trustees and the Student Groups Committee may each nominate someone to attend and speak at the General Meetings on their behalf should they wish. As far as possible, they should nominate someone who self-defines as part of the group represented by the Association. The non-voting delegates from Student Groups Committee and from the Durham SU Board are there to have a regard for matters of good governance, and not to seek to direct the democracy or activities of the Association. They should inform the President of their request for attendance, and the reason for their attendance, in advance of the meeting they wish to attend. Other persons who are not members of the Association may also attend the General Meetings but only with the prior consent of the Committee.
- 4.5 A General Meeting may be called by:
 - 4.5.1 the Committee; or
 - 4.5.2 [ten percent] of members of the Association.
- 4.6 Meetings may take place by video conference or telephone conference or similar means to allow every member to take part in the meeting.
- 4.7 Notification of all General Meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Association (and, where the agenda for the General Meeting includes a matter of significance, to members of the Student Groups Committee and the Durham SU Board of Trustees) at least seven days in advance of the meeting date. Notices shall be given in writing, including by email where members have given their consent. For the purpose of this clause 4.7, a "matter of significance" shall include a proposal to amend this Constitution or a proposal to change the rights of the Association's members.
- 4.8 Motions to be discussed should be presented to the Association Committee not less than [five days] prior to the General Meeting unless the Committee agrees otherwise.
- 4.9 [The President], or in their absence, another Officer nominated by the [President] shall chair the General Meeting. In the absence of the President or other Officers, the members present at the General Meeting shall elect a chairperson from amongst themselves for that meeting.
- 4.10 [The Secretary], or in their absence, another Officer nominated by the [Secretary] will take the minutes of the General Meetings.
- 4.11 The quorum for General Meetings shall be double the number of committee positions currently filled plus one.
- 4.12 All decisions at a General Meeting will be made by a show of hands or electronic vote, unless at least one members demand a secret ballot. In the case of electronic vote, that vote must be received within the advertised timescales
- 4.13 Motions carried by the necessary majority (i.e. a 50% or more vote in favour of the motion) at quorate General Meetings are binding on the Association (unless those motions also require the prior consent of the Student Groups Committee or the Durham SU Board of Trustees, in which case they will need that prior consent also to be binding).

- 4.14 A Committee member subject to a proposed motion of no confidence shall be notified of the motion in advance of the General Meeting and be given the opportunity to make representations thereto.

5. AGMs

- 5.1 AGMs shall be held annually prior to the deadline for the Association to submit its application for re-registration to the Student Groups Committee, as determined from year to year.
- 5.2 All members who, at the point that notice of the AGM is issued, have joined the Association, shall be entitled to attend and, in the case of Student Members only, be entitled to vote at the AGM (subject to the Conflicts of Interest section below).
- 5.3 The Durham SU Board of Trustees and the Student Groups Committee may each nominate someone to attend and speak at the General Meetings on their behalf should they wish. As far as possible, they should nominate someone who self-defines as part of the group represented by the Association. The non-voting delegates from Student Groups Committee and from the Durham SU Board are there to have a regard for matters of good governance, and not to seek to direct the democracy or activities of the Association. They should inform the President of their request for attendance, and the reason for their attendance, in advance of the meeting they wish to attend. Other persons who are not members of the Association may also attend the General Meetings but only with the prior consent of the Committee.
- 5.4 Notification of an AGM shall be circulated to all members of the Association (and to members of the Student Groups Committee and the Durham SU Board of Trustees) at least [two weeks] in advance of the meeting date. [Notices shall be given in writing, including by email where members have given their consent].
- 5.5 Meetings may take place by video conference or telephone conference or similar means to allow every member of the Committee to take part in the meeting.
- 5.6 Motions to be discussed should be presented to the Association Committee not less than [seven days] prior to the AGM unless the Committee agrees otherwise.
- 5.7 [The President], or in their absence, another Officer nominated by the [President] shall chair the AGM. In the absence of the President or another Officer, the members present at the AGM shall elect a chairperson from amongst themselves for that meeting.
- 5.8 [The Secretary], or in their absence, another Officer nominated by the [Secretary] will take the minutes of the AGM.
- 5.9 The quorum for an AGM shall be double the number of committee positions currently filled plus one.
- 5.10 At the AGM the following business shall take place:
- 5.10.1 President's report.
 - 5.10.2 Report by other Officers (where applicable).
 - 5.10.3 An Officer shall report on the administrative affairs of the Association.
 - 5.10.4 Approval of the minutes of the last General Meeting.
 - 5.10.5 Approval of the Association's accounts for the preceding year.
 - 5.10.6 Approval of the Association's plan and budget for the forthcoming year.
 - 5.10.7 Constitutional amendments (if any).

5.10.8 Such other business as is considered necessary.

- 5.11 All decisions at an AGM will be made by a show of hands or electronic vote, unless at least one member demand a secret ballot. In the case of electronic vote, that vote must be received within the advertised timescales and validated by [the president] as eligible.

6. THE COMMITTEE

6.1 Composition of the Committee

6.1.1 The Committee must have a minimum of three Officers but may have more. As a minimum, there must be the following **Officers**:

- (a) The **President** who shall be the nominal head and representative of the Association and is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the Association and such other matters as set out in this Constitution and in the President's role description.

The President is accountable to the Durham SU Board of Trustees.

- (b) The **Treasurer** who shall maintain the Association accounts and any property whether belonging to the Association or in the care of the Association and shall be responsible to the President for those and such other matters as set out in this Constitution and in the Treasurer's role description.
- (c) The **Secretary** who shall be responsible for the administration of the Association, including taking the minutes of the AGMs, General Meetings and Committee meetings and such other matters as set out in this Constitution and in the Association Secretary's role description.

6.1.2 The Committee may also include the following officers:

- (a) A **Vice-President** who shall support the president and act as substitute for the President when they are not available and such other matters as set out in this Constitution and in the Vice President's role description.
- (b) Such other positions as the Committee may decide from time to time, and which they may add to their constitutions accordingly. These additional positions may be restricted to those who self-define within a certain identity group.

6.2 Election of Officers and cessation of office

- 6.2.1 Notwithstanding any provision herein to the contrary, Officers must be elected in accordance with the Durham SU Associations Election Policy (as amended from time to time).
- 6.2.2 Any Student Member may run for a committee post with the exception of any roles restricted to those who self-define within an identity group as per 6.1.2 b. In those instances, candidacy is restricted to self-defining members.
- 6.2.3 Subject to clause 6.2.4, all Officers shall ordinarily commence their posts on the first day of the University's summer break and shall continue in post until the last day of the University's third academic term. Exemption requests can be made for individual officers upon request to Durham SU Prior to the end of their term in post, each Officer shall use all reasonable endeavours to train the incoming Officers, and to ensure a smooth handover.

- 6.2.4 An Officer's term in office may cease prior to the last day of the University's third academic term if:
- (a) They resign.
 - (b) A motion of no confidence is passed at a General Meeting held in accordance with clause 4.
 - (c) They are removed from their post by the Board of Trustees of Durham SU of its own volition acting reasonably, or on the recommendation of the Panel or Appeal Panel pursuant to clause 11.
 - (d) They are removed from their post by the Board of Trustees of Durham SU on the recommendation of the Committee which reasonably concludes that such Officer's tenure is either damaging to the interests of the Association or is no longer in furtherance of its Aims or the objects of Durham SU.
 - (e) In the case of an Officer who is also a trustee of Durham SU, that person ceases to be a trustee in accordance with the articles of association of Durham SU. In these circumstances, they will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee, except in instances where the officer would continue to have student status at Durham University, and their resignation will take effect on the date that their termination from office of trustee takes effect.
 - (f) They cease to be a member of Durham SU for whatever reason. In these circumstances, they will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and their resignation will take effect on the date that their membership of Durham SU ends. Details of all resignations, dismissals and appointments must be sent to the Student Groups Committee within seven days of the resignation, dismissal and/or appointment (as applicable).
- 6.2.5 If an Officer post becomes vacant for whatever reason, reasonable steps shall be taken to fill the vacancy in accordance with the process for electing Officers under this constitution.

6.3 Responsibilities and powers of the Officers

- 6.3.1 The Committee shall manage the Association's day to day duties, general business and policy.
- 6.3.2 The Committee may delegate any of its functions to another group or person but is ultimately responsible for the acts or omissions of such group or person.
- 6.3.3 The Committee is responsible for the Association's compliance with the Rules and Regulations; the law (including charity law), regulation and best practice; and the Student Group Agreement, and is accountable to the Durham SU Board of Trustees for the same.
- 6.3.4 The Committee may specify further responsibilities for themselves, or for any Officer, as required.
- 6.3.5 Upon appointment each Officer shall sign a declaration confirming that they:
- (a) Are able and willing to act as an Officer.
 - (b) Shall attend such training as the Durham SU Board of Trustees and/or the Student Groups Committee may require from time to time.
 - (c) Will at all times act in the best interests of the Association and uphold the Association's Aims.

- (d) Will at all times act in the best interests of Durham SU and uphold the objects of Durham SU.

7. THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND DECISION MAKING

- 7.1 The Committee must meet at least [twice in every University academic term].
- 7.2 An Officer may call a committee meeting by writing or email to the Association Committee.
- 7.3 Any persons nominated by the Student Groups Committee and/or the Durham SU Board of Trustees may request to attend and speak at the committee meetings. Other persons may also attend with the prior consent of the Committee. As far as possible, they should nominate someone who self-defines as part of the group represented by the Association
- 7.4 Notification of a Committee meeting shall be circulated to all members of the Committee (and to members of the Student Groups Committee and the Durham SU Board of Trustees) at least [one week] in advance of the meeting date. The non-voting delegates from Student Groups Committee and from the Durham SU Board are there to have a regard for matters of good governance, and not to seek to direct the democracy or activities of the Association. They should inform the President of their attendance, and the reason for their attendance, in advance of the meeting they wish to attend. Notification may be circulated by email to the email address supplied by the recipients for this purpose, and provided the recipients agree in advance to receive such notifications by email.
- 7.5 Meetings may take place by video conference or telephone conference or similar means to allow every member of the Committee to take part in the meeting.
- 7.6 The President will chair all Committee meetings. If the President is unable or unwilling to do so then another Officer shall chair the meetings.
- 7.7 In the event of a tie, the chair of the meeting will have a casting vote.
- 7.8 The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be [three] members.
- 7.9 The Committee may make decisions outside of meetings, provided that such decisions are recorded by the Association Secretary and that all members of the Committee have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

8. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 8.1 A member (including an Officer) who has a conflict of interest in relation to the matters discussed at a General Meeting, AGM or a Committee meeting must:
- 8.1.1 At the start of the meeting declare the nature and extent of their interest in the matter in question.
 - 8.1.2 Excuse themselves from the meeting whilst the matter in question is being discussed.
 - 8.1.3 Not be counted in the quorum for the part of the meeting where the matter in question is discussed.
 - 8.1.4 Not vote on the matter in question.
- 8.2 The Association Committee must keep a record of all interests declared.

9. ASSETS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 9.1 **Assets**

9.1.1 All assets (whether tangible or intangible) ("**Assets**") purchased by the Association (whether from monies raised, grants awarded to it by Durham SU or otherwise) or provided or awarded to the Association by Durham SU shall at all times remain the property of Durham SU.

9.1.2 The Association and its members shall not cause, or permit to be caused, any damage to the Assets and may otherwise be held liable for any such damage.

9.1.3 For the avoidance of doubt:

- (a) Tangible assets are physical assets such as stationery, books, tech/IT equipment, marketing materials and gear.
- (b) Intangible assets are non-physical assets such as contracts or agreements, computer software, domain names, trademarks, goodwill and copyright.

9.2 **Bank Account**

9.2.1 Unless otherwise agreed with the Durham SU Finance Committee, on the recommendation of the Chief Executive of Durham SU, the Association shall not be permitted to maintain its own bank account. All of the Association's funds (the "**Association's Funds**") must be deposited into the Durham SU bank account, as nominated by Durham SU from time to time (the "**Bank Account**"). The Association's Funds will be ring-fenced from such other funds contained within that Bank Account (i.e. the Association's Funds will be held by Durham SU as a restricted fund).

9.2.2 Money received from members, sponsors, donors, and any other third parties:

- (a) Must be immediately deposited into the Bank Account.
- (b) May only be used for the purpose it was provided, donated, etc.
- (c) Must be immediately returned if provided, donated etc. for a purpose that is incompatible with the Aims of the Association.

9.2.3 It is the Committee's responsibility to ensure that it instructs Durham SU as to the correct use of, or return of, the Association's Funds held in the Bank Account.

9.3 **Accounting Records**

9.3.1 The financial year for the Association is the same as that for Durham SU i.e. 31 July.

9.3.2 The Association's accounts and financial records shall be kept for at least seven financial years and can be inspected by any member of the Association, the Student Groups Committee or the Durham SU Board of Trustees upon request.

9.3.3 The Treasurer is responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring that monies received are properly accounted for, and that the Association's financial records are kept in good order.
- (b) Presenting the Association's accounts to the members annually at the AGM.
- (c) Ensuring that the ordinary expenditure of any given year is not more than the ordinary income of that year.
- (d) Presenting an undated budget to the first full meeting of the Committee in the following academic year to be discussed.

9.4 Miscellaneous

- 9.4.1 The Association shall be non-profit making which means that the members (including the Officers) may only receive payment, direct or indirect, as reimbursement for legitimate expenses reasonably incurred in carrying out activities in furtherance of the Aims.
- 9.4.2 Any reserves at the end of the financial year shall be carried over into the restricted reserves for that Association for the following financial year, unless otherwise agreed by Durham SU.
- 9.4.3 If the Association is suspended or de-ratified by the Student Groups Committee and/or the Durham SU Board of Trustees or the Association has been dormant for two years, any balance left in its Bank Account shall be transferred to the Durham SU bank account, as a restricted fund, for the charitable purposes of Durham SU.
- 9.4.4 Records of the Association's business (whether financial or otherwise) shall be available for inspection by members of the Association, the Student Groups Committee and Durham SU.

10. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 10.1 Subject to clause 10.2 below, the Constitution may be amended at a General Meeting, with approval of at least 50%+1 of those members present.
- 10.2 Any alteration to the following provisions of this Constitution will require the prior written consent of Durham SU:
 - 10.2.1 Clause 1 – Name, Aims and Organisation
 - 10.2.2 Clause 2 – Relationship with Durham SU and Durham University
 - 10.2.3 Clause 6.2.4 – Cessation of office of an Officer
 - 10.2.4 Clause 6.3.5 – Requirement for Officers to sign a declaration.
 - 10.2.5 Clause 9 – Assets and Financial Matters
 - 10.2.6 Clause 10 – Changes to the Constitution and Complaints Procedure
 - 10.2.7 Clause 11 – Breach of this Constitution
 - 10.2.8 Clause 12 – Dissolution
- 10.3 Any deviation from the Durham SU Complaints Procedure will require the prior written consent of the Durham SU Board of Trustees. A copy of that Procedure is available from the Opportunities team upon request.

11. BREACH OF THIS CONSTITUTION

- 11.1 If a member is alleged to have breached the terms of this Constitution, then those allegations must be promptly reported to a member of the Committee, and the process set out below must be followed.
- 11.2 All persons involved in the process must at the outset sign a declaration to confirm that they will deal with the matter sensitively and with respect for the privacy of the relevant member concerned and shall treat the information that they are privy to as part of the process as

confidential. This form can be obtained from the Opportunities Team who will support those involved in the process to follow the correct procedure.

- 11.3 Allegations of breach of this Constitution must, where possible, be dealt with in an informal and prompt manner. However, where this is not possible, or where the relevant member of the Committee believes that the breach is more than minor or has been committed before by the same person, then the Student Groups Committee must be notified, and the more formal process below must be followed.

Investigation

- 11.4 An Officer (the **Investigatory Officer**) shall promptly investigate the alleged breach.
- 11.5 The Investigatory Officer may, as part of the investigatory process, suspend the member in question as a member of the Association. Suspension shall not imply that the relevant member has breached the Constitution – suspension will be a neutral measure designed to facilitate the investigation process.
- 11.6 The Investigatory Officer shall share the findings of their investigation with the Panel (defined in clause 11.7).

Panel decision

- 11.7 A panel made up of one member of the Committee (but not the Chair or the Investigatory Officer), one member of the Student Groups Committee, and the Opportunities Officer (or their nominated Sabbatical Officer), (the **Panel**), must promptly discuss the allegation and shall invite the member who is alleged to have breached the Constitution to put forward their views at the meeting. That member may be accompanied by a trusted friend or family member, but not a legal representative.
- 11.8 Each Panel member shall have one vote. If the majority or all of the Panel members decide that the member in question did breach the Constitution, then the Panel is authorised to carry out one or more of the following actions:
- 11.8.1 Issue a written warning to the member;
- 11.8.2 Suspend or expel the member from the Association; if the member is also an officer they will automatically have been considered to have resigned from the post on suspension or expulsion of their membership from the Association under this clause.
- 11.8.3 Make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees of Durham SU to suspend or expel the member from Durham SU in accordance with the latter's Articles of Association;
- 11.8.4 If that member is an Officer of the Association, make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees of Durham SU to remove the member as an Officer of the Association and, if the Board of Trustees of Durham SU agree and action that recommendation, propose to the other members that a replacement Officer be elected without undue delay in accordance with this constitution;
- 11.8.5 Require the member to undergo such relevant training and development as specified by the Panel and in the timeframes specified by the Panel; otherwise, the complaint will be dismissed.

Appeal Panel decision

- 11.9 Subject to clause 11.10, if the Panel decides that the member in question did breach the Constitution, that member may appeal that decision to a separate panel (the **Appeals Panel**) within 5 days of the decision.

- 11.10 Any person appealing a decision to carry out the action listed at clause 11.8.3 shall have the right of appeal (if any) as for a trustee of Durham SU as set out in Articles 86 to 89 inclusive of the Articles of Association of Durham SU.
- 11.11 The Appeals Panel shall comprise the Chair and one other Officer (excluding the Investigatory Officer and the Officer who sat on the Panel).
- 11.12 The Appeals Panel shall meet to consider the allegations against the relevant member. The proceedings of the Appeals Panel shall be conducted in the same way as the Panel originally conducted their proceedings.
- 11.13 The Appeals Panel may substitute any alternative outcome, or uphold the original decision or recommendation of the Panel, and shall, in writing, notify the relevant member of the Appeal Panel's decision within 5 days of the appeal hearing.
- 11.14 Durham SU shall appoint an individual to take notes of the meetings of the Panel and the Appeals Panel and shall circulate the draft minutes to the Panel and Appeals Panel (as appropriate) for commenting and approval.
- 11.15 Subject to clause 11.16, the Appeal Panel's decision shall be final.

External validation of the process

- 11.16 If the relevant member remains dissatisfied with the decision **and** believes that the correct procedure has not been followed in reaching that decision, then they must write, within 5 days of the date of the decision, to the Appeals Panel, setting out why they believe the correct procedure was not followed. An independent, external person, nominated by Durham SU Board of Trustees will then review the fairness (or otherwise) of the process and make recommendations to that Board of Trustees and the Committee on how to readdress that going forward. That independent external person may not, however, substitute an alternative outcome of the Appeals Panel.

12. DISSOLUTION

- 12.1 The Association may be wound up by a resolution of [two thirds] of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting called for that purpose provided that notice of the proposed dissolution is first provided to Assembly and to the Durham SU Board of Trustees in good time before the General Meeting.
- 12.2 Any motion for dissolution of the Association shall provide that assets remaining after all liabilities have been met shall not be distributed amongst the members but instead paid to Durham SU for its general charitable purposes
- 12.3 The Association shall automatically be dissolved if it is de-ratified by Assembly and the Durham SU Board of Trustees.

TO: Assembly

FROM: President

RE: Review of Durham SU elected student Officer structure

DATE: 23 November 2023

Consultation update – 16 November 2023

The President has reviewed student feedback in response to the proposal to change the Officer structure.

In addition to the communications outlined in the original proposal below to all students, the following groups have received further communications regarding the review since 9 November:

- A further email to all members of JCR PresComm and MCR PresComm, and a discussion at a meeting of the SU and JCR Presidents
- Inclusion in the Assembly papers sent to all Assembly members
- An email to Student Groups Committee
- A further email to all Faculty and Course Representatives.

There was a consensus of support but with some suggestions for amendments to the motion that I've included in the Standing Orders below **in highlighted text**, and some questions which are important to address in answers to Assembly.

Points of consensus

- There was broad support for the review; there was strong agreement with the findings, and a broad agreement with the new roles as proposed.
- In particular, there was agreement that there needed to be elected student leadership, at Officer level, engaging with academic interests in Faculties. There was also broad agreement that JCR and MCR leaders should be part of the collective Officer team, and this would have positive contributions to Durham SU and to Common Rooms.

Points which have been made which require an answer:

Feedback: It isn't clear how much time the part-time Officers would have to do their role. How much will they be paid?

Response: The part-time Officers would be asked to contribute 7 hours per week (0.2 of a full-time equivalent), and this would be evaluated at the end of academic year 2024/2025 and discussed by Assembly at that time to see how it's worked for the good of students. There's scope to increase this to 14 hours/0.4 of a full-time equivalent if necessary or appropriate. We think this amount of time will be sufficient for a part-time Officer to attend meetings with relevant groups of students, and then represent the interests of students to the right people.

The roles will be paid at the Living Wage Foundation Real Living Wage. The proposed reduction in sabbatical Officer roles, from five to three, makes the proposals cost neutral.

Feedback: The part-time Officers may have a lot to do. Is this possible in part-time roles?

Response: Students run really big and important things in Common Rooms and in societies on a part-time basis, around their studies, and do so very well. There's every reason to believe that these roles can be done on a part-time basis, with good support and good boundaries, because this is how almost every other students' union works. Durham SU has also shown with the PGR Student Representative, which has been funded as a roughly 0.2 FTE experiment over the past two years (as

an intern role, not as an elected student leader), that this model can work. We're also clear that the Durham SU professional staff team will support the part-time Officers to shoulder the administration burden of their role, and won't disturb the Officers with excessive internal meetings so that they can focus on their roles engaging with students.

Feedback: It isn't clear how the Officer team, and individual Officers, would be accountable to Assembly.

Response: That's a good point, and I've made a suggestion below in the text of the motion. This Officer review should be read in light of other Standing Orders which already exist, such as the Elections Standing Order which says that the sabbatical Officers would be elected by all students in a cross campus ballot, and the Assembly Standing Order which says that Officers report to Assembly.

Feedback: The Postgraduate Research Student Officer and International Student Officer should be elected by all students (undergraduate students should be part of the electorate for the PGR Student Officer and UK students should be part of the electorate for the International Students Officer).

Response: I disagree, but would emphasise that the motion suggests that we agree at Assembly in November that there should be a Postgraduate Research Students Officer and an International Students Officer, and asks for volunteers to join in a discussion as to the best way to elect that Officer over the next few months. We'll consult students more widely on how we can ensure that these Officers are legitimate and respected and, if students think that undergraduates should elect the PGR Officer, I'll respect that view, but I think that should be a discussion we have in February, for election in May (or at the best time as discussed).

Assembly members can review and offer amendments by midday on 23 November, for review and a vote at Assembly on 23 November.

Proposal

Assembly is asked to approve the following text as new Standing Order F, subject to:

- The plain text being approved and sent to the Board of Trustees for approval on 8 December 2023. This will have the effect of changing the number and roles of the full-time Officers. This will mean that the roles elected in February 2024 will be as set out in the motion. If further changes are required to other standing orders, in order to align with the proposals below, these will be brought before Assembly in the Epiphany Term.
- *The italic text* being approved in principle, but only to take effect if Assembly also agrees amendments to the election regulations at its meeting in Epiphany Term 2024. This will mean that there will be a sense of the role Assembly believes are suitable part-time Officer roles, but volunteers from Assembly will be asked to consider how best to fill the roles in Epiphany term. No part-time Officers will be elected until Easter term.

Reasoning

The independent review found that:

- Durham SU, quite unusually, had few opportunities for students currently studying to have influence in the students' unions elected leadership (note that this is understood differently to being a representative on Assembly which isn't an executive body). There are almost no roles with power in between 'not-involved' and 'a full-time Officer'. Almost all other students' unions had a form of part-time student leadership on the students' union's executive. Taken with the fact that recruitment of election candidates for full-time positions, and retention when in role, is an increasingly difficult challenge, **the review found that there should be more part-time roles and there was sense in considering fewer full-time roles.**
- Students, student leaders, the Durham SU Officer team, the Durham SU Board of Trustees, and Durham University, all wanted the students' union to be an effective representative organisation for students' education, but there was no meaningful evidence that the voice of students on their programme had any way to influence the students' union. There should be a Faculty focussed frame for student leadership positions, as well as a central University frame with **part-time Faculty Officers elected by students from within each Faculty.**

- There had been changes in the make-up of the student population, and very large numbers of students with particular needs that needed to be represented. These student demographics found it difficult or unappealing to run in a cross-campus ballot for a full-time role. An experiment with postgraduate research student representation in 2022, following the resignation of the Postgraduate Academic Officer, had shown that the model was viable, and **the review recommended part-time Officers for postgraduate research students and for international students.**
- **Common Rooms should have a formal power to influence Durham SU's representation of student issues to the University** on issues that relate to Colleges and life in College. The review acknowledged that the fact that many Common Rooms were now independent charities meant that this had to be done carefully, but it was both possible and desirable. It should also be possible to cover the time the PresComm Chair is already giving to institutional representation from Durham SU resources, with agreement from the governors of that Common Room.
- There were then aspects of the wider student experience where students who volunteer or campaign in particular ways need support and leadership to do their work properly. **The review recommended that part-time roles be created to support the leadership of societies, welfare, and liberation.** The Culture Commission on 2022 engaged with this issue, and informed the recommendation. The Durham SU President has, since the review, received feedback that a student leadership position to represent the student interest on the important issue of sustainability would be a timely and important addition to the proposal, and so **a Sustainability Officer is included in the proposal in this motion.**

Consultation

Students were asked about restructuring the Officer team in line with the Student Consultation Framework agreed by Assembly in 2023. All students have had the opportunity to see the recommendations from the independent reviewer, the first reaction from the Durham SU President, and have been invited to share their thoughts from 1 November to 14 November. All students have had the restructure drawn to their attention through:

- Two all-student emails, on 2 November and 9 November.
- A pop-up box on the Durham SU website, which will be live between 1 November and 14 November.
- A column from the Durham SU President in Palatinate on 9 November.
- The restructure appearing at least twice on all Durham SU social media channels between 1 November and 14 November.

The Student Consultation Framework also sets expectation that particular groups of students are asked for their points of view in particular. This has so far been achieved through:

- An email to all members of JCR PresComm and MCR PresComm, and a discussion at a meeting of JCR PresComm.
- An email to all Assembly members.
- An email to all College Welfare Representatives.
- An email and social media post to all Student Group Executives.
- An email to all Faculty and Course Representatives.

On 16 November, the Durham SU President will review all feedback gathered to that date and send out a proposal to all students, in an all-student email, which he intends to table at Assembly but which he stresses is not a final proposal because Assembly members still have the opportunity to table amendments after consulting with the people they represent.

Assembly members will have the proposal between 16 November and 23 November, to review and offer amendments before review and a vote on 23 November.

Standing Order F: Officers

Durham SU Officers

The Officers Committee

There will be an Officers Committee.

Membership

The full-time Officers

- The Durham SU President
- The Education Officer
- The Community Officer

The part-time Officers

- *One Faculty President, for each Faculty of Durham University.*
- *The International Students Officer.*
- *The Postgraduate Research Students Officer*
- *The Societies Officer.*
- *The Welfare Officer.*
- *The Liberation Officer.*
- *One member of JCR Presidents Committee.*
- *One member of MCR Presidents Committee.*

The Secretary to the Officers Committee is the Durham SU Chief Executive, who will ensure that the Officers Committee receives the support and advice necessary to undertake its responsibilities, and that Durham SU responds appropriately to discussions and decisions of the Officers Committee.

Responsibilities

The Officer Committee will collectively:

- Promote and defend the rights of Durham students.
- Represent the general interests of all Durham students to Durham University, and others.
- Agree and publish an annual priority plan against the Durham SU strategy.
- Report on progress against annual priorities to students, to Assembly, and to the Board of Trustees.
- Uphold high standards of behaviour, in line with the Durham SU Code of Conduct.
- Work with the Durham SU Chief Executive to ensure that service delivery responds to student interest.

The Officer Committee will have two Committees:

- *The Education Committee, which will be chaired by the Education Officer.*
- *The Community Committee, which will be chaired by the Community Officer.*

The Education Committee

Membership

The membership of the Education Committee is the Education Officer, the four Faculty Officers, the International Students Officer, and the Postgraduate Research Students Officer.

Responsibilities

The Education Committee will collectively:

- *Lead Durham SU's policy and campaigns in respect of the academic student experience.*
- *Coordinate Durham SU's response in urgent or unexpected matters which impact the academic student experience, for report to Assembly and the Board of Trustees.*
- *Champion the support, development and success of academic student representatives.*
- *Nominate student representatives to academic committees and working groups.*

The Community Committee

Membership

The membership of the Community Committee is the Community Officer, the Societies Officer, the Welfare Officer, the Liberation Officer, the Chair of JCR Presidents Committee, the Sustainability Officer and the Chair of MCR Presidents Committee.

Responsibilities

The Community Committee will collectively:

- *Lead Durham SU's policy and campaigns in respect of the wider student experience.*
- *Coordinate Durham SU's response in urgent or unexpected matters which impact the wider student experience, for report to Assembly and the Board of Trustees.*
- *Champion the support, development and success of student representatives in the wider student experience.*
- *Nominate student representatives to academic committees and working groups.*

The Chairs of the Officer Committee, the Education Committee, and the Community Committee, will report to Assembly at each meeting on work taken to progress the interests of students, and will be held accountable for progress against the Durham SU strategy, policy, and student priorities.

Particular responsibilities of Durham SU Officers

The full-time Officers

The Durham SU President will:

- Chair Officer Committee.
- Be chief spokesperson for the Officer team, representing Durham students to the media.
- Be lead student representative to Durham University, regional and national organisations.
- Lead the student interest in the effective governance and management of Durham SU, working closely with the Durham SU Chief Executive.

The Education Officer will:

- *Chair Education Committee*
- Be lead student representative to Durham University on the academic student experience.
- Coordinate and champion the work of academic student experience volunteers across Durham.

The Community Officer will:

- *Chair Community Committee*
- Be lead student representative to Durham University on the wider student experience.
- Coordinate and champion the work of wider student experience volunteers across Durham.

The part-time Officers

The Faculty Officers will:

- *Be lead student representative within their Faculty and be Durham SU nominees to be members of the Durham University Senate.*
- *Coordinate and champion the student representatives within their Faculty.*
- *Coordinate and champion student academic interests across Faculties, as members of the Durham SU Education Committee.*

The International Students Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for international students and be Durham SU nominee to be a member of Durham University committees and working groups for international students.*
- *Coordinate and champion international student representatives across Durham.*
- *Coordinate and champion international student interests across Durham, as a member of the Durham SU Education Committee and Community Committee.*

The Postgraduate Research Students Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for postgraduate research students and be Durham SU nominee to be a member of Durham University committees and working groups for postgraduate research students.*
- *Coordinate and champion the postgraduate student representatives across Durham.*

- *Coordinate and champion postgraduate student academic interests across Durham, as a member of the Durham SU Education Committee.*

The Societies Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for the interests of student social, cultural and developmental services and experiences.*
- *Coordinate and champion the work of student groups across Durham, representing their interests to Durham SU, Durham University and others, as a member of the Durham SU Community Committee.*
- *Chair the Societies Committee of Assembly.*

The Sustainability Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for the interests of student sustainability and to be a member of Durham University committees and working groups related to sustainability.*
- *Coordinate and champion the work of student groups, representatives and volunteers working to improve sustainability within Durham University and the community, as a member of the Durham SU Community Committee.*
- *Chair of the Sustainability Committee of Assembly.*

The Welfare Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for the interests of student welfare and support services and experiences.*
- *Coordinate and champion the work of student welfare groups and volunteers across Durham, representing their interests to Durham SU, Durham University and others, as a member of the Durham SU Community Committee.*
- *Chair the Welfare Committee of Assembly.*

The Liberation Officer will:

- *Be lead student representative for the interests of student equity, inclusion, diversity, and liberation services and experiences.*
- *Coordinate and champion the work of student equity, inclusion, diversity, and liberation groups and volunteers across Durham, representing their interests to Durham SU, as a member of the Durham SU Community Committee.*
- *Chair the Liberation Committee of Assembly.*

The Chairs of the JCR Presidents Committee and the MCR Presidents Committee will:

- *Be lead representatives for the interests of students' residential and collegiate experience to Durham SU, and through Durham SU to Durham University.*
- *Coordinate and champion the shared interests of Common Rooms and Durham SU.*
- *Coordinate and champion the work of groups and volunteers in Common Rooms within Durham SU.*

Additional provisions

The full-time Officers will be:

- *Elected in a cross-campus ballot of all members.*
- *Employed under a full-time contract of employment with Durham SU.*
- *Serve for one year in total, with additional paid transition time for training and development.*
- *Major office holders and trustees of Durham SU.*

The part-time Officers will be:

- *Elected in ways detailed in the Elections Standing Order.*
- *Employed under a part-time contract of employment with Durham SU.*
- *Serve for one year in total, with additional paid transition time for training and development.*

The part-time Officers will each work with student volunteers, who will guide, support, and scrutinise their work as a member of the Officer Committee. The part-time Officers will submit an individual activity report to Assembly.

Both full-time Officers and part-time Officers are paid Durham SU office holders so, by law, no student member may serve in any combination of any office for more than two years in total.

The Officers will be members of Assembly.

TO: Assembly

FROM: President

RE: Affordability and Student Income Definitions Discussion

DATE: 23 November 2023

Assembly notes:

1. The Student Finance system in the UK provides students with a Maintenance Loan for living costs based on household income. The Maintenance Loan usually falls short of the UK living costs, so the government relies on parents to fill the gap. The higher their income, the more parents are expected to contribute. However:
 - a. Some parents have more than one child at university and, therefore, less money to spare.
 - b. Some parents do not want to or cannot help their children financially after they turn 18.
 - c. This system assumes that all students have a parent or guardian who can support them, but this is not true for everyone.¹

2. Rent is the largest part of students' expenses.
 - a. Durham University's lowest charges for college accommodation (2023-24) are as follows:

Level of student	Type of room	Charge per week	Annual charge
Undergraduate	Standard room with shared bathroom facilities for 30 weeks (term only)	£179pw	£5,370.
Undergraduate	Standard room with shared bathroom facilities plus catering for 30 weeks (term only)	£271pw	£8,130
Postgraduate	Standard room with shared facilities for 50 weeks	£152pw	£7,600
Postgraduate	Standard room with shared facilities plus catering for 50 weeks	£209.04pw	£10,452

- b. Only 7 out of 17 colleges offer non-catered options.
 - c. The average rent within Durham's private rented sector for 2024-25 (**52 weeks**) is £888.06 pppcm; in many cases, bills are excluded. The average rent within the most expensive properties in Durham city and the surrounding areas is £1220.92 pppcm, approximately 2.2 times the average rent of the lowest rent properties in Durham city and the surrounding areas, which amounts to £555.21 pppcm².

¹ <https://www.savethestudent.org/money/asking-parents-for-money-university.html> (see appendix table 4)

² 2024/25 Rental Costs by Area from the Students' Union Data Collection (see appendix table 5)

3. According to the Student Money Survey from Save the Student 2023 the average student's monthly living costs have increased by 17%, from £924 in 2022 (when the average maintenance loan was £439 monthly), to £1,078³ in 2023 (when average maintenance loan was £496 per month). According to the same survey, the average living costs for Durham students in 2023-24, **excluding rent**, reach £512 per month. Meanwhile for the same academic year, the average rent price for low-rent properties was £554ppcm, and the average rent price for high-rent properties was £1,049ppcm while the average maintenance loan increased slightly to £496 per month.
4. Student income potential definitions with calculations for 2023-24 academic year:
 - a. If student income consists of the maintenance loan and expected parental contribution⁴:
 - i. Student income: full maintenance loan, Durham Grant, parental contribution (expected to be £0): $£9,978 + £2,500 = £12,478$ (approx. £1,039.8 per month, £239.9 per week)
 - ii. Student income: reduced maintenance loan, no Durham Grant and expected parental contribution: approx. $£6,412 + £3,566 = £9,978$ (approx. £831.5 per month, £191.8 per week)
 - iii. Student income: lowest maintenance loan and expected parental contribution: $£4,651 + £5,327 = £9,978$ (approx. £831.5 per month, £191.8 per week)

Student Income	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
Full maintenance loan, Durham Grant, Expected parental contribution (expected to be £0)	£12,478	£1,039.80	£239.90
Reduced maintenance loan, No Durham Grant Expected parental contribution	£9,978	£831.50	£191.80
Lowest maintenance loan Expected parental contribution	£9,978	£831.50	£191.80

Table 1 Calculation of Student Income with expected parental contribution.

- b. If student income consists of the maintenance loan (plus, in some cases, the Durham Grant) and a 15-hour per week part-time job:
 - i. Student income: full maintenance loan, Durham Grant, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks, minimum wage £7.49): $£9,978 + £2,500 + £5,842.20 = £18,320$ per year (£1,526.60 per month, £352.31 per week)
 - ii. Student income: full maintenance loan, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks minimum wage £7.49): approx. $£6,412 + £5,842.20 = £12,254.20$ (£1,021.18 per month, £235.67 per week)

³ [Student Money Survey 2023 – Results - Save the Student](#)

⁴ <https://www.savethestudent.org/money/asking-parents-for-money-university.html>

- iii. Student income: lowest maintenance loan, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks minimum wage £7.49): £4,651+ £5,842.20= £10,493.2 (£874.43 per month, £201.79 per week)

Student Income	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Weekly Income
Full maintenance loan, Durham Grant, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks, minimum wage £7.49)	£18,320	£1,526.60	£352.31
Full maintenance loan, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks minimum wage £7.49)	£12,254.20	£1,021.18	£235.67
Lowest maintenance loan, part-time work (15 h/ 52 weeks minimum wage £7.49)	£10,493.20	£874.43	£201.79

Table 2 Calculation of Student Income with part-time job.

5. Different groups of students are facing different issues, i.e. international students might have additional costs due to guarantor issues, lack of parental income, and needing to use private services or health care; postgraduate students or mature students might have families and other financial responsibilities; self-funded students or care leavers and estranged students will have greater costs to cover, students with disabilities/access requirements don't always receive DSA. This list is not exhaustive; it is here to merely indicate how a superficial response such as "We provide a Hardship Fund", will not be a panacea for the student body's various and complex issues, contrarywise there will need to be institutional change.

Assembly believes:

6. Student accommodation affordability definition

Affordable accommodation means:

- a. The ability to pay rent without:
 - i. experiencing financial hardship.
 - ii. Securing additional income in family support (other than the one expected from the SFE) or part-time work.
 - iii. Reliance on credit, including overdraft.
 - iv. Compromising on essential expenses (food etc).
 - v. Compromising the wider student experience.
- b. No more than 35% of your net income is spent on accommodation, as recognised by Shelter⁵ and the UK Government's How to Rent guide⁶.

7. An affordable home should be at most 35% of student income:

- a. For 4ai: £4367.3 per year, £363.9 per month, £83.9 per week (52 weeks).
- b. For 4aii: £3492.3 per year, £291,1 per month, £67.2 per week (52 weeks).
- c. For 4aiii: £3492.3 per year, £291,1 per month, £67.2 per week (52 weeks)

⁵ <https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/08/what-is-affordable-housing/>

⁶ How to Rent, October 2023, page 3.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1188064/DLUHC_How_to_rent_Oct2023.pdf

- d. For 4bi: of rent: £6,412, £535 per month, £123.3 per week (52 weeks).
- e. For 4bii: £4,288.97, £358 per month, £82.48 per week (52 weeks).
- f. For 4biii: £3,672.62, £307 per month, £70.62 per week (52 weeks).

Student Income based on	Yearly rent	Monthly rent	Weekly rent
4ai	£4,367.30	£363.90	£83.90
4aai	£3,492.30	£291.10	£67.20
4aaii	£3,492.30	£291.10	£67.20
4bi	£6,412	£535	£123.30
4bii	£4,288.97	£358	£82.48
4biii	£3,672.62	£307	£70.62

Table 3 Rent Calculation based on 35% of Student income.

8. The lowest rent for Durham University college accommodation for undergraduates is £5,370 for **30 weeks (Term Only)**. For postgraduate students, the lowest charges start from £7600 pw for **50 weeks**. **Therefore, none of Durham University's accommodation options is affordable to any student income bracket above.**
 - a. At the PRS for 2023/24, the lowest yearly rent price was £4680 for 52 weeks, which is only affordable when students are taking up a consistent part-time job while obtaining a full maintenance loan and the Durham Grant. For this bracket (4bi), there was one more affordable option.
 - b. The situation is expected to remain the same for 2024/25 unless student income increases drastically.
 - c. The data for the PRS rent prices do not represent the actual reality students are facing, as we don't know how many "lower" priced rooms are available and whether bills are included; it is safe to derive from what we do know that the "lower" - **but still unaffordable** - options are not nearly enough to enable students to participate in wider University life⁷.

⁷ A generic illustration of the prices can be drawn from the pictures provided in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1

Household income	Maintenance Loan	SFE expected parental contribution
£25,000 or less	£9,978	£0
£30,000	£9,265	£713
£35,000	£8,552	£1,426
£40,000	£7,839	£2,139
£45,000	£7,125	£2,853
£50,000	£6,412	£3,566
£55,000	£5,699	£4,279
£60,000	£4,986	£4,992
£62,343 or more	£4,651	£5,327

Table 4 How much money should parents give students?

<https://www.savethestudent.org/money/asking-parents-for-money-university.html>

2024/25 Rental Costs by Area from the Students' Union				
Area	Bottom	Top	Average	Maximum Yearly (52 weeks)
Gilesgate	£101	£269	£185	£13,988
Neville's Cross	£91	£263	£177	£13,676
Claypath	£149	£347	£248	£18,044
Elvet	£180	£420	£300	£21,840
Viaduct	£159	£300	£230	£15,600
Langley moor/Meadowfield	£110	£160	£135	£8,320
Framwellgate moor/Pitty me	£105	£295	£200	£15,340
Carrville/Belmont	£130	£200	£165	£10,400
Average week	£128	£282	£205	£14,651
Monthly Average	£555.21	£1,220.92	£888.06	£1,220.92

Table 5: 2024/25 Rental Costs by Area from the Students' Union

2023/24 Rental Costs by Area from the Students' Union				
Area	Bottom	Top	Average	Maximum Yearly (52 weeks)

Gilesgate	£90	£160	£125	£8,320
Neville's Cross	£110	£200	£155	£10,400
Claypath	£130	£200	£165	£10,400
Elvet	£169	£450	£310	£23,400
Viaduct	£140	£200	£170	£10,400
Average week	£128	£242	£185	£12,584
Monthly Average	£554	£1,049	£801	£1,049

Table 6: 2023/24 Rental Costs by Area from the Students' Union

Appendix 2

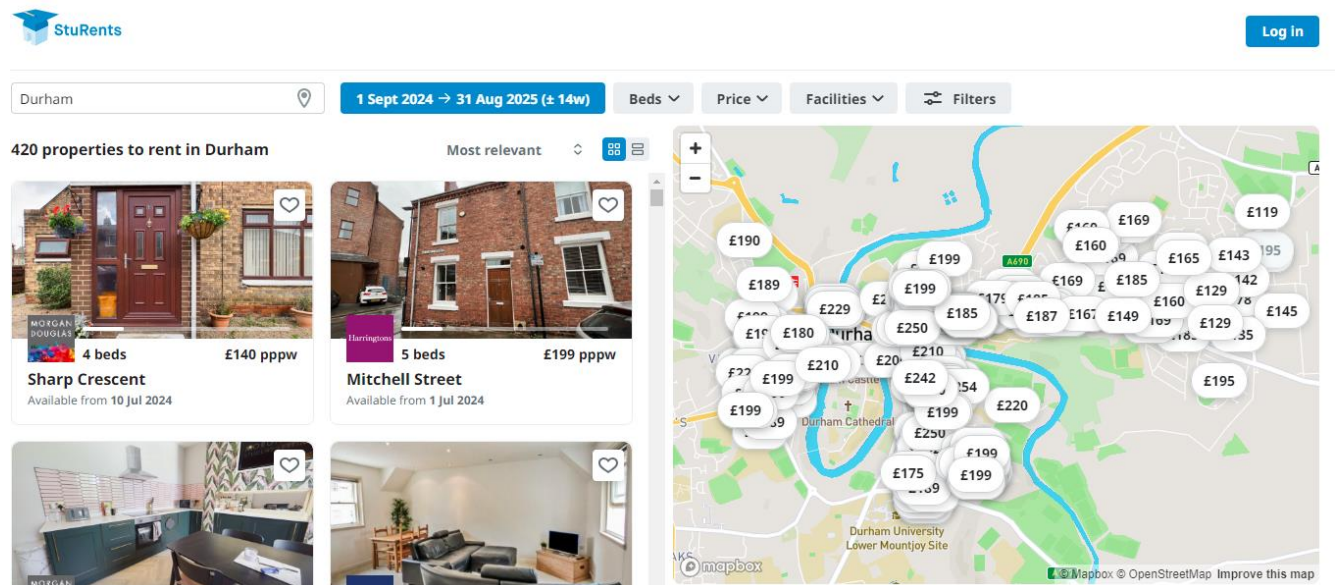


Figure 1 Caption of StuRents availability on the 10/11/2023

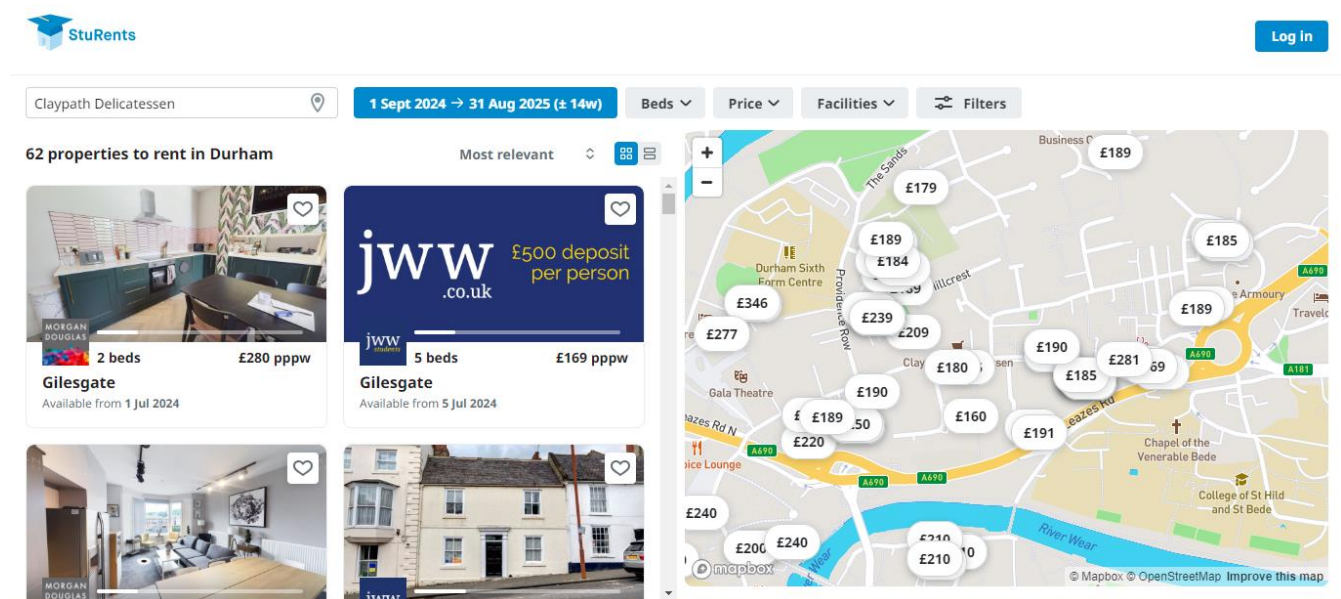
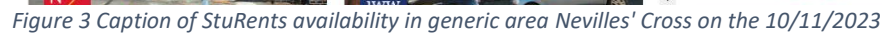


Figure 2 Caption of StuRents availability in generic area Claypath on the 10/11/2023



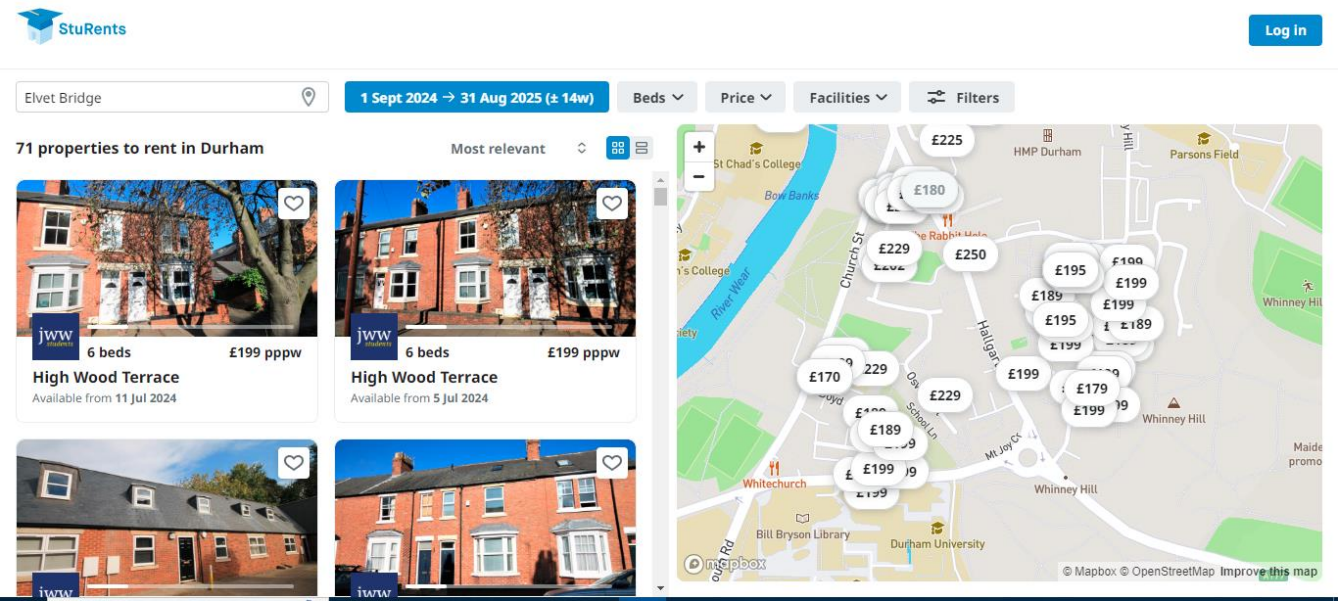


Figure 5 Caption of StuRents availability in generic area Elvet on the 10/11/2023

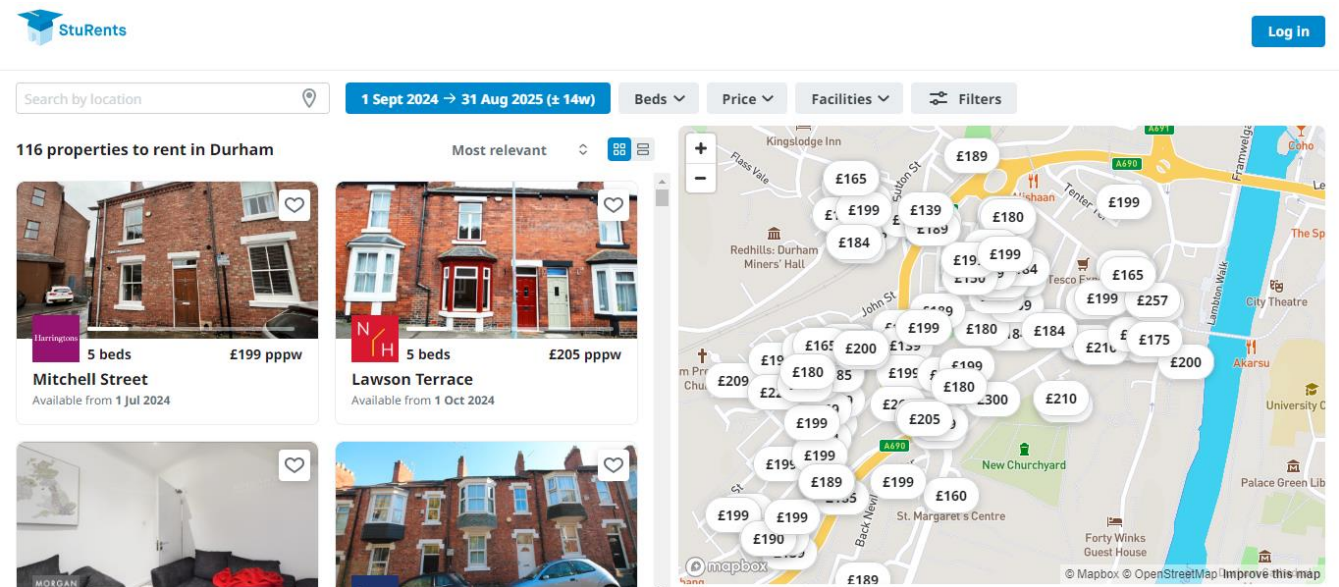


Figure 6 Caption of StuRents availability in generic area Viaduct on the 10/11/2023



TO: Assembly
FROM: Nadia Hanter
RE: Solidarity with Palestine
DATE: 23 November 2023

Note from the Durham SU Board of Trustees

Standing Order D15 provides: *"The Board of Trustees shall review motions and amendments for any legal, financial, or reputational risks. The Board may request changes from the student who submitted the motion and, at their sole discretion, may decline the policy, or part of the policy, from being discussed. If they do so, reasoning must be given in their report to Assembly. The Trustees may also require that advice on the legal, financial, or reputational implications are included in the circulation of papers, to support Assembly members in their decision making."*

The trustees would like to thank the proposer for constructive discussion on this motion. The trustees have, however, exercised their discretion to remove one part of the motion, which discussed what may be considered as antisemitic, or not, in the view of the proposer.

This is because Durham SU has adopted the [IHRA definition of antisemitism](#) on the advice of our Jewish Society, and uses this definition when considering whether something may be antisemitic.

In the view of the trustees, the motion set out here is lawful and in order, but it is for Assembly to decide whether it should be the policy of Durham SU. In debate, the trustees draw the attention of Assembly members to the IHRA definition.

Assembly notes:

1. Following Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7th, the Israeli government has reacted with disproportionate violence against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and throughout historic Palestine.
2. The ruthless bombing by the Israeli military has led to over 10,000 reported casualties in the Gaza Strip alone, mostly comprising of women and children, as well as over 26,000 injured and 1.5 million internally displaced.¹
3. The SU has previously noted in its motion Standing in Solidarity with the People of Palestine that *'the use of forced dispossession, grossly disproportionate violence and settler colonialism has been a tool of the government of Israel against the Palestinian people for several decades.'*² The current bombing and ground invasion are an escalation of these strategies and aim to further the Israeli government's colonialist aims.
4. A majority of countries and Human Rights Groups have called for a ceasefire and end to violence in Occupied Palestine, calls which the United Kingdom³, Israel, and the United States have opposed.⁴

¹ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/hostilities-gaza-strip-and-israel-reported-impact-day-39>

² <https://www.durhamsu.com/resources/stand-in-solidarity-with-the-people-of-palestine>

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/gaza-prime-minister-israel-hamas-raf-b2435723.html>

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142847>

5. In rejecting international calls for a ceasefire and continuing to support Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip, the United Kingdom is complicit in these genocidal acts of oppression against Palestinian citizens.⁵
6. Durham University's ethical investments policy includes a commitment not to invest in 'armament sales to military regimes.'⁶ It is unclear if this includes Israel. Furthermore, Durham's investments are managed by BlackRock, which owns a majority share in, and funds ZIM Integrated Shipping Services, an Israeli company facilitating the current armament of Israel.
7. The escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine often leads to an increase in antisemitism and islamophobia in the United Kingdom. Reports indicate that this is currently the case.
8. The SU has previously resolved:
 - a. *To stand in Solidarity with the people of Palestine against the actions of the Israeli government and publish a statement of solidarity as a students' union.*
 - b. *To raise awareness and campaign for the people of Palestine as they face the ongoing brutality of a substantially more powerful state.*
 - c. *To lobby the University to boycott and divest from any organisation that funds or supports the Israeli government as it commits acts of terror against the Palestinian people.*
 - d. *To condemn the Government of the United Kingdom in its complicity in funding and supporting such acts of terror and grossly disproportionate violence.*⁷

Assembly believes:

1. That the Palestinian people have, as all people have, a fundamental human right to be free from forced dispossession, acts of state aggression that constitute war crimes, brutality against protesters, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.
2. That the Israeli military's current actions in the Gaza Strip and throughout the occupied Palestinian territory have placed the Palestinian people at grave risk of genocide, as many Human rights organisations and UN experts have repeatedly warned.
3. That a ceasefire is necessary to ensure that the fundamental human rights of all people in Israel and Palestine are protected.
4. That a ceasefire and humanitarian approach to Israeli and Palestinian freedom is a crucial step in the path towards preserving human life and dignity for all in the region and necessary for the advancement of true liberation, which centres the dignity of all people.
5. That the abhorrent attempts at dehumanizing all Palestinians through government statements and media coverage as thousands are killed in the ongoing bombing of Gaza perpetuates the racist violence of Israel's contemporary settler colonialism, which has and continues to facilitate genocide.
6. That Durham SU has a duty to fight for the fundamental rights of the people of Palestine who continue to face oppression against the Israeli government, not only on behalf of our Palestinian student populations, but also to uphold freedom from acts of violence against civilians as a fundamental human right.

⁵ Campaign Against Arm Trade: "The UK government is complicit in [Israel's] crimes not just by supplying [them with] weapons for decades, but by repeatedly inciting Israel to commit war crimes against Palestinian civilians with impunity, in retaliation for Hamas' horrific killings and abductions of Israelis including civilians."

<https://caat.org.uk/news/statement-on-uk-arms-exports-to-israel/>

⁶ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/treasurer/DUEthicalInvestmentPolicyfinalisedJune2020.pdf>

⁷ SU Motion

7. That Durham SU also has an obligation to ensure the welfare of its students impacted by racism, islamophobia, and antisemitism in all its forms.

Assembly resolves:

1. To continue to stand in Solidarity with the people of Palestine against the actions of the Israeli government as was resolved in our previous motion.
2. To publish an official statement demanding an immediate ceasefire, an end to violence, and to the illegal occupation of Palestine.
3. To raise awareness and campaign for the people of Palestine as they face this increase in violence and bombardment from a substantially more powerful state.
4. To increase support for all students impacted by the current violence, including Muslim and Jewish students impacted by the rise in islamophobia and antisemitism in the UK due to rising tensions around the world and particularly those from the affected region, such as Palestinian Education Trust students.
5. To lobby the University to publish an official statement demanding an immediate ceasefire, an end to violence, and to the illegal occupation of Palestine.
6. To demand the University disinvest from any company knowingly involved in international law and human rights violations in the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In echoing other campaigns for divestment in apartheid, we demand divestment from any company that:
 - a. facilitates the collective punishment of Palestinian civilians;
 - b. contributes to forcible displacement of Palestinians;
 - c. contributes to or maintains the settler colonies within the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem; or,
 - d. contributes to the construction or maintenance of the Annexation Wall in the West Bank.
7. To continue to support the right of Palestinian student and allies' to free speech within the confines of UK law.
8. To coordinate and facilitate student fundraising for affected people.
9. To condemn the Government of the United Kingdom in its current stance against an immediate ceasefire and its complicity in funding and supporting Israel's grossly disproportionate violence in Gaza.