

## University of Bristol Students' Union Widening Participation Network

### 1. NAME

1. The name of the Network shall be the Bristol SU (University of Bristol Students' Union) Widening Participation Network.
2. The Network shall be a network of the University of Bristol Students' Union, as described in the Union Byelaws.

### 2. POWERS

1. The Network shall exist to provide a platform for officers, student groups and individual students to work together to build student communities and create change through collective action, in line with the Network's Standing Mandate.
2. In pursuance of this purpose, the Network shall have the power to act as a representative body, lead campaigns, hold forums and draft policy in line with the Network's Standing Mandate.
3. To achieve its purpose, the Network may undertake the following activities:
  - i. Take action on the Network's Standing Mandate
  - ii. Carry out policy referred to the Network by Student Council
  - iii. Act as a consultative body for relevant full-time officers and support them in progressing work relevant to the Network
  - iv. Scrutinise the work of associated Full Time Officers and propose a motion of censure to Student Council where they are disappointed in the actions of an Officer
  - v. Consider informal proposals from individual students, which may be progressed by the Network if they are within the scope of the Network's Standing Mandate or Terms of Reference
  - vi. Refer or propose policy to Student Council where it falls outside of the Network's Standing Mandate.
  - vii. Act as consultants on the wider work of the Union and the University as it pertains to the Network's remit.
  - viii. Arrange promotional, community-building or social activities which will build participation-levels or capacity of the Network.
4. The Network is expected to comply at all times with Union Policy as defined in the Union Byelaws and does not have the power to overturn or circumvent such policy.

### 3. STANDING MANDATE

1. Unless otherwise instructed by Union Policy, the Network shall have a Standing Mandate to:
  - i. Advocate for a greater proportion of students admitted to the institution to come from Widening Participation backgrounds

- ii. Advocate for improved support to be provided for students from Widening Participation backgrounds while they are at University so that they are able to fully engage with academic, extracurricular and social aspects of the student experience
  - iii. Recommend practices or policies which would remove barriers to academic, social or extracurricular engagement for students from Widening Participation backgrounds
  - iv. Raise institutional awareness of the experiences of students from Widening Participation backgrounds throughout the student lifecycle that might affect their admission, engagement and attainment, so that their needs might be better taken into account when developing institutional policies
  - v. Raise student awareness of developments in local and national policies which might impact the admission, progression or attainment of students from Widening Participation backgrounds
  - vi. Identify aspects of University admissions policy or practices which the Network considers might unfairly disadvantage capable candidates from gaining access to the institution, and work with stakeholders to address these
  - vii. Identify potential barriers which might inhibit the engagement or attainment of students from Widening Participation backgrounds while they are at University, and to work with stakeholders to overcome these
  - viii. Challenge instances of harassment and discrimination that might affect students from Widening Participation backgrounds at the institution, along with the underlying culture and practices that the Network considers contribute to this.
  - ix. Campaign against cuts to financial support which might result in students experiencing financial hardship or being unable to study at the institution
  - x. Arrange social and community-building activities for students from Widening Participation backgrounds
2. This Standing Mandate should not be understood to permit the following, unless carried out under the instruction of Union Policy:
- i. Activities about which there is likely to be significant controversy within the Eligible Membership of the Network
  - ii. Activities which have significant implications for the work of another Union Network, unless there is prior agreement with that Network that the activity should take place, or where the activity is conducted in collaboration with that Network
  - iii. Activities which are likely to incur significant risk to the Union's finances, reputation, legal standing or relationships with stakeholders
3. In the case that a Network wishes to engage in an activity which would fall into one of these categories, it should either:

- i. Refer the matter to the Standing Committee, which shall decide whether such activities would require the approval of Student Council
  - ii. Submit policy on the matter directly to Student Council for decision
- 4. It shall be the responsibility of both the Chair of the Network and the associated Full-Time Officer(s) to ensure that the Network does not act on matters outside of its Standing Mandate and relevant Union Policy, and that any concerns regarding this are promptly referred to Standing Committee or Student Council.

#### 4. MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Membership is open to all Full Members of the Union who self-define as coming from a Widening Participation background, who shall be considered Eligible Members of the Network.
- 2. Certain Eligible Members shall be designated as Invited Members, by virtue of a role or position that they hold within Bristol SU or the University of Bristol. These shall be:
  - a. All Committee Members of the 93% Society
  - b. The Chairs of the BME and Disabled Students Networks
- 3. The Chair of the Network shall maintain a contact list comprised of:
  - a. All Invited Members of the Network
  - b. Any other Eligible Members of the Network who have signed up to receive communications from the Network

#### 5. COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

- 1. The Network shall be convened by the Chair of the Widening Participation Network, elected as described in Union's Byelaws (the Chair of the Network)
- 2. The Network may be attended by the Equality, Liberation and Access Officer, as described in Byelaw 8 (the associated Full-Time Officer)
- 3. There shall also be a Network Committee which shall be the executive decision making body of the Network.
- 4. In addition to the roles described in 5.1 and 5.2, the Network Committee shall include:
  - i. Social Media Officer
  - ii. Events Officer
  - iii. Campaigns Officer
- 5. The Network Committee may meet at a schedule of its own determination, but should meet at least once per term.
- 6. Quoracy for committee meetings shall be set at 50% of the filled positions plus one.
- 7. All committee meetings must be minuted and the minutes published online and circulated to the committee before the next committee meeting.

## 6. ELECTIONS

1. The Network shall have the power to hold elections to fill positions on the Network Committee, other than those outlined in 5.1 and 5.2.
2. Candidates in any such elections shall be subject to the rules for candidate conduct described in the Union's Election Rules.
3. Committee elections shall be held through an online vote in the first term of the academic year.
4. Voting shall be by single transferable vote
5. All Eligible Members shall have the right to vote in Network Elections
6. Where it has not been possible to fill a position on the Network Committee via election, the Network Committee shall have the power to co-opt an Eligible Member to the position at a properly constituted Committee Meeting. In these cases, the Network Committee must ensure that sufficient notice is provided to all Invited Members of the Network so that they may reasonably be able to apply for the position.
7. The Network shall also have the power to elect delegates to any associated NUS Liberation/Section Conference(s), for example where additional delegate positions are available or where the Chair of the Network is unable to attend
8. Such elections shall usually be held via an online ballot in accordance with the Union's Byelaws.
9. If the Network Committee determines that such an election is not possible due to difficulties with identifying relevant electors, the election may be held at an open democratic Network Meeting as described above.

## 7. DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS

1. The Network must hold open democratic meetings at least once per term, which any Eligible Member of the Network shall have the right to attend and participate in, at such a time as determined by the Chair.
2. Notice of such meetings must be sent to the Network's contact list of Invited Members and Eligible Members who have asked to receive updates via email, with at least fourteen days' notice. An agenda must be sent out with at least seven days' notice.
3. Notice of such meetings must also be published on an appropriate public forum such as the Bristol SU Website with at least 14 days notice.
4. Quorum of such meetings shall be 10 Eligible Members
5. All Democratic Meetings must be minuted and the minutes published online within 2 weeks.
6. An Extraordinary Network Meeting may be called by one of the following:
  - i. Agreement of the Chair and attending Full Time Officer, as specified in 5.2

- ii. The Union Standing Committee
  - iii. Instruction of a properly constituted Student Council or Members' Meeting, or by other Union Policy
  - iv. 5% of the Invited Members by application to the Chair
7. An Extraordinary Meeting shall be called as specified on the application, but at least 7 days' notice shall be given.
  8. Democratic meetings of the Network shall be chaired by the Chair of the Network.
  9. The Chair shall, as far as possible, support the Network to reach decisions by consensus. Where consensus is not possible, decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote of those in attendance.
  10. The Network may also hold meetings for non-democratic purposes, which shall not be subject to these rules.

#### 8. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The Network may amend these Terms of Reference where the amendment has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the Eligible Members present at a properly constituted Network Meeting.
2. No amendment may become valid if it contravenes Union Policy or minimum standards provided by Bristol SU concerning the governance of Networks.
3. Amendments approved by the Network shall become valid only after ratification by the Union's Standing Committee
4. In addition, amendments to the Network's Standing Mandate shall require ratification by Student Council
5. These Terms of Reference may also be amended through the process for amendments to the Union's Byelaws