Strath Union Societies Policy

1.  Definition and Remit

As outlined in [Strath Union’s Constitution](https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/policy/), the Union shall provide Clubs and Societies. This policy sets out how Strath Union regulates student societies, and how all societies affiliated with Strath Union must operate.

2.  Aims, Objectives, Purpose and Values

**a.** Societies aim to:

1. Increase involvement and participation of students in their union;
2. Facilitate and support the bringing together of like-minded students with common interests and/or beliefs, thereby providing a platform for social engagement;
3. Provide opportunities for personal development;
4. Create a sense of belonging and community;
5. Be open and accessible to all students.

**b.** Strath Union will:

1. Provide a robust structure of support, resources and training to ensure societies can achieve their aims and objectives and realise their potential;
   1. Support includes but is not limited to financial support, individual and group support from staff and officers, providing advice to help societies deliver their aims and activities, and supporting societies through Strath Union’s processes and procedures.
   2. Resources includes admin access to a society webpage, access to finance services, storage space, room booking, and transport bookings.
   3. Training includes mandatory finance and general committee training, and an offering of further training and skills development opportunities to support committees’ needs.
2. Effectively communicate the opportunities available to the wider student body.

**c.**Societies will:

1. Run alongside Strath Union and operate under its policies and procedures, including but not limited to the Constitution, Standing Policies, Equal Opportunities Policy and any guidelines issued by the Societies E

3.  Membership of affiliated societies

1. Membership of all societies is open to all members of the union, with no condition of membership unless in reference to a Widening Access and Inclusion group. Any condition of membership must be discussed and agreed with Strath Union, can be a suggestion based on self-identification only, and cannot require students to present evidence.
2. Membership of societies must consist of a minimum of 75% Strathclyde students. A maximum of 25% of membership can be made up of Strathclyde Associate members. Please see [Strath Union Membership Terms & Conditions](https://www.strathunion.com/pageassets/shop/memberships/Associate-Membership-Terms-Conditions.pdf).
3. All society memberships must be gathered and stored through Strath Union’s website. No other method of taking membership is valid or permitted, and no personal information about members should be held by the Society.
4. Societies may ask for membership fees where they deem them to be appropriate or necessary for their activities. However, such fees are not mandatory and societies are free not to request them.
5. It is the responsibility of each Society to make members aware of their aims, objectives, this Policy and their Constitution below. It is the responsibility of every member to agree with and abide by Strath Union policies and the [Code of Conduct](https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/codeofconduct/).
6. Societies cannot remove or suspend a member or committee member for any reason, including a complaint or breach of the Code of Conduct. Strath Union reserve the right to suspend an individual from activities according to Strath Union [Complaints or Disciplinary procedure](https://www.strathunion.com/union/complaints/).

4.  Governance of affiliated societies

**a.** The Committee

1. The administrative affairs of the Society shall be conducted by or delegated to members of the society Committee.
2. The Committee shall be elected at the society’s Annual General Meeting (AGM).
3. The minimum requirement for the committee is a President and a Treasurer. The society may create other committee positions as required and these positions must be approved by the members at the AGM.
4. All society committee members must be student members of Strath Union unless a society’s AGM specifically chooses to create and elect a Development Officer.
5. The Development Officer must be a former committee member and no longer a student member of Strath Union, and they must possess an Associate membership of Strath Union.
6. Development Officers are Ordinary committee members and cannot vote in society elections, Societies General Meetings or Annual General Meetings. This is called an *ex officio* role.
7. They will act solely in an advisory capacity but can be delegated additional responsibility by their society, as they see fit, but not including access to finances, room bookings or vehicle hire.
8. Societies should only have 1 Development Officer and they should only be elected for one academic year.
9. Societies may exceptionally be permitted to have another *ex officio* committee role in addition to the Development Officer. This is at the discretion of union staff and only where it is deemed necessary to carry out the Society’s aims.

**b.** The Society Annual General Meeting

1. The AGM will be held once every academic year, during Semester 2. However, this may be extended with prior permission from the societies team.
2. AGMs shall be open to all members of the Society.
3. Only Strathclyde student members of the Society are entitled to vote.
4. Notice of the AGM shall be given to all Society members and advertised at least one week before the meeting.
5. The business of the AGM shall include the election of the society Committee and the presentation of the annual financial accounts of the Society.
6. Strathclyde student members of the Society should be able to stand for any position available.
7. Societies must use a consistent election process e.g. paper ballot, show of hands, online vote.
8. The AGM will be minuted and a copy of these minutes shall be uploaded to the [Strath Union website](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/generalmeetings/archive/).
9. It is the responsibility of the outgoing Committee to inform the societies team of the results of your AGM by the end of Semester 2, and to hand over to the incoming Committee by the end of Semester 3.

**c.** The Society Extraordinary General Meeting

1. If a Society needs to change or re-elect any committee position at any time outwith the AGM, the Society must hold an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
2. The EGM must run according to the same conventions as the AGM above (**b.**ii.-viii.).

5.  Affiliation

**a.**Applying for affiliation

To become affiliated to the union a Society must:

1. Agree to abide by this Policy;
2. Submit details of the Society’s student Committee;
3. Submit other relevant information including society aims and objectives. The aims and objectives outlined must not overlap with any other part of Strath Union, or another society.
4. Not be in breach of any active union policy.
5. Society affiliations expire each year, usually at the end of the academic year, and societies must then reaffiliate by completing the steps in part **c**.

**b.** First-time affiliation

New societies affiliating with Strath Union for the first time must complete the steps in part **a** by [applying on the website](https://www.strathunion.com/groups/start/). Applications will be presented to, discussed and approved or rejected by the Societies Executive Committee.

1. Applications may be rejected where there is clear evidence that the applicant’s affiliation (as determined by their name, aims and objectives) is in direct conflict with union policy, or their aims and objectives overlap with other societies, or parts of Strath Union.
2. The Societies Executive Committee reserve the right to defer a decision on an application to a later meeting in circumstances where there is a need for more information.
3. New societies may submit an initial committee formed of a President and Treasurer. Once affiliated, the new Society should create and elect further committee positions as needed, and complete and return the Society Constitution at the end of this document.

**c.**Reaffiliation

1. All societies must reaffiliate to Strath Union every academic year by completing the steps in part **a**. Conditions, deadlines and process for reaffiliation will be set by Strath Union and published at the earliest possible convenience.
2. If a society does not reaffiliate by the deadline, the Society will be unaffiliated, with the exception of Widening Access and Inclusion groups, which may be supported by union staff until a new committee is elected. This category currently includes but is not limited to:
   * 1. Mature Students Association
     2. BAME Society
     3. Care Experienced and Estranged Students Society
     4. Neurodiverse Students Association
     5. LGBT+ Society
3. If a society does not reaffiliate, Strath Union will hold any equipment stored in the University or Union for a maximum of one year. Strath Union then reserves the right to redistribute, give away or sell this equipment.
4. If Strath Union is approached by a new committee who wishes to restart an unaffiliated society, the webpage and accounts will be handed over to the new committee.

**d.**Withdrawal of affiliation

1. The President and Treasurer in agreement with the existing members of their society may choose to disaffiliate at any time.
2. The Vice President Community must be notified and the disaffiliation will be presented for information at the next Societies Executive Committee and will take effect from that time.
3. Any monies remaining in the society’s Savings account will be transferred to the Societies general fund after 5 years unless specified by the society to donate to a named charity.
4. Affiliation can be withdrawn following due process of union Disciplinary procedure when evidence shows that an affiliated group has breached union policy.

**d.**Affiliations with outside organisations

1. The Society may affiliate to an outside organisation, providing that the organisation does not breach any union policy and that the affiliation is approved by a simple majority (50%+1) of the voting members at a Society meeting and ratified by the Societies Executive Committee.
2. No affiliate organisation will be allowed to compromise the student leadership of the Society.

6.  Activities

1. Resources and training
   1. In order to conduct the administrative affairs of the Society and carry out its activities, the Committee shall have access to resources including a webpage, finance and grants systems and room bookings.
   2. In order to access resources, the Committee must complete training and follow processes as required.
      1. To request rooms, general committee training must be completed and process followed.
      2. To organise society events, an annual risk assessment must be completed for the society’s general planned activities and events over the year.
      3. To organise a trip or another activity outside the general activities, a new risk assessment and additional documentation must be completed.
      4. To use the finance system, finance training must be completed.
      5. To use the grant system, grant training must be completed.
2. Regular meetings

The Society shall convene regularly throughout the academic year and the frequency shall be determined at the first meeting of the incoming committee.

1. Events

The Committee have responsibility for the planning and operation of any Society event, as well as the conduct of all attendees including non-Strathclyde guests.

1. Trips
   1. If a Society is organising a trip, the Committee is responsible for all attendees. The Committee must submit the following documents to the societies team:
      1. Risk Assessment;
      2. Trip Authorisation form for UK and international trips the society is organising or attending – including full itinerary and, if the society is organising the trip, the details of any non-members attending;
      3. Student Travel declarations for all Strathclyde student attendees.
2. Balls

Societies may not use their Society webpage or accounts to [organise a ball](https://www.strathunion.com/societies/ball/) or any event where tickets cost over £20. Strath Union shall provide ball and event organisers with a separate page and account.

1. Communications
   1. The official channel for societies to communicate with their members shall be the messaging function on the Strath Union website.
   2. Communication via any platform must abide by all union policies and Code of Conduct. We discourage the use of WhatsApp for official society communications. While societies may use platforms such as Discord for group communications, any official society communications should only include society members, Societies Executive members or union staff, where appropriate.
   3. No member should be removed or banned from any means of society communication unless they are no longer a society member.
   4. All publications made by the Society must include the Strath Union logo.
2. Equal access
   1. As part of operating under Strath Union policy, consideration should be given to equal access and opportunity within societies’ activities.
   2. Societies should consider digital or hybrid activities and communications where feasible, in order to better include groups such as part-time and distance students.
3. Support and recognition
   1. The societies team shall support societies to enhance their activities by providing advice and initiatives including further training, skills development, awards and recognition opportunities.

7.  Societies General Meetings

1. A Societies General Meeting (GM) will be held regularly throughout the academic year – typically there will be 3 GMs and one AGM.
2. The Societies GM shall be open to all members of affiliated societies, and the Societies Executive.
3. Voting members shall consist of the Societies Executive Committee and one representative of each affiliated Society who will each have one vote per society. If an attendee is a member of more than one society’s Committee, they are still only entitled to a single vote.
4. Details of all meetings should be published on the union website and communicated effectively to each society’s primary contact via email in advance of the meeting. It is, however, the responsibility of individual societies to inform the societies team of of any changes to contact information.
5. All affiliated societies should have a representative present at all GMs; failure to attend two or more meetings without apologies will result in appropriate action until there is adequate engagement from the Society. This could result in freezing bank accounts, removal of room booking privileges, and/or prohibition from requesting grant funding.
6. A Societies AGM must take place before the end of the academic year.
7. A Societies EGM can be called at the request of a simple majority of a) the Societies Executive Committee or b) the total number of affiliated societies.
8. The Societies Executive shall report to and be accountable to the Societies GM.

8.  Societies Executive Committee

Democratic decisions on society matters shall be made by the Societies Executive committee.

**a.** The Societies Executive shall consist of:

1. Vice President Community
2. 6 electedstudent members
   1. The members of the Societies Executive, with the exception of the Vice President Community, shall be elected by the Societies AGM each year.
   2. Societies Executive members will take office for one year usually in line with academic calendar;
      1. Societies Executive members can serve no more than two full terms in office.
   3. Any unfilled positions shall be open for election at the next Societies GM and take office immediately upon election until the end of the academic year.

**b.** Responsibilities of Societies Executive:

1. Attend all Societies Executive committee meetings, GMs and AGM unless apologies are given in advance;
   1. The Societies Executive committee will aim to meet fortnightly throughout term-time;
   2. Minutes will be kept of all meetings of the Societies Executive committee and these minutes will be made available on the website when they are approved.
2. Be aware of and operate within the union’s financial procedures;
3. Ensure policy of the Union is adhered to;
4. Discuss and create development opportunities for societies;
5. Act as points of contact and support for society committee members;
   1. Societies will be allocated to each member so that each society has one dedicated point of contact.
6. Support decision-making on behalf of societies;
7. Attend other meetings, training and events that relate to their role.

9.  Financial Regulations

**a.**General

1. The Society will be provided with a bank account within the union in order to manage their accounts. Societies are not permitted to hold bank accounts outwith the union or to hold funds in any other premises.
2. All financial transactions must be processed through societies’ union bank accounts via the finance portal and no society funds should be deposited into a personal bank account.
3. The Society Treasurer shall be responsible for the proper account of the funds in accordance with Strath Union regulations.
4. Funds in the Society’s Savings account can be spent on anything which furthers the Society’s aims and benefits its members, providing that expenditure does not breach union policy.
5. If membership fees are requested, such funds will be collected via the website, placed in the society’s Savings account and can be spent by the Society. Membership fees are non-refundable unless agreed by the society President.
6. As a registered charity, Strath Union cannot donate funds directly to another charity, therefore grants cannot be awarded for charity donations. However, a Society may donate funds from their Savings account to charity.
7. If a Society does not reaffiliate, the Society bank accounts and any funding in the Savings account will be retained for 5 years. After this period, funding will be transferred back to Societies general funding and the accounts will be closed. If a society does not reaffiliate by the deadline, the society will be handed over to any new committee who wishes to re-start the committee. Any equipment will be given to the new committee after one year. Thinking this might also encourage people to re-affiliate on time!
8. In the event of suspected financial malpractice, Strath Union has the right to investigate and act accordingly through Complaint and Disciplinary procedures.

**b.**Funding

1. Societies can apply to the Societies Executive committee for funding from the Societies general fund or the Arts & Culture Fund via the grant portal.
   1. The Society is entitled to one Welcome Grant and one AGM grant per year. Societies must apply for these using the grant portal.
   2. The Society may also apply for further funding from the Societies Executive.
2. Funding is restricted to that which is stipulated in the [Grant Guidelines](https://www.strathunion.com/organisation/resources/grants/). The grant guidelines may be revised by the Societies Executive committee at any time. If changes are made to the guidelines, the Societies Executive committee must notify societies as soon as possible.
3. While societies are encouraged to seek external funding, they may not accept funding or support from any organisation or individual blacklisted, boycotted or otherwise in breach of existing union policy, nor attend their events or distribute their materials.
4. All unspent semester 1 Welcome Grants will be cleared from society Grant accounts in the following January. Societies affiliated after the start of the academic year will not be affected by this and their Welcome Grant will not be cleared until 31st July.
5. All society Grant accounts will be cleared on 31st July each year with any unspent funds returned to Societies general funding unless previously agreed with the societies team.

10.  Discipline

In the event of a dispute that cannot be resolved amicably at Committee level, the Society will follow Strath Union’s Complaints procedure. All issues regarding discipline should be referred to the Strath Union Disciplinary procedure, with consideration to union policy and the Code of Conduct.

Society Constitution

This constitution sets out how this individual Strath Union society operates. It cannot in any way supersede or contradict the Societies Policy above, nor any other [Strath Union policy](https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/policy/).

1.  The name of the Society

Hereafter referred to as the Society:

* Please include any abbreviations or acronyms commonly used

2.  Aims of the Society

The Society aims to:

1.

2.

3.

3.  Membership

Membership of our society is open to all student members of Strath Union, with no condition of membership.

As a Widening Access or Inclusion society, we suggest the following condition of membership in order to join our society:

* Delete one of the statements above as appropriate
* Any condition of membership must be discussed and agreed with Strath Union

4.  Committee

The Society committee shall be made up of:

* 1. President
  2. Treasurer

Additional Committee positions:

5.  Activities

The typical activities of our Society are:

*How often does the Society meet during term-time?*

*What does the Society typically do during meetings?*

*Does the Society organise other events and activities? What kind?*

*How does the Society tend to communicate with members?*

3.

* Use suggestions as needed

6. AGM & Handover

Our AGM will be held during Semester 2.

Our AGM will be held:

AGM date or time of year:

* Delete one of the statements above as appropriate

The current committee will hold their roles until the end of Semester 2.

The current committee will hold their roles until:

Committee handover date:

* Delete one of the statements above as appropriate

The Handover period will be semester 3 (April – May).

The Handover period will be:

Committee handover period:

* Delete one of the statements above as appropriate

Our incoming committee will assume their roles on the first day after the end of Semester 2.

Our incoming committee will assume their roles on the following date:

Committee handover date:

* Delete one of the statements above as appropriate

7. Amendments to this Constitution

The Society can add to and amend this Constitution as deemed necessary to satisfy its requirements. All amendments must be submitted to and approved by the Societies Executive committee.