



University of St Andrews

UDS

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Union Debating Society

St Andrews Union Debating Society Constitution

As at March 2021

Taken From St Andrews Student
Association Subcommittee Constitutions

Chapter 15: Debates Subcommittee (Union Debating Society)

1. Overview

- 1.1. The official name of the subcommittee shall be the ‘St Andrews Union Debating Society’, or ‘UDS’.
- 1.2. The official motto of UDS shall be *‘pro amicitia et litteris’*, translated from Latin as ‘for friendship and learning’.
- 1.3. All Ordinary Members of the Association shall be eligible to stand and vote in elections to the Debates Board, and shall also be members of the House.
- 1.4. All members shall have speaking and voting rights in the House, save where the vote is of a constitutional or binding nature.
- 1.5. At the first debate chaired by the incoming Debates Officer, they shall swear upon the sword of UDS the following oath:
 - 1.5.1. “I, (name), Convenor, swear to uphold and protect the ancient traditions and rights of this House of the St Andrews Union Debating Society; and especially, I swear to guard the right of every matriculated student of this seat of learning to attend debates and speak their mind in any capacity, at no charge or fee whatsoever. This being one of the chief glories of this House.”
- 1.6. The Debates Board shall have responsibility for overseeing all matters concerning UDS.
- 1.7. The House shall be governed by the Standing Orders of the House, as ratified by the SAF.
- 1.8. Throughout the academic year, there must be an extensive attempt to attract a diverse range of representation of minority groups as official guest speakers.
 - 1.8.1. This applies unless the Debates Officer and Speakers Secretary have both exhaustively invited a diverse range of speakers without success, and if there has been no success in seeking a variety of University students or debaters.

2. Committee structure

- 2.1. UDS Board of Ten:
 - 2.1.1. SAF Debates Officer (Convenor, and Chair)
 - 2.1.1.1. Fulfil the responsibilities as defined in the Laws of the Association.
 - 2.1.2. Treasurer
 - 2.1.2.1. Oversee the finances of UDS.
 - 2.1.2.2. Coordinate sponsorship for UDS.
 - 2.1.3. Clerk to the House (Secretary)
 - 2.1.3.1. Keep accurate minutes of UDS meetings, recording all events and decisions in the House and of the Debates Board.

- 2.1.3.2. Ensure minutes are shared with the committee, Association, and University Library, and are available in an accessible online format.
- 2.1.3.3. Along with the Debates Officer, sign minutes upon their approval by the Board, thus forming the only authoritative record of the proceedings of UDS.
- 2.1.4. Two Media Officers
 - 2.1.4.1. Oversee all aspects of media and advertising for UDS.
- 2.1.5. Chief Whip
- 2.1.6. Equity Officer
 - 2.1.6.1. Work in collaboration with the Chief Whip to provide training on equity in debating and discussing sensitive issues respectfully.
 - 2.1.6.2. Promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups in all activities of UDS.
- 2.1.7. Freshers' Representative
 - 2.1.7.1. Represent, and organise social activities for, all first-year debaters. This shall include any person who has not actively competed or participated in UDS for more than a year.
- 2.1.8. Chairman of Ways and Means
- 2.1.9. DoSDA (line manager)
- 2.2. Competitive Debates Board:
 - 2.2.1. Chief Whip (Chair)
 - 2.2.1.1. Oversee the competitive and schools-oriented activities of UDS, including training sessions for both casual and competitive purposes.
 - 2.2.2. Training Officer
 - 2.2.2.1. Organise weekly debate training sessions.
 - 2.2.3. Competitions Secretary
 - 2.2.3.1. Arrange the representation and participation of UDS in external competitions.
 - 2.2.4. Schools Outreach Officer
 - 2.2.4.1. Oversee outreach and development of debating at local schools.
 - 2.2.5. Schools Competition Convenor
 - 2.2.5.1. Organise school debating competitions.
- 2.3. Public Events Board:

2.3.1. Chairman of Ways and Means (Chair)

2.3.1.1. Organise the public events.

2.3.1.2. Recruit speakers, with support from the Public Events Board.

2.3.2. Public Debates Secretary

2.3.2.1. Support the Chairman of Ways and Means in organising public debates and recruiting speakers.

2.3.3. Serjeant-at-Arms

2.3.3.1. Enforce order and produce order papers.

2.3.3.2. Order UDS clothing.

2.3.3.3. Maintain alumni relations.

2.3.4. Steward to the House

2.3.4.1. Organise all social events, including the annual Gaudeamus Party.

2.4. Parent(s) of the House (honorary, non-voting)

2.4.1. Provide support and advice to UDS at their discretion.

3. Appointments

3.1. The Debates Officer shall be appointed through the Association elections.

3.2. The Treasurer, Media Officers, and Equity Officer shall be appointed by interview prior to the AGM.

3.2.1. The interview panel shall consist of the incoming and outgoing Debates Officers, DoSDA, and current holder of the relevant position.

3.3. The Freshers' Representative shall be elected at an EGM of first-year debaters and members of the Debates Board.

3.4. The Parents of the House shall be appointed by the Debates Officer.

3.5. All other positions shall be elected at the AGM, except for the Deputy Convenor.

3.5.1. Positions available at the AGM may be elected as a job share.

3.6. To fill casual vacancies, the Board shall have the power to appoint positions through co-option, or by election in the House.

3.7. All appointment-related matters, including interviews, elections, and co-options, shall run as outlined in the Laws of the Association.

4. Meetings

4.1. All meetings shall operate as outlined in the Laws of the Association.

- 4.2. Meetings of the Board of Ten, Competitive Debating Board, and Public Debates Board shall be fortnightly during the academic year, and at other times if necessary.
- 4.3. Members must attend all meetings of the Boards they are part of, reporting their actions and planned activities. If unable to attend a meeting, they must send an apology to the Clerk of the House at least 24 hours in advance.
- 4.4. The chairs of the Competitive Debates and Public Debates Boards shall update the Board of Ten on the activities of their respective Boards.
- 4.5. Meetings of the entire Debates Board may be called by the Debates Officer, and must be suitably advertised at least five days in advance.
- 4.6. The AGM shall be held after the Association elections, and before the end of semester two.
 - 4.6.1. The order of proceedings shall be:
 - 4.6.1.1. Reports of the outgoing committee members
 - 4.6.1.2. Annual statement of UDS accounts and finances
 - 4.6.1.3. Valediction of the outgoing Debates Officer
 - 4.6.1.4. Election of relevant committee positions
 - 4.6.1.5. Any other competent business
 - 4.6.2. The quorum shall be as defined in the Standing Orders of the House.
 - 4.6.3. The method of election to the Board shall be determined by the Debates Officer, subject to the approval and monitoring of an Sabbatical Officer.
- 4.7. An EGM may be called by the Debates Officer. An EGM may also be called through written request to the Debates Officer, signed by five members of the Board or twenty Ordinary Members of the Association.
 - 4.7.1. Any request for an EGM must state the purpose and proposed agenda, allowing for any other business that may be discussed.
 - 4.7.2. The form of an EGM must be accepted by both the Debates Officer and those making the request.
 - 4.7.3. An EGM must occur within two weeks following the receipt of a request, and must be advertised for at least five days.
 - 4.7.4. The quorum for an EGM shall be as defined in the Standing Orders of the House.
 - 4.7.5. The resolutions of an EGM shall be binding upon the Debates Officer and the Board, subject to oversight of the Association.

5. Financial support

- 5.1. UDS is dedicated to ensuring that all interested students are able to participate in at least one debate competition in the coming year, regardless of socioeconomic

background.

- 5.2. The Debates Officer and Treasurer shall ensure that a bursary scheme is accessible to students from low-income backgrounds, so they have the opportunity to participate in debate competitions.
- 5.3. There shall be two distinct bursary schemes, for local and international competitions respectively.
- 5.4. The requirements, application process, and further details of the bursary schemes are as outlined in the 'UDS Bursary Scheme' document.
- 5.5. The process for receiving a bursary shall be entirely confidential.
- 5.6. The trials and selection process to participate in competitions shall be entirely separate from the bursary application process. As such, a member will be able to trial for a speaker or judge spot without prior knowledge of their acceptance to the bursary scheme.

6. Affiliation to the Scottish Students' Debating Council

- 6.1. UDS shall be affiliated to the Scottish Students' Debating Council (SSDC) and abide by its policies, except where this may conflict with Association policy.
- 6.2. The Chief Whip, or their nominee, shall represent the interests of UDS on the SSDC.
- 6.3. Members of UDS who are also members of the SSDC Executive shall be considered non-voting members of the Debates Board, and may participate in the Competitive Debating Board, though they shall not be subject to attendance requirements.