



## **Students' Union Constitution** *(20 March 2017)*

### **Sabbatical Officer**

Middlesbrough College students elect a paid Further Education Sabbatical Officer who leads on the Student Engagement Strategy, and is the main focus and conduit for the Student Voice.

The Sabbatical Officer is also known as the Student President.

The Sabbatical Officer will develop the existing mechanisms and ensure that students are represented at all levels of College life and that consultation and aspiration are at the heart of the College Student Journey.

The Sabbatical Officer is the prime representative for the Students' Union and the spokesperson to media and external bodies.

The Sabbatical Officer is also automatically elected as a Student Governor and attends all Governing Body meetings from the 1 August to 31 July.

The Sabbatical Officer also acts as the Student Representative on any committees, where necessary.

The Sabbatical Officer acts as a liaison within the Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team, and provides regular updates on Student Union activity, outcomes and Student Council information.

The Sabbatical Officer liaises with the National Union of Students (NUS) locally, regionally and nationally.

The Sabbatical Officer works with the Student Services Manager and the Assistant Principal - Students in terms of managing the Student Union budget.

The Sabbatical Officer normally holds at least fortnightly meetings with the Student Union Team in order to develop the Student Union effectively and pass all information to Executive Officers.

In order to make a partnership between students and staff, the Students' Union has agreed that all staff can apply for an NUS card online.

## **Aims and Objectives**

- To create a partnership between Students and Staff.
- To create a forum for the sharing and exchanging of ideas throughout the College.
- To create a clear channel of communication between representatives of the Student Council and other bodies.
- To involve the whole College community in raising aspirations, attainment and standards through the creation of new initiatives, problem solving and achieving goals.
- To empower and enable students to contribute and become active citizens in the wider community.
- To represent the students' views at the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) / College Management Team (CMT) to ensure a two way communication between students and staff. This will include attendance at internal committee meetings, as agreed with the Principal / Chief Executive.
- To create a network locally, regionally and nationally with other Students' Unions and the NUS.

## **Student Membership and Opting Out**

- Every student, when enrolled onto a Middlesbrough College course, is automatically opted into the Middlesbrough College Students' Union.
- Students are able to relinquish their right to membership of the Student Union and, should they wish to do so, students should sign the Opt-out Register, which is held in the Students' Union Office.
- Any student who opts out of the Students' Union cannot continue to attend Clubs and Societies or run/participate in activities of clubs and societies.
- Any student who opts out of the Students' Union will not be able to participate in the democratic and decision making of the Union. This includes not being able to stand for an Executive position, the Sabbatical Officer or any other position in the Students' Union.
- Any student who opts out of the Students' Union and then wishes to become a member of the Students' Union again, must notify the Sabbatical Officer in writing. If the application falls within the 20 days of Student Union Executive nominations opening, then they are not eligible to take up the privileges of membership until the nomination period has been closed.

## **Responsibilities of the Student Union**

- The Students' Union has five different Executive roles with various responsibilities, including Well-being, Equality & Diversity, Events & Activities, Disability and Vice President / Student Governor.
- All Students' Union Executives must follow the Code of Conduct if one is approved.
- Job descriptions will be developed and updated annually for Student Union Executives by the Sabbatical Officer, Student Experience Co-ordinator and the Clerk to the Corporation.

### **(The Students' Union Executive Job Descriptions are attached as Appendix 1)**

## **Representation**

- The Sabbatical Officer is automatically elected as a Student Governor for one academic year beginning 1 August.
- The Second Student Governor is elected by students and will commence their position on the Governing Body on the elected date and serve until 31 July the following year.
- The two Student Governors will work with the Clerk to the Corporation to develop their corporate knowledge, who will support their attendance at all Governing Body and / or Committee meetings.

## **Students' Union Complaints Procedure**

- Any student who is a member of the Students' Union, who has exercised their right to not be in the Students' Union, is entitled to complain about unfair/unreasonable treatment by the Students' Union. In order to do this they can speak directly to the Assistant Principal - Students or the Student Services Manager.
- Any student who is a member of the Students' Union and would like to complain about any member of staff should follow the College's Complaints Procedure.

## **Reporting**

- The Students' Union meetings will be held at least fortnightly and will normally be minuted to provide an update on all Students' Union activity.
- All minutes of formal Cross College Student Council meetings will be circulated to members of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team.
- The Students' Union Executive Team must attend all formal meetings and will only be excused in serious cases, such as illness or examinations etc.
- The Student Sabbatical Officer will also work closely with the Nominated Governor for Student Voice / Prevent & Safeguarding, ensuring they are kept informed of progress and invited to all appropriate meetings.

## **Responsibilities of the Student Council**

- The Student Council can discuss a range of issues brought by Directorate and / or Faculty Student Council Representatives or any other internal source e.g. Governing Body, Principal / Chief Executive or other staff.
- The Student Council will be involved in the decision making process at all times.
- The Student Council will clearly disseminate information throughout the College via all established means e.g. E-mail, Blackboard, College Website, College's main Twitter and Facebook pages, Directorate Council Meetings, Plasma Screens, Notice Boards and the Middlesbrough College Students' Union Twitter and Facebook pages.
- The Student Council shall respect all issues of confidentiality, privacy and data protection at all times.
- The Student Council will determine the key roles and responsibilities of its representatives annually.
- Members of the Student Council have the power to apply a 'Vote of No Confidence' in the Sabbatical Officer, the Students' Union Executive Team or individual Student Union Executive Officers.

## Structure and Membership

- The Student Council will be chaired by the Sabbatical Officer, who is also a member of the Student Council.
- The Cross College Representation is detailed below and is subject to change through discussion and agreement with the Cross College Student Council, Student Sabbatical Officer and Assistant Principal – Students.

The Directorate Representatives are:

- Sport, Travel and Public Services  
*(Up to four students)*
- Services Industries & Retail Skills  
*(Up to four students)*
- Computing and Visual & Performing Arts  
*(Up to four students)*
- Construction  
*(Up to four students)*
- Engineering  
*(Up to four students)*
- Health and Social Care  
*(Up to four students)*
- Business Management & Professional Development  
*(Up to four students)*
- A Levels  
*(Up to four students)*
- 14 – 16 students 'MC ACADEMY'  
*(Up to four students)*
- Additional Learning Support  
*(Up to four students)*
- Higher Education  
*(Up to four students)*

Class Representatives are also elected from within their respective Directorates and / or Faculties and these students work with the Directorate and / or Faculty Representative and the Sabbatical Officer (*Student President*) to promote the Student Voice.

- The Sabbatical Officer is elected as the Chair of the Student Council.
- The Vice President / Student Governor is automatically opted-in as the Vice-Chair of the Student Council.
- The Sabbatical Officer will be one of the elected Student Governors, attending Governing Body and / or Committee meetings from 1 August onwards.
- The second Student Governor will normally be elected in October and will attend Governing Body meetings from when elected to 31 July the following year.
- The Student Council will normally meet on a termly basis and will be planned into the College's meetings schedule. When minutes are taken they will be circulated to the Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team and the Governing Body.
- It is expected that all elected members of the Student Council attend every meeting, but if they are unable to attend a nominated substitute can attend subject to the agreement of the Sabbatical Officer.
- All members are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner conducive with their position as elected representatives of the Student Council.
- Training for Student Council Representatives will be made available, and to ensure continuity it is expected that all members remain on the Student Council for the duration of their course. This will be organised by the Student Experience Co-ordinator.
- All positions will run from 1 October to 31 July the following year respectively.

#### **14-16 Students (MC Academy)**

- Students aged 14 to 16, who enrol in MC Academy are classed as being students at Middlesbrough College. However, when they enrol they do **not** automatically opt into Middlesbrough College's Students' Union.
- However, MC Academy students will have the opportunity to attend Student Council meetings, and two members will be respectively elected by their peers. These students will have their own agenda item and they can raise any concerns/issues in this item.

## **Higher Education (HE) Students**

- Higher Education students who enrol via Middlesbrough College/Teesside University are entitled to run for Student Sabbatical Officer, if they have been issued a Middlesbrough College Student ID Card.
- If requested, there will be an agenda item for Higher Education students on the Student Council Agenda for them to raise any concerns they may have.
- Higher Education Students, who have a Middlesbrough College Student ID Card are able to vote in Middlesbrough College Students' Union Elections and / or run for a position.

## **Financial Matters**

- To disseminate available funding in line with College Financial Procedures.
- To be fair and student led in distribution of aforementioned funds.
- To offer equal and clear opportunities to access the fund to all students.
- To present an annual audit of Student Council accounts to the Governing Body.
- £200 may be allocated to each Students' Union Executive Officer annually for them to use for events, initiatives etc. This will be agreed and managed by the Student Services Manager, who will work with the Sabbatical Officer to agree priorities.
- Each Students' Union Club/Society that is set up will receive a start-up fee of £30, and if the Club is successfully run it will get an income of £20 per month if needed for equipment, trips, rooming etc.

## **Clubs and Societies**

- Middlesbrough College Students' Union will allocate a set budget to Clubs and Societies that are set up by Students of Middlesbrough College. This budget will allow Students to access between £15 - £20 a month for equipment, rooms, trips etc. in order for the Club/Society to run and recruit more smoothly.
- All Middlesbrough College Students can participate in Clubs and Societies that are set up in College whether affiliate, Higher Education or 14-16 students.
- In order for a Club/Society to run there must be at least 10 sign ups and active members.
- If an individual is an Executive Officer in the Students' Union, they can participate in Clubs/Societies. However, they cannot be the President of such Club/Society.
- Clubs and Societies are open to all Students studying in Middlesbrough College, including 'MC Academy (14-16 Students).'

## Elections

- The Sabbatical Officer and Students' Union Executive Elections dates will be agreed by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the current Sabbatical Officer.

### *Sabbatical Officer Elections*

- Sabbatical Officer Elections are normally held in May each academic year and the dates are determined annually by the Student Services Manager in consultation with the current Sabbatical Officer.
  - The Sabbatical Officer can be re-elected for a second and final time subject to a satisfactory review of the first year in office.
  - In the event that only one Student applies for this position, elections will still take place. However, on the Voting Form there will also be another option which states that the student body can 're-open nominations.'

### *Students' Union Executive Elections*

- Student Union Executives and Student Governor Elections are normally held in October each academic year, and dates are determined annually by term.
- In the event that only one student applies for the position as a Student Union Executive, elections will still take place. However, on the Voting Form there will be another option to vote them in/out of the position. This will state 're-open nominations.' If the individual is voted out then nominations will have to re-open for more students to apply for the position.
- If the above occurs then the option of 're-open nominations' must be placed on all Voting Cards for all Executive positions.





## Appendix 1

### Students' Union Executives

- All officers must attend relevant meetings to the position in the Students' Union.
- All officers must attend at least fortnightly Students' Union meetings, with other executives and the Sabbatical Officer.
- Should Executive Officers not attend three consecutive meetings without apologies or good reason, then they may be removed from the Students' Union Executive Team, and any decision will be made in consultation with the Student Experience Co-ordinator. Should this situation arise, then the Sabbatical Officer will commence elections for that post.
- The Student Council will have the power to vote out any of the executives, and this may happen if they feel the executive(s) are not fulfilling their job role(s).
- All executives must attend relevant training and meetings that are a part of their specific job roles.
- The Executive Team will be entitled to attend the Student Council meeting and feedback to students about the Students' Union. However, they will have **NO** vote on matters that are being decided.

### Events and Activities Rep

- Launch, promote and be the main contact for all Student Clubs and Societies.
- Run and support student events, campaigns and other activities.  
*(Including, but not limited to, Every Student Matters Week, Refreshers Day & the Community Festival).*
- Help organise an end of year student event.
- Work with staff to promote all student events and the MC XTRA Programme.

## **Well-being Rep**

- Consult students on welfare issues that affect their experience at Middlesbrough College.
- Increase student awareness of the support available e.g. Bursary, free travel and services such as Student Engagement Officers, Counselling and how to access them.
- Help plan and organise events and campaigns that promote & raise awareness of key welfare themes and issues.
- To be the named Health & Safety Representative for the Student Council.

## **Equality & Diversity Rep**

- To deal with any Equality and Diversity issues and report them to staff Equality and Diversity meetings.
- To work closely with both staff and students to promote Equality and Diversity for all within College.
- Work closely with other Students' Union Officers to run campaigns & activities that promote equality & diversity, inclusion & equal opportunities.

## **Disability Students Rep**

- Representing and speaking on behalf of Students with a disability.
- Work with the Sabbatical Officer and other key staff within the College to promote events that include students with a disability.

## **Vice President & Student Governor**

The student who is elected as the Vice President of the Students' Union will also become the second Student Governor and shall:

- Attend all Governing Body meetings and training days so that the Student Union and wider Student Body is represented.
- Be part of the decision making process of the Governing Body.
- Attend regular meetings with the Clerk to the Corporation, Sabbatical Officer and Student Liaison Coordinator to develop the understanding of the role of Student Governors further.
- Comply with the Governing Body's Code of Conduct.