

Students' Union Constitution

(21st March 2019)

Sabbatical Officer

Middlesbrough College students elect a paid 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, and, where appointed, Committee 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 Head of Student Engagement, Student Support Services Manager and the Vice-Principal – Staff and Students in terms of managing the Students' Union budget.

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 a 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 Students' 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 decision making of the Students' Union. This includes not being able to stand for the position of Sabbatical Officer or Vice President (*Student Governor*) 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 Students' 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 one further executive role, in addition to the Sabbatical Officer, and this is the Vice President (*Student Governor*).
- The Vice President (*Student Governor*) must follow the Code of Conduct, if one is approved.
- The Job Description for the Vice President (*Student Governor*) will be updated annually by the Sabbatical Officer, Head of Student Engagement and the Clerk to the Corporation.
- The Job Description for the Sabbatical Officer will be updated annually by the Head of Student Engagement and the Clerk to the Corporation, and will be used as part of the Sabbatical Officer Election Process.

Representation

- The Sabbatical Officer is automatically elected as a Student Governor for one academic year beginning 1 August.
- The Second Student Governor, *also known as the Vice President*, 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, who will develop their corporate knowledge, and support them before, during and after 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 Vice Principal – Staff and Students or the Student Support 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

- All minutes of the Cross College Student Council meetings will be circulated to members of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team / College Management Team as soon as they have been approved.
- The Sabbatical Officer will also work closely with the Nominated Governor for Student Voice / Safeguarding / Prevent / Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) and SEN, ensuring they are kept informed of progress and invited to all appropriate meetings.
- The Sabbatical Officer will also work closely with the Vice President (*Student Governor*) on a range of issues, and will meet regularly, providing feedback to the Head of Student Engagement and Clerk to the Corporation on actions agreed.

Responsibilities of the Student Council

- The Student Council can discuss a range of issues brought by Department and / or Directorate 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, Canvas, College Website, College's main Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram pages, Directorate Council Meetings, Plasma Screens, Notice Boards and the Middlesbrough College Students' Union Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat 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 and / or the Vice President (*Student Governor*).

Structure and Membership

- The Student Council will be chaired by the Sabbatical Officer, who is also a member of the Student Council. In the absence, of the Sabbatical Officer, the Vice President or the Head of Student Engagement will chair the meeting, and this will be determined at the beginning of the meeting.
- Cross College Representation is detailed below and is subject to change through discussion and agreement with the Cross College Student Council, Sabbatical Officer and Vice Principal – Staff and 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 & Education
(Up to four students)
- A Levels
(Up to four students)
- Apprentices
(Up to four students)
- Progression Studies
(Up to four students)
- Higher Education
(Up to four students)

Class Representatives are also elected from within their respective Department and / or Directorates, and these students work with the Department / Directorate and the Sabbatical Officer to promote the Student Voice.

Key managers will also attend the Student Council meetings to provide feedback and answers to key issues being raised by students. Invitations to these meetings are sent out on a termly basis.

- 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 Vice President will also be automatically elected as the second Student Governor, and they will normally be elected in September / 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 as soon as they have been approved.
- 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 Head of Student Engagement.
- All positions will run from 1 October to 31 July the following year respectively.

Higher Education (HE) Students

- Higher Education students who enrol via Middlesbrough College / Teesside University / Open University are entitled to run for Sabbatical Officer, if they have been issued a Middlesbrough College Student ID Card.
- An independent HE Department meeting has been established to collect the specific views of HE students.
- HE Directorate Reps are also invited to attend and contribute to the Cross-College Council meeting.
- 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, to the Governing Body, an annual up-date of the Student Council accounts.

Clubs and Societies

- All Middlesbrough College Students can participate in Clubs and Societies that are set up in College.
- In order for a Club/Society to run, there must be at least 5 sign ups and active members.
- The Sabbatical Officer and the Vice President (*Student Governor*) 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.

Elections

Sabbatical Officer Elections

- Sabbatical Officer Elections are normally held in April / May each academic year and the dates are determined annually by the Head of Student

Engagement in consultation with the current Sabbatical Officer, and communicated to the Senior Leadership Team and Clerk to the Corporation.

- The position of Sabbatical Officer is for a one-year term only.
- 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.'

Vice President (Student Governor) Elections

- The Vice President (*Student Governor*) Elections are normally held in September / October each academic year, and dates are determined annually.
- In the event that only one student applies for the position as Vice President (*Student Governor*), 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.

Appendix 1

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 Experience Coordinator to develop the understanding of the role of Student Governors further.
- Comply with the Governing Body's Code of Conduct.
- Attend relevant training and meetings to fulfil their role as Vice President of the Students' Union and as Student Governor.

The Vice President (*Student Governor*) shall also:

- Attend relevant cross College meetings to represent the Students' Union.
- Attend meetings with the Sabbatical Officer, as required. Should the Vice President (*Student Governor*) not attend 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 the Vice President (*Student Governor*), and this may happen if they feel they are not fulfilling their job role.