

# Constitution of the Free Speech and Secular Society

Adopted 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2016

## 1.0 Objectives of the Society

1.1 The Objectives of the Society are:

(a) We, the society, wish to speak freely and to be subject to secular government. The aim of the Free Speech and Secular Society is to raise awareness about, promote and defend both free speech and secularism.

(b) On issues not related to free speech or secularism, the society will remain politically neutral. Decisions on the society's stance in regards to issues related to free speech or secularism are made by the membership at a General Meeting.

## 2.0 Membership of the Society

2.1 Membership will be open to all students

2.2 Membership may be conditional upon payment of a membership fee, subject to terms and conditions determined from time to time by the Committee.

2.3 The Committee may provide classes of memberships to people who are not students at Manchester University.

2.4 Membership of the society may be suspended or revoked by the Committee.

## 3.0 The Committee and its meetings

3.1 The Committee will manage the Society's affairs in all matters. Any matter not provided for in this Constitution will be decided upon by the Committee.

3.2 The Committee may delegate any of its functions to another group or person.

3.3 The members of the Committee are all the Officers of the Society.

3.4 The Chair will chair all Committee meetings, and appoint a replacement if absent.

3.5 One half of the Committee is a quorum for Committee meetings.

3.6 In the event of a tie, the person chairing will have a casting vote.

3.7 The Committee may make decisions outside of meetings, provided that such decisions are recorded by the Secretary and that all members of the Committee have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

3.8 Committee members must comply with the conflict of interest rules in the Societies Bye-Law.

3.9 Subject to the requirements of this Constitution, the Committee may manage its affairs, and conduct itself informally, as it sees fit.

## 4.0 Officers

4.1 The following positions exist as the Officers of the Society: Chair; Treasurer; Secretary;

4.2 The committee may create additional non-elected roles as the need arises, to be filled at the discretion of the committee or through an election.

4.3 All elected Officer positions will be filled by votes conducted at the Society's Annual General Meeting, at a General Meeting or online in accordance with the Election Rules for Societies.

4.4 The term of all positions will start on a date set by the Committee from time to time, to last one year, with a handover period beginning after the election.

4.5 If an Officer position becomes vacant during the year, the Committee may co-opt another member to fill this position.

#### 4.6 Qualifications for elected positions

4.6.1 Any candidate for the position of Chair must previously have held a Committee position.

4.6.2 Any candidate for a committee position must be a student at the University of Manchester.

4.6.3 Any candidate for a committee position must be active within the society. This can be in the form of attending events, contributing to the blog or a campaign or help in the organisation of a debate.

4.7 Any Officer that suspends, withdraws from or finishes their studies at the University of Manchester during their elected term will relinquish their position as Officer, subject to a transition period as determined by the remaining members of the Committee.

### **5.0 Responsibilities and powers of Officers**

5.1 Within the responsibilities set out below any Officer may act as they see fit on behalf of the Society, subject to the oversight of the Chair.

5.2 The Committee may specify further responsibilities for any Officer as required.

5.3 The responsibilities of the Chair are to:

- (a) Oversee the Society so as to advance the Society's objectives;
- (b) Ensure that the Society's rules and Constitution are being followed;

5.4 The responsibilities of the Treasurer are to:

- (a) Administer the Society's finances as required by its activities;
- (b) Ensure the probity of the Society's finances;
- (c) Provide regular financial reports to the Committee;

5.5 The responsibilities of the Secretary are to:

- (a) Manage all general administration;
- (b) Act as the primary link between the Society and the Students' Union;

### **6.0 Rules of the Society**

6.1 The Committee may make rules to govern the running of aspects of the Society.

6.2 Rules must be made available to members of the Society on request.

6.3 The terms of this Constitution are binding upon all the members of the Society, as are any policies or decisions determined under its provisions.

6.4 The Society must, within reason, conduct all matters in accordance with the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Students' Union.

### **7.0 General Meetings**

7.1 A General Meeting may be called for by the Committee or by a petition of members who make up at least 20% of the total membership.

7.2 Notice must be given two weeks in advance.

7.5 All decisions at a General Meeting except for elections will be made by a show of hands, unless at least 3 members demand a secret ballot.

7.6 An Annual General Meeting ("AGM") is usually called by the Committee once in each academic year. Two weeks' notice must be given of the AGM.

### **8.0 Amendments**

8.1 The constitution shall be amended where a change is approved by 2/3 of the committee. Such changes come into force with immediate effect. In case of a tie, the chair will have the casting vote.