



# CONSTITUTION

DISABLED STUDENTS UK

# CONSTITUTION

## DISABLED STUDENTS UK

### CONTENTS

1	Name	3
2	Administration	3
3	Aims	3
3.1	Vision . . . . .	3
3.2	Goal . . . . .	3
4	Activities	3
4.1	Empowering individual students . . . . .	3
4.2	Creating a network . . . . .	4
4.3	Researching solutions . . . . .	4
4.4	Campaigning . . . . .	4
4.5	Lobbying . . . . .	4
5	Leadership	4
5.1	Appointment and retirement of leaders . . . . .	4
5.2	Leaders remuneration . . . . .	5
6	Other working members	5
7	Complaints procedure	6
7.1	Making a written complaint . . . . .	6
8	Policies	6
9	Membership	7
9.1	Appointment and retirement of members . . . . .	7
10	Meetings	7
10.1	Leadership Meetings . . . . .	7
10.2	Quorum . . . . .	8
10.3	General Meetings . . . . .	8
11	Accounts	8
12	Dissolution	9
13	Amendments	9
14	Review	9

## 1 NAME

**Disabled Students UK**, referred to below as '**DSUK**' or the 'organisation'

## 2 ADMINISTRATION

Disabled Students UK is a Disabled Peoples' Organisation, which is to say that we are led by disabled people.

Subject to the matter set out below the group is administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by members of the Leadership team.

## 3 AIMS

### 3.1 Vision

DSUK envisions a world where disabled students have the same access to higher education as non-disabled students.

### 3.2 Goal

DSUK is working to make universities truly accountable to their disabled students and to disability law.

## 4 ACTIVITIES

We are working for change in five ways:

### 4.1 Empowering individual students

In pursuit of accessibility, disabled students are faced with an obstacle course of bureaucracy. Even with our support students will likely face successive barriers to achieving access. However, navigating each step of the bureaucracy is essential and necessary to access the higher decision making, and it is this journey **we seek to empower students to take**.

We give guidance and peer support to individual students in navigating inaccessible bureaucratic university complaint procedures to put forward a complaint to their university and oversight bodies. Some complaints are not successful, however, complaints can still be an important way of paving the way for future students. We believe that as more disabled students make formal complaints universities will have to start listening.

## 4.2 Creating a network

We support disabled students and disability networks at different universities to come together, share resources and organise resistance. Because being a disabled student can be exhausting and isolating, we have also created social spaces which are designed to be restful, positive places where disabled students can connect with one another.

## 4.3 Researching solutions

We conduct research into how exactly universities and other bodies in the higher education sector are failing disabled students and how they could do better.

## 4.4 Campaigning

We run several initiatives including, but not limited to; information and guidance campaigns, protests and petitions and social media campaigns in order to best raise awareness of accessibility issues that disabled students are facing within higher education. Helping us connect with the general public and in targeted groups such as students, families, and university staff and work towards inclusive policies together.

## 4.5 Lobbying

We lobby the government and regulatory bodies for the enforcement of the Equality Act (2010) for disabled students in higher education.

# 5 LEADERSHIP

Our organisation is run by a number of disabled members that make up the Leadership Team.

## 5.1 Appointment and retirement of leaders

The leaders are selected by the leadership team through an interview and/or a skills test. A requirement for leadership is that the applicant identifies as disabled or as having a disability.

A leader can step down at any point and may be removed by the other leaders if they are not able to complete the duties laid out in the leadership job description.

### **A person ceases to be a leader as soon as:**

- Notification is received by the Organisation from the leader that the leader is resigning from office, and such resignation has taken effect in accordance with its terms.

- The leader ceases to be a member.

The Leaders are responsible for the management of the organisation's business, for which purpose they may exercise all the powers of the organisation.

## 5.2 Leaders remuneration

Occasionally, it may become necessary for a leader to receive financial compensation. - something something, a leader might be spending hours equivalent to part time or full time employment carrying out organisation business. In this scenario, the organisation may deem it appropriate to (compensate/ or support (subsidise) the leader)

1. An employed Leader may undertake any services for the Organisation that the Leadership team decides.
2. An employed Leader shall be entitled to such remuneration as the Leadership team determines:
  - a) for their services to the organisation as an employed leader; and
  - b) for any other service which they undertake for the organisation.
3. Subject to the Articles, an employed Leader's remuneration may:
  - a) take any form; and
  - b) include any arrangements in connection with the payment of a pension, allowance or gratuity, or any death, sickness or disability benefits, to or in respect of that leader.
  - c) Unless the Leaders decide otherwise, Leaders' remuneration accrues from day to day.

## 6 OTHER WORKING MEMBERS

In addition to our leadership, non-leadership members are engaged in our work to different degrees. Leaders may delegate any of the powers which are conferred on them under the Articles or the implementation of their decisions or day to day management of the affairs of the Organisation:

1. to such person or committee;
2. by such means (including by power of attorney);
3. to such an extent;
4. in relation to such matters or territories; and
5. on such terms and conditions;

as they think fit.

If the leaders so specify, any such delegation of this power may authorise further delegation of the leaders' powers by any person to whom they are delegated. The leaders may revoke any delegation in whole or part, or alter its terms and conditions.

## 7 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

DSUK aims to do work which benefits disabled students. However as limited individuals we cannot meet everyone's needs. We strongly believe in developing ourselves, so if we are not quite getting something right, or if you have an idea for how we can improve, we would like to know.

We are particularly interested in how we can improve our intersectionality and accessibility. Where complaints arise, we aim to deal with them in a professional and sensitive manner. As members of the organisation we are open to further development and the betterment of the organisation as a whole. To this end we encourage members to raise issues informally in the first instance to the individual or relevant leader as appropriate.

We have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you have encountered an issue in your dealings with the organisation. If you are not happy with the organisation please tell us. If you are unhappy about any of our services, please speak to the relevant Leader. If you are unhappy with an individual that you are working with in the organisation sometimes it is best to tell him or her directly. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then speak to the team leader or directly to the Leadership team.

Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.

### 7.1 Making a written complaint

If you are not satisfied with our response or wish to raise the matter more formally, please write to [complain@disabledstudents.co.uk](mailto:complain@disabledstudents.co.uk) All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within three working days. The aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within ten working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

## 8 POLICIES

DSUK have created a number of documents which detail our operational procedure.

This includes a Safeguarding Well-being Policy, an Equality Policy as well as a Code of Conduct.

These can all be found on our website at [disabledstudents.co.uk/constitution](https://disabledstudents.co.uk/constitution)

## 9 MEMBERSHIP

The organisation shall have a membership.

### 9.1 Appointment and retirement of members

1. Every person who wishes to become a member shall deliver to the company an application for membership in such form (and containing such information) as the Leader requires and executed by him or her.
2. To become a member of Disabled Students UK you must be a disabled student, a former disabled student, or a verified ally. Our members must be 18 or over and agree to our rules.
3. Membership is not transferable to anyone else.
4. Membership is terminated if the member decides to leave or is removed. The leaders may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interest of the organisation. If the member wishes to appeal this decision, they have the right to be heard by the Leaders and can be accompanied by a friend.
5. The leaders will keep an up-to-date membership list.
6. Members have access to our internal meeting and social platforms, can vote in our membership polls and are able to apply for committee or leadership positions.

## 10 MEETINGS

The business of the group will be carried out by the Leadership Team. The team will meet as necessary and not less than four times a year.

### 10.1 Leadership Meetings

1. Two Leaders may call a leadership meeting, or one leader if the motion is seconded by another.
2. A leadership meeting must be called by at least seven Clear Days' notice unless either:
  - a) all the Leaders agree; or
  - b) urgent circumstances require shorter notice.

3. Notice of leadership meetings must be given to each leader.
4. Every notice calling a leadership meeting must specify:
  - a) the place, day and time of the meeting; and
  - b) If it is anticipated that leaders participating in the meeting will not be in the same place, how is it proposed that they should communicate with each other during the meeting.
5. Notice of leadership meetings need not be in Writing.
6. Notice of leadership meetings may be sent by Electronic Means to an Address provided by the leader for the purpose.

### 10.2 Quorum

The quorum for leadership meetings is dependant of the total number of leaders, which may vary, but at no time should the quorum be less than half that of the total number of leaders

### 10.3 General Meetings

The Leaders may call a general meeting at any time

## 11 ACCOUNTS

The organisation is not established or conducted for private gain: any surplus or assets are used principally for the benefit of the community.

To further its objectives the organisation may do all such lawful things as may further the organisations objects and, in particular, but, without limitation, may borrow or raise and secure the payment of money for any purpose including for the purposes of investment or of raising funds.

**The Leadership Team shall be responsible for:**

1. The keeping of accounting records for the group
2. The preparation of the annual statement of accounts for the group.
3. Arranging the auditing or independent examination of the statements of accounts of the organisation

The leadership will aim to achieve funding through applying for grants. We are currently recruiting a finance officer. In the meantime [mark@disabledstudents.co.uk](mailto:mark@disabledstudents.co.uk) will be responsible for organisations banking and preparing an annual report.



## 12 DISSOLUTION

If a Leadership meeting, by simple majority, decides that it is necessary to close down the group it may call a Special General Meeting to do so. The sole business of this meeting will be to dissolve the group. If it is agreed to dissolve the group, all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a charitable organisation chosen by a quorum of the Leadership team at the meeting which agrees the dissolution.

## 13 AMENDMENTS

Any proposal to alter the constitution by a motion passed by no less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting.

## 14 REVIEW

The next review is due October 2021, after an initial 6 month revision period wherein this document is subject to change.