

CUSU Disabled Students' Liberation Campaign Constitution

This constitution shall be the governing document of the CUSU Disabled Students' Liberation Campaign, hereafter referred to as 'the Campaign'.

A – The Objectives of the Campaign

A. 1 The primary objective of the Campaign shall be to represent, and act in, the interests of its members. The Campaign shall pursue this objective by:

- i. providing support in navigating welfare, access, academic and social life as a disabled student
- ii. actively enabling its members by countering internalized disablism, both by raising awareness of disability rights, and through the unified challenging of disablist attitudes, behaviours, institutions and spaces
- iii. providing advocacy for members who are experiencing prejudice or discrimination based wholly or in part on their status as disabled
- iv. seeking to change practices that routinely discriminate against disabled students
- v. challenging and countering the idea that it is primarily the bodies or minds of people with impairments that disable them, and promoting positive self-identity amongst disabled students
- vi. promoting and spreading understanding and knowledge of the social model of disability, with a particular focus on how students are disabled by the University
- vii. seeking to promote positive self-identity amongst disabled students, by countering internalized disablism, and working to bring into the Campaign people who might be unaware either of their status as disabled, or of the oppression that this leads
- viii. raising awareness of the legal rights to which disclosure as a disabled student entitles members of the Campaign, and promoting access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the DDA) as basic rights, dispelling myths of privilege or nuisance in demanding them
- ix. representing its members on the decision-making bodies of CUSU, and at a national level in the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, and acting as a channel of communication between its members and these and other relevant bodies
- x. ensuring that the interests and views of the members of the Campaign are actively and effectively represented at all levels of the University
- xi. liaison and cooperation with College JCRs and MCRs with regards to the interests of its members within their colleges
- xii. working closely with the CUSU Welfare Team on its work in promoting equal opportunities for all, opposing prejudice and discrimination, and any work it might do to raise awareness of mental health issues, impairment and disability issues, and avenues of support

- xiii. working with the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, and other disability rights organizations, towards the complete acceptance and integration of the bodies and minds of people with impairments, and an end to the widespread practice of disabling them

In furtherance of this objective, the Campaign shall seek:

- i. the repeal of all legislation discriminating against and disabling citizens with impairments
- ii. equal rights for citizens with impairments to be enforced by law
- iii. to counter the disablism which is, in its many guises, so widespread in society, both nationally and internationally

A. 2 The Campaign shall be independent of any religious body or party political organization, but may affiliate to or work together with any organization that may be working to further the interests of its members.

A. 3. Except in so far as may be necessary for the support of a disadvantaged section of society or of the disabled community, the Campaign shall pursue its object without regard to ethnic origin, religion, nationality, colour, gender orientation, age, sexual orientation, or HIV status, provided that this provision shall not invalidate the provision of Articles D. 3. vi, viii, ix and x and Article D. 9 below.

A. 4. The Campaign shall be a democratic body.

B – Membership

B. 1. The Disabled Students' Campaign shall be an association of the members of the University of Cambridge in statu pupillari who self-define as disabled, or who have themselves experienced disability, and are pursuing a course of study or research in the University.

B. 2 All members of the Disabled Students' Campaign shall have the right to:

- i. Participate in the decision-making processes of Open Meetings
- ii. Vote in CUSU Disabled Students' Campaign elections

B. 3 Membership shall not be withheld or revoked and members shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of any consideration other than their status as not reasonably self-defining as disabled, or not having themselves experienced disability.

C – Open Meetings

C. 1 Open Meetings shall be the primary decision-making body of the Campaign.

C. 2 All members of the Campaign shall have the right to participate in the decision-making process of Open Meetings.

C. 3 Quoracy for Open Meetings shall be 10 or more members of the Campaign participating in the decision-making process. Decisions of a non-quorate Open Meeting may be ratified at the next quorate Open Meeting.

C. 4 Ordinary members of CUSU who are not members of the Campaign may attend meetings and speak at the invitation of the Chair. Other groups or individuals may attend and speak as long as no objections are raised by attending members. No non-member may contribute to the consensus decisions of Open Meetings. Attendance by a non-member denotes a commitment to Article C. 8 below, and brings them under its jurisdiction.

C.5 If another autonomous campaign or representative group has a self-defining Disabled Students' Officer, it shall be noted that their input into the Campaign's meetings is representative of a constituency.

C. 6 Procedure for conduct of open meetings shall be set out in the Campaign's Standing Orders.

C. 7 As a matter of course, open meetings shall be as accessible as possible, without waiting for someone to come forward with a particular access need. If someone does come forward with an unforeseen access need, it shall be met as a matter of course from then on. If the Campaign does not have the resources to meet a particular access need, the Campaign shall seek funding to meet that access requirement as a priority, and keep the excluded person or people included in every way possible in the meantime.

C. 8 Unless impossible, open meetings shall be streamed in real time over the internet, so that people can participate without needing to physically attend, contributing towards quoracy and decision-making.

C. 9 Open Meetings shall be a safe space. Everyone in attendance at the meeting shall actively seek to avoid perpetuating any form of oppression through prejudiced or discriminatory language or behaviour. If any individual is engaged in such oppressive language or behaviour, it shall be the responsibility of the group to mediate and, if necessary, agree by consensus that that individual should apologize and cease to engage in such behaviour or, if no such change in behaviour is forthcoming, that that individual has excluded themselves from the safe space by use of persistent oppressive language or behaviour.

C. 10 Elected Officers and Representatives shall take it in turns to facilitate Open Meetings, putting themselves forward as a contact point for agenda items at least ten days in advance, and gathering written proposals for action or areas of discussion, disseminating them amongst the whole Campaign at least four days in advance. Facilitators shall ensure that people are speaking in turn and not interrupting each other, and find ways of structuring discussion so as to keep it productive and move it towards consensus. They shall have no special powers and shall facilitate discussion and decision-making. For the purposes of the CUSU Constitution, the facilitator shall be considered the Chair of the meeting.

C. 11 The date, time and location of Open Meetings shall be announced by the facilitator ten days in advance and remain fixed, and it shall be made clear to people who might attend that they can rely on this.

C. 12 Elected Officers and Representatives shall take it in turns to take and disseminate detailed minutes of Open Meetings.

C. 13 Elected Officers and Representatives of the Campaign shall be bound in their actions by the decisions of Open Meetings, and mandated as appropriate to facilitate their implementation.

C. 14 Open Meetings of the Campaign shall be held at least four times during Michaelmas and Lent full term and at least twice during Easter full term.

D – Elected Officers and Representatives

D. 1 Only members of the Campaign are eligible to run for elected positions in the Campaign.

D. 2 Elected Officers and Representatives of the Campaign shall facilitate the running of the Campaign at the direction of the consensus decisions of Open Meetings.

D. 3 The Elected Officers and Representatives of the Campaign shall comprise the following:

- i. The Disabled Students' Officer
- ii. The Welfare Officer
- iii. The Access Officer
- iv. The Academic Affairs Officer
- v. The Social Officer
- vi. The Women's' Officer
- vii. The Equality and Diversity Officer
- viii. The Mental Health Representative
- ix. The Invisible Impairments Representative
- x. The Visible Impairments Representative
- xi. The Multiple Impairments Representative

D. 4 The responsibilities of the Elected Officers and Representatives shall be as follows:

i. The Disabled Students' Officer shall:

- a) Coordinate the overall work of the Campaign.
- b) Coordinate awareness-raising on the social model of disability, and promotion of positive self-definition amongst disabled students.
- c) Represent the Campaign at CUSU Council and to the CUSU Executive, and vote in accordance with the wishes of the Campaign at CUSU Council. For the purposes of

the CUSU Constitution, s(he) shall be the head of the autonomous campaign, but this status shall give her/him no special powers.

- d) Endeavour to ensure that the views of the Campaign are represented at the Joint Committee on Disabilities and the Disability Forum.
 - e) Act as the representative of the Campaign to local, national and international media.
 - f) Represent the Campaign at the NUS Disabled Students' Conference, and generally connect the Disabled Students' Campaign to the wider disability rights movement.
 - g) Support members of the Campaign in pushing for self-defining representation within their college JCRs and MCRs, and seek to inform the work of any Students with Disabilities Officers who are not members of the Campaign with its objectives.
 - h) Seek to maintain close liaison with the Disabled Staff Network.
- ii. The Welfare Officer shall:
- a) Provide welfare support for disabled students.
 - b) Represent the Campaign to JCRs, MCRs, Disabled Students' Officers and Students with Disabilities Officers, seeking to coordinate on disability rights and related issues.
 - c) Attend CUSU Welfare Team Meetings, presenting the views of the Campaign, and advocating the welfare and rights of disabled students.
 - d) Endeavour to ensure that the views of the Campaign are represented at the University Health Services Committee.
 - e) Coordinate the provision by the Campaign Elected Officers and Representatives of fully accessible welfare events during stressful points of the year.
- iii. The Access Officer shall:
- a) Act as a contact point for prospective disabled students.
 - b) Attend CUSU Access Team Meetings, presenting the views of the Campaign and working to ensure that the specific access issues faced by disabled students are being addressed.
 - c) Endeavour to ensure that the views of the Campaign are represented at the Access to Learning Fund Committee.
 - d) Raise awareness amongst college Access Officers of the specific access issues faced by disabled students.
 - e) Coordinate action to increase the accessibility of the University to disabled students.
 - f) Be responsible for making open meetings accessible, as outlined in C. 6 and C. 7.
- iv. The Academic Affairs Officer shall:
- a) Provide academic support for disabled students.
 - b) Attend CUSU Education Team Meetings, presenting the views of the Campaign and working to inform their work with an understanding of the specific issues faced by disabled students.
 - c) Coordinate action to promote full accessibility across all aspects of academic life.

- d) Act as a channel of communication between the Disability Resource Centre and the Campaign, seeking to coordinate their work and raise awareness of the support provided by the DRC.
 - e) Raise awareness amongst college Academic Affairs Officers and Faculty Reps of the specific academic affairs issues faced by disabled students.
- v. The Social Officer shall:
- a) Organize fully accessible social events for disabled students and others who support the aims of the Campaign.
 - b) Promote awareness of accessibility across events being organized for Cambridge students.
 - c) Support disabled students in gaining the confidence to assert their right to be included in all aspects of social and extra-curricular.
 - d) Coordinate action to challenge inaccessibility in social and extra-curricular life.
- vi. The Women's Officer shall:
- a) Be a member of the Campaign who self-defines as a woman.
 - b) Represent the interests of disabled women to the Women's Union.
 - c) Provide welfare support on issues relating to gender.
 - d) Coordinate action and awareness-raising on the relationship between women's liberation and disabled liberation.
- vii. The Equality and Diversity Officer shall:
- a) Promote strong links with the other CUSU Autonomous Campaigns, and coordinate Campaigns that relate their work as an overall struggle for liberation for all oppressed groups within the University and society.
 - b) Endeavour to ensure that the views of the Campaign are represented at the Equality and Diversity Committee, and represent the Campaign at Equality and Diversity Student Links events.
- viii. The Mental Health Representative shall:
- a) Be a member of the Campaign who has experience of mental health problems.
 - b) Facilitate meetings of the Mental Health Network, which shall consist of members of the Campaign who have personal experience of mental health related impairment.
 - c) Coordinate action to overcome stigma against mental health problems and people with mental health related impairments, including eating disorders.
 - d) Raise awareness of mental health conditions (including eating disorders) and of the support available, and promote positive self-identification amongst students with mental health related impairments.
 - e) Endeavour to ensure that the views of the Mental Health Network are represented at the University Counselling Service Executive Committee.

- f) Act as a channel of communication between the University Counselling Service and the Campaign, seeking to coordinate their work and raise awareness of the support provided by the UCS.
- g) Coordinate action to defend the right of students with mental health related impairments, including eating disorders, to access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the DDA) and full integration into all aspects of student life.
- h) Attend CUSU Welfare Team Meetings, working closely with the CUSU Eating Disorders Support Officer to ensure that Eating Disorders are being fully represented within the Campaign, and with the CUSU Mental Wellbeing Officer, both to represent disabled students with mental health related impairments, and to fully integrate their work and shared aims.

ix. The Invisible Impairments Representative shall:

- a) Be a member of the Campaign who has an invisible but not mental health related impairment, e.g. dyspraxia, dysgraphia, autism, epilepsy, dyslexia.
- b) Raise awareness of invisible impairments and work to overcome stigma against them, scepticism about their existence, and prejudice or discrimination against people with invisible impairments.
- c) Promote positive self-identification amongst invisibly impaired disabled students.
- d) Coordinate action to defend the right of students with invisible impairments to access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the DDA) and full integration into all aspects of student life.

x. The Visible Impairments Representative shall:

- a) Be a member of the Campaign who has a visible impairment.
- b) Raise awareness of visible impairments and work to counter the idea that it is primarily the bodies of students with visible impairments that disable them, that a fully adjusted lifestyle is inferior, or that it is OK to look down on disabled students when they happen to have a visible impairment.
- c) Coordinate action to defend the right of students who have visible impairments to access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the DDA) and full integration into all aspects of student life.

xi. The Multiple Impairments Representative shall:

- a) Be a member of the Campaign who has multiple impairments.
- b) Raise awareness of multiple impairments, and work to counter the potential assumption that members of the Campaign with multiple impairments are defined by their most visible or obvious impairment.
- c) Coordinate action to defend the right of students with multiple impairments to all of the access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments under the DDA) necessary to allow them to fully access all aspects of student life, and to oppose the view that an individual has a finite right to access arrangements (including

reasonable adjustments under the DDA), or should ever be penalized, financially or otherwise, for demanding their full rights.

- d) Coordinate with other Representatives in areas in which their roles overlap, and in making sure that the Campaign is taking into account fully the issues faced by multiply impaired students.

D. 4 The Campaign may decide from time to time to introduce new elected officer roles in response to particular contexts and situations, by adding a clearly defined title and job description to the Standing Orders for election for as long as the role remains relevant.

D. 5 The term of office of all Elected Officers and Representatives shall be from the day after the announcement of election to office until one year and a fortnight later. The two weeks following the annual elections shall be a handover period, including ensuring close familiarity amongst all officers and representatives elect with the Campaign's Constitution and Standing Orders.

D. 6 An elected officer or representative shall have the right to resign at anytime during their term of office, and concerns about their fulfilment of their office can be raised at Open Meetings. It shall be understood, however, that they are all part time officers facing disablement: as long as they are keeping Open Meetings fully informed of their progress, and sending apologies to any meetings that they are unable to attend, they shall have the right to remain in office.

D. 7 If any member of the Campaign has concerns that an Elected Officer or Representative may be conducting themselves in a way that is contrary to the aims of the Campaign, they may raise this for discussion at an Open Meeting. This should then be discussed and resolved in the same way as any other item for discussion, as outlined in the Campaign's Standing Orders.

D. 8 Elected Officers and representatives shall coordinate their work through Open Meetings, with no separate decision-making processes, and any other meetings between them shall be purely organizational.

D. 9 Any Elected Office can be shared between more than one members of the Campaign standing for the position together.

D. 10 In the event of an unfilled office, the Elected Officers and Representatives and the Elections Committee shall take collective responsibility for finding interested members, and facilitating their election to the position(s) through the consensus decision of a quorate Open Meeting. In the meantime, the work pertaining to unfilled roles shall be divided between the Elected Officers and Representatives.

D. 11 Any group within the Campaign shall have the right to initiate an autonomous network within it and elect a self-defining officer to facilitate it.

E – Elections

E. 1 All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot and counted by STV, in accordance with the regulations set out in the University Ordinances.

E. 2 An Elections Committee of not less than two members of the Campaign, but as many as are interested, shall volunteer to be responsible for facilitating the elections; devising the rules; making every reasonable effort to advertise the time, date and venue of such elections to all Ordinary Members of the CUSU in every college; and resolving any conflicts relating to electoral conduct.

E. 3 The Returning Officer for the elections shall be chosen by the members of the Elections Committee from among themselves.

E. 4 Elections shall be held annually during Full Lent Term.

E. 5 Nominations shall open fourteen days prior to the date of the elections, and close seven days later, at which point candidates shall be announced.

E. 6 Only members of the Campaign shall be eligible to stand for elected positions and vote in elections.

1. 7 Any member may run for the position of one officer role only and one representative role only.

E. 8 The relevant Open Meeting of Lent Term shall include hustings, facilitated by the Elections Committee.

E. 9 Hustings shall be made fully accessible to all members of the Campaign. If a member of the Campaign who is running for a position or positions cannot attend hustings due to their impairment(s) or disablement, a speech shall be read out on their behalf. Unless impossible, all hustings shall be streamed live on the internet.

E. 10 Voting shall be carried out via the CUSU online voting system and an accessible ballot box at the relevant open meeting.

E. 11 There shall only appear on the ballots the names of the candidates standing, the ballot rubric and a clear explanation of the criteria for membership of the Campaign.

E. 12 Voting shall be made as accessible as possible. If a member of the Campaign has particular access needs that prevent them from voting in the procedure outlined here, access arrangements shall be made to allow them to vote.

E. 13 Voting shall be open for at least 48 hours and no more than seven days, as decided by the Elections Committee, and votes shall be publically counted.

F – Finance

F. 1 The running of the finances of the Campaign shall be the collective responsibility of its members, with expenditure decided through Open Meetings.

F. 2 The Campaigns' accounts shall be managed by an appointed representative at the direction of Open Meetings, who shall liaise with the CUSU coordinator and follow CUSU internal policy.

G – CUSU

G.1 The Campaign shall be a Representative Campaign of CUSU, as laid out in the CUSU Constitution, Article I. The Disabled Students' Officer shall represent the interests of the Campaign on the CUSU Executive, and at CUSU Council. The Disabled Students' Officer is accountable to Open Meetings for her/his votes at CUSU Council. (S)he shall act as a channel of communication between the Campaign and CUSU.

H – Amendments to the Constitution

H. 1 The Constitution shall be the primary document governing the transaction of all Campaign business. It may only be amended by the consensus decision of an Open Meeting, pending ratification by CUSU Council.

H. 2 The Campaign may have Standing Orders as decided by open meetings of the Campaign. Standing Orders may be amended by the decision of an open meeting.