

THE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Responsible Person:	Coordinator, Student Representation
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CONTENTS

The Students' Council 2

 Composition of Students' Council..... 2

 Role and Accountability of the Students' Council..... 3

 Responsibilities of Students' Council 3

 General Governance Duties of Members of Council..... 4

 Additional Duties of Members of Council..... 4

 Implementation..... 5

 Time Commitment & Recognition of Services 5

Versioning 7

Declaration 7

The Students' Council

The Students' Council is the paramount governing body of the University of Melbourne Student Union. Membership of Council consists of a maximum of 22 Voting Representatives, and an additional 37 non-Voting Representatives. Of the Voting Representatives on Council, there are 15 General Representatives and 7 Representatives for Special Constituencies – Queer, Indigenous, International, Postgraduate, Students of Colour, Students with Disabilities, and Southbank. Additionally, all elected Office Bearers serve as non-Voting Representatives, alongside the UMSU International President and one UMSU International Vice President. All except the UMSU International representatives are elected at the annual student elections in September.

Students' Council meets regularly throughout the year to oversee and provide direction to the organisation. Council meets once a fortnight within the academic semester, and at least once per month outside it. At these meetings, Office Bearers will present their reports of the activities and expenditure of their departments and how they are tracking towards their personal goals. The Chief Executive Officer will also present their report to Council on how the organisation is faring and present any concerns or points of interest. Motions to pass funds, endorse actions, and make regulation/policy changes will also be brought forward to Students' Council at these meetings to be considered and voted upon, as well as Student Initiative Grant applications.

To this end, Students' Council is integral to UMSU's service delivery, as it central to the direction of the organisation. It is critical that members of Council serve in the best interest of UMSU, and in conformity with the UMSU Constitution and its regulations.

Composition of Students' Council

The Students' Council is composed of the following voluntary positions:

- 22 elected Voting Members of Council:
 - 15 General Representatives
 - 1 Queer Representative
 - 1 Indigenous Representative
 - 1 International Representative
 - 1 Graduate Representative
 - 1 Southbank Representative
 - 1 Students of Colour Representative
 - 1 Students with Disabilities Representative
- All elected Officers as non-Voting Members of Council

- The UMSU International President as a non-Voting Member of Council
- An UMSU International Vice President as a non-Voting Member of Council

Each representative of a special constituency may only be elected by and from student members of UMSU within that constituency. E.g., The Queer Officer and Queer Voting Council Representative must be a student who identifies as Queer and elected by Queer students.

Role and Accountability of the Students' Council

The Students' Council must work closely with the CEO and use their best endeavours to implement and carry out the Constitutional purposes of UMSU. All members of Council are accountable to, and subject to the direction of, the members – being the student membership of UMSU. The Students' Council is the paramount governing body of UMSU and has a responsibility to act in UMSU and its members best interests. All members of Council must act in accordance with the requirements of UMSU's Constitution (together with all UMSU Policies and Regulations), the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (AIR Act) and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC), including the ACNC Governance Standards. Members of Council must exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out their duties, as prescribed in the UMSU Constitution, Council Charter, and Regulations for Student Representatives.

Responsibilities of Students' Council

As outlined in the UMSU Constitution and subject to other provisions, the Students' Council is responsible for:

- a) the control and management of UMSU;
- b) coordinating the activities of UMSU;
- c) determining appeals against Committee decisions and against Disaffiliation of Clubs and Societies;
- d) affiliating, cooperating with, and joining other organisations in order to carry out the Purposes of UMSU;
- e) representing Students, and petitioning on behalf of Students, to the University and in the community;
- f) the finances of UMSU;
- g) setting the UMSU budget;
- h) the appointment of the UMSU Chief Executive Officer (subject to the delegation under rule 17.1(e) of the Constitution to the CEOCOC, whose powers include

advertising for, interviewing and recruiting any new CEO and renewing the Chief Executive Officer's employment contract);

- i) setting the honoraria and conditions of Voting Council Representatives and Officers;
- j) enacting Regulations, unless the power to enact Regulations is specifically entrusted with another body by the Constitution; and
- k) such other matters as are prescribed in the Constitution and the Regulations.

General Governance Duties of Members of Council

Members of Council must comply with the following duties and responsibilities:

- (a) exercise reasonable care and diligence in carrying out their duties as members of Council (as well as any additional duties arising from their Office);
- (b) act honestly in the best interests of UMSU and for its Constitutional purposes;
- (c) use their position as a member of Council and any information obtained in their role as a member of Council only for a proper purpose and in the best interests of UMSU;
- (d) properly disclose and manage any actual or perceived conflict of interest in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy;
- (e) ensure that the financial affairs of UMSU are managed responsibly;
- (f) not allow UMSU to operate while insolvent; and
- (g) not engage in any conduct likely to bring discredit to the Students' Council or UMSU.

Additional Duties of Members of Council

All members of Council, in accordance with the Council Charter, are obligated to:

- Attend and participate in an induction program at the beginning of their term;
- Attend and participate in any ongoing Students' Council governance training;
- Review and set the UMSU Budget;
- Engage in a courteous and respectful manner with members of Council, their Committees, and UMSU staff;
- Have familiarity with and provide information and assistance to students with regards to UMSU Regulations and Policy;
- Attend and prepare appropriately for all Students' Council and sub-Committee meetings, including taking the time to read and consider all papers in advance;
 - Students' Council meets fortnightly within Semester and monthly during summer and winter breaks

- Voting Members of Council may be elected to delegated sub-Committees of Students' Council, such as the Operations sub-Committee
- Participate in the ongoing review and update of UMSU's Constitution, Regulations, and Policies – facilitated through regular workshops arranged by the General Secretary; and
- Act in accordance with the Council Charter at all times while in office.

If any member of Council is unable to fulfil any or all of the above obligations due to extenuating circumstances or disability, supports with and/or adjustments will be made available.

Implementation

The Students' Council is the paramount governing body of the Student Union. Essentially, it is the board of directors - and the actions and decisions made by members of Council affect the whole organisation! Each member has a prerogative to represent University of Melbourne students, whether a special constituency, or the general student body.

Primarily this is achieved in the forum of Students' Council meetings. Members of Council that are Voting Representatives will spend their term representing stakeholder interests and upholding the aims and objectives of UMSU through regular Council meetings with Officers and key stakeholders. Meetings of Students' Council will review UMSU's activities through the reception of reports from each student-led department, the CEO, and other staff-led divisions. These meetings will also go over UMSU's operational business, manage the organisational budget, address any correspondence to Council, review Student Initiative Grants, address appeals to Council, action Policy or Regulation change requests, take on policy positions, and pass funds for various UMSU activities. All this is achieved through review of meeting papers, discussion, and the passing of motions. Any student may attend meetings of Council and propose motions for Voting Representatives to consider. Throughout their term, members of Council must adhere to their fiduciary duties and good governance practices, act in UMSU's best interests, and act in good faith as a representative of the whole student body.

Time Commitment & Recognition of Services

Members of Council are expected to be prepared for and attend for all meetings of Council, unless in the case that a leave of absence is granted. Members of Council are also expected to be available and attend all scheduled inductions and ongoing governance trainings.

The average time commitment for members of Council who are not Officers is 3-4 hours per fortnight, inclusive of meeting times and preparation. Please note this time is only indicative, as meeting times, quantity of papers, and frequencies throughout the year may vary.

In recognition of this services, Voting Council Representatives are awarded a sitting fee. The sitting fee is an honoraria or *ex gratia* payment, i.e., an honorary reward for voluntary services. For 2024, the fee was set at **\$54.04** for each meeting of Students' Council where specified attendance requirements were met. Upon completion of their term, all UMSU elected representatives are also eligible for a Melbourne Plus digital credential.

[Melbourne Plus](#) is the University's program for recognising your participation in co-curricular activities and the capabilities you develop through them. Serving as an elected student representative is eligible for recognition through Melbourne Plus as it helps students develop their capability in *People Leadership*. When students have completed their terms, they will have the opportunity to reflect on how their time at UMSU helped develop this capability; and will receive a digital credential that is verified by the University of Melbourne. This credential can be shared across networks and students may use it, along with the reflection piece, to demonstrate and articulate their capabilities in the future.

Versioning

TITLE	PARA. AMENDED	APPROVAL DATE
Statement Enacted		07/12/2022
Language amended	4, 14	11/10/2023

Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to the role and responsibilities of my position as outlined in this document, and consent to act in the capacity of an elected representative of UMSU with effect from the date of my appointment or election.

I have read and agree to comply with the UMSU Constitution.

I have read and agree to comply with the UMSU Council Charter.

I have read and agree to comply with the Policies and Regulations of UMSU.

Elected Representative's Signature		Name	
		Date	