CCR

CONFERENCE OF COMMON ROOMS

Pilot Framework
Trinity Term
2025

Oxford SU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS CONT.

WHAT IS OXFORD SU?

Oxford SU exists to represent **students' academic interests** while studying at the University of Oxford. We advocate for both **the academic and wider student life experiences of the student body** at the highest levels of the University, ensuring the student voice is heard on all issues affecting **students as students.**

We champion **student voice** - meaning we influence University decisions and work to improve the student experience.

We do this by:
- Being the recognised representative channel between students and the University of Oxford
- Promoting the interests and welfare of all students
- Supporting and advising individual students through our dedicated Advice Service
- Providing social & cultural activities, such as Fresher's Fair
- Ensuring that marginalised student voices are represented and prioritised in University policy discussions

This is what we call our **'primary purpose',** and everything we do should contribute to achieving it.

Oxford SU is **smaller** than many other Russell Group and non-Russell Group University students' unions. We do not run societies or commercial services; instead, we focus on providing support for our Sabbatical Officers and other student representatives to deliver **high-quality, evidence-based representation to University leaders and on senior decision-making bodies.** With a small staff team and limited resources, it is **crucial** that both our financial and human resources deliver value for money and directly support the **SU's primary purpose activities.**

WHO ARE OUR MEMBERS?

If you're a student at the University of Oxford, you're automatically a member of Oxford SU. **Membership is free!** You can opt out if you wish - but even if you do, you'll still be able to access our services and support.

Some students, such as visiting or exchange students, can choose to become associate members - this gives access to more services, but does not include voting rights.

The more you engage with Oxford SU, the more you'll get out of it! You can stay up-to-date with what's going on at Oxford SU by following our Instagram page, reading our weekly email updates, or attending a Conference of Common Rooms meeting. You can also get in touch with our Officers **anytime via email** - we're here to represent you.

HOW OXFORD SU WORKS

Oxford SU is a **student-led** organisation. This means that students are involved in key decisions including around our policy and providing student direction in our work. Students also play a key role in selecting the student leaders that will go on to work on your behalf and represent you in decision-making within the SU and within the wider University.

Most of our representative positions are **elected by students.** These leaders are students themselves, including four full-time Sabbatical Officers taking a year out of their studies to work full-time. Students propose and vote on policies that shape what the SU campaigns for and how it works.

Spaces like the **Conference of Common Rooms (CCR)** and **RepComs** allow student reps to make decisions on behalf of their peers, and support the SU to ensure that its work is representative of the student body and that we are working on the things that matter most to you.

THE TRUSTEE BOARD

The **Trustee Board** provides oversight of Oxford SU to ensure **all decisions are legal, financially responsible, and in made in the best interests of both students and the organisation.** It includes Sabbatical Officers, as well as Student and External Trustees (who give their time on a voluntary basis). It handles big-picture stuff like finances, staff, and long-term plans.

The Trustee Board respects student-led decision making and democracy, but it must always act in the best interests of the organisation. This means that occasionally the Board might need to **amend or prohibit** a decision.

OFFICERS OF THE UNION

Your representative Officers are elected students who lead the SU.

They include:

- **Four Sabbatical Officers**, who are employed by Oxford SU for a year during or after their studies to represent students on a range of issues across the whole collegiate university. For the 2025/26 academic year, there will be an *Undergraduate Officer, a Postgraduate Officer, a Welfare, Equity & Inclusion Officer, and a Communities & Common Rooms Officer*. You can read more about what they do on our website.
- **Equity Officers**, who will represent specific communities like LGBTQ+ or Disabled students
- **Community Officers**, who will work with other representatives across the university in areas such as sports, volunteering or societies
- **Divisional Officers**, who are linked to academic divisions, and who work with Course Reps within their Divisions

We also work closely with **Common Room committees.** Each Common Room (MCR, JCR or GCR) will have a different structure, and if you're a member of a Common Room you can ask them for more information about how to get involved.

Common Room committees will represent you *within your college and support community building,* and the SU Officers are elected to represent you *to the University of Oxford.*

ELECTIONS

Oxford SU elections are how students choose the people who lead the SU and represent them.

The elections usually happen in Hilary Term, with campaigning and voting taking place during Weeks 3 and 4 of term. If there's a vacancy or a particular need to, we might also hold elections in other terms.

All voting is done online using **Single Transferable Voting** (a ranked-choice system), and every election includes the option to vote 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON).

If you're interested in running for a position now or in the future, email **studentengagement@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk**.

STUDENT-LED POLICY SETTING

We are a **student-led** organisation, which means that we work with networks of representatives to ensure that student voices are heard across the whole institution.

In **Trinity Term 2025**, we will be piloting a new student voice model, which brings together Common Room representatives and Officers of the Students' Union to build a collective voice. It's a space to find out what students think about things, and agree positions deemed to be representative of the wider student body at the University of Oxford.

The **Conference of Common Rooms (CCR)** will be where Common Room Presidents, alongside Part-Time Officers, come together to support the SU's student voice work. CCR is a forum for students to discuss shared interests and common purpose, and is how students can input into SU decision-making, representation, and policy development.

This model has been designed in collaboration with students. Following consultation in Michaelmas 2024 and Hilary 2025, we have developed a representative model of democracy, which means that Common Room Presidents will attend and represent students' views. This means that if there's something you want the SU to do, you should start the process by talking to your Common Room.

HOW WILL CCR WORK?

Each college's Common Room will send one representative (usually the President) to vote on behalf of that Common Room. Any student can attend meetings, but only representatives vote. The meetings will occur twice a term, usually in Weeks 3 and 7.

CCR can make three types of decisions on behalf of students:

1. **Conference Policy**: A shared stance on an issue that students care about. These sorts of decisions need full agreement (consensus of attending members) to pass.
2. **Conference Mandate**: These decisions ask the SU Officers to take action on something. These types of decisions need a simple majority vote of members (which will be done online).
3. **Accountability Action**: These can be used to hold an Officer of the SU or a postholder of Conference of Common Rooms accountable for a position that they've taken on something which doesn't align with Conference Policy or Mandates.

HOW CAN I GET SOMETHING ON THE AGENDA?

Because this model is a representative model, the best way to get something on the agenda is to first talk to your **Common Room Committee or one of the Officers of the SU.**

To submit a motion to the Conference of Common Rooms (CCR), it must either:
- Have been passed at a Common Room meeting or RepCom, or
- Be proposed and seconded by 5 Common Room Presidents or SU Officers.

SU Officers can also submit morions directly to CCR, provided they are proposed and seconded by 2 SU Officers.

If you are a Common Room representative or an Officer of the SU, you can submit your proposal **via the SU website.** Proposals need to come with an **Equality Impact Assessment** (guidance for this will be available on our website), and it must be submitted **at least 10 working days** before a meeting of Conference to give the SU enough time to review the proposal and work with the Trustee Board to conduct a risk assessment. The Board's risk assessment will focus on the legal, reputational, financial, and representative impact of any motion and if there's ever any disagreement, the Sabbatical and Student Trustees will meet with Conference of Common Rooms to discuss the issue openly and transparently, and hopefully come to an agreement.

Important: To support our primary purpose motions that mandate any action will only be considered/progressed where they represent matters which affect **'students as students'**. Put simply, the SU is here to represent students on issues which impact them as students here at the University of Oxford.

HOW DO CCR MEETINGS WORK?

The CCR meetings are **Chaired by a Sabbatical Officer**, typically the incumbent Communities & Common Rooms Officer. This is to make sure that there is a clear connection between CCR, the Board and the SU's representative/primary purpose functions.

Two Deputy Chairs are elected from within the Conference of Common Room Members. One **MCR** representative and one **JCR** representative. They can serve as Deputy Chair for three terms; if they resign or are no longer a student for any reason, a new election will be held.

Any student can attend and speak at Conference of Common Room meetings, but only the Members of Conference of Common Rooms can vote.

The Chair & Deputy Chairs will work through the proposals that have been submitted, giving people an opportunity to speak on behalf or against the proposal. The Bye-Laws put a limit on discussion of **30 minutes** to try and keep the meeting productive and on time.

In the case of setting Conference Policy, the decision is by consensus of CCR members. This means that through the discussions, the Chair & Deputy Chairs might ask attending members to vote on amendments (by simple majority vote) one after the other until there is a consensus of attending members on the final proposal. The Chair may ask to see a show of hands to determine whether consensus has been achieved.

In the case of any other decision, voting will take place **online,** within the 48 hours after each meeting. We will publish the results of the votes online and circulate by email to Common Rooms.

REPCOMS (REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEES)

RepComs are spaces for marginalised or specific student communities to come together, organise, and propose policy for Conference of Common Rooms. The RepComs match roles that exist within Common Rooms and work by bringing those reps together to identify common collegiate issues affecting that particular group of students. **The following RepComs will be used:**

- Class RepCom
- Disabled Students' RepCom
- LGBTQ+ RepCom
- International Students' RepCom
- Black and Ethnic Minorities Student RepCom
- Suspended Students' RepCom
- Women*s RepCom

RepCom meetings follow a similar pattern to Conference of Common Rooms. RepComs meet formally **once a term** (but can meet more often to work together on projects or to plan).

Motions or proposals to the CCR, from a RepCom, must be submitted **at least 10 working days** in advance of the meeting **via the SU website.** Proposals need to come with an **Equality Impact Assessment** (guidance for this will be available on our website), and will be risk assessed by the Board of Trustees against the same criteria as motions from Common Rooms.

The meetings are **Chaired** by the relevant **Equity Officer** (as outlined in Bye-Law 3) and a **Deputy Chair** is elected from within the other reps. Common Room reps hold voting rights, but - similar to CCR - any student who self-identifies as part of that community is welcome to attend, contribute to discussions, and share their views (though they cannot vote).

RepComs can make the following decisions:
- Create **RepCom Policy**, which is a representative position for their community
- Submit **RepCom Mandates**, which suggest actions the SU could take in the interest of their community
- Hold Officers or RepCom Postholders accountable through **Accountability Actions**

Important: RepCom policies only become full SU policy if also passed by the **Conference of Common Rooms.**

REFERENDUMS

Referendums are where ALL student members across Oxford SU are given the opportunity to vote on a binary issue.

A **referendum** can be triggered by the Conference of Common Rooms through **motions**, the **Trustee Board** (in conversation with CCR), and if **2% of students vote** for a referendum using the **Student Ideas** function on the website.

A referendum is deemed to have passed if a **simple majority** decides the result, if **5%** of all students vote.

CHANGING THE RULES

During the pilot there might be occasions where we realise that the interim Bye-Laws we have drafted are not clear or do not help us to achieve our purpose. There are *two ways* to amend the Bye-Laws:

Trustee Board Proposes Changes: If the Board identifies a need to amend a Bye-Law, the Trustees will inform the postholders of CCR in advance. After any necessary discussion, one of the Student or Sabbatical Trustees will submit a motion to CCR which will be voted on in the normal way.

Students Propose Changes: If students or CCR identify a need to amend the Bye-Laws, they can submit a motion to CCR in the normal way. A Trustee will be invited to discuss the amendments at the CCR meeting, but the vote will happen in the normal way.

Changes to the Bye-Laws need a **two-thirds** majority vote to pass and changes cannot break the law, conflict with the Articles, or create significant risk to the organisation.

THE PILOT

The **Trustee Board**, alongside the **Transformation Committee**, have set some **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** against this pilot to support us to determine whether it delivers value for money and enables the SU to deliver its primary purpose of representing students to the University.

In addition to the specific KPIs outlined on the next page, we will also evaluate **participants' sentiment** - focusing on how useful, inclusive, and representative the CCR space is, and we will look at **other themed areas** such as demonstrable impact and resource implications. Crucially, we will also consider whether the **University** has confidence that the CCR is supporting the SU Officers in performing their role of constructively representing Oxford University students on academic and students life matters.

The pilot will take place across **Trinity Term**. At the end of the term, the Transformation Committee and Trustee Board will decide whether to continue the pilot with ongoing evaluation, or to close the model entirely.

An **update** on CCR will be shared in **Week 4**, reviewing progress against the KPIs and feedback from the attendee sentiment survey.

THE PILOT CONT.

We will be measuring the success of this model using **participant engagement and sentiment metrics.**

These measures will help us to understand how valuable students and participants in the pilot have found the CCR model. After each CCR meeting, we will ask attendees and those who have sought change through CCR, a series of questions, which may include:

- What do participants understand to be the SU's primary purpose, and how do CCR meetings support this work?
- Was everyone at the meeting treated with dignity, fairness and respect?
- Was there diversity of opinion and issues discussed at the meeting?
- Do you feel represented in the outcomes of this meeting?
- Do you have confidence that decisions made at this meeting will support Sabbatical Officers in their representative work to the University?
- Do you feel that student representatives were sufficiently informed to make constructive decisions?

We have also set the following KPIs as **operational measures** of success for the two CCR meetings in Trinity Term:

- 60% of CCR Members attending each CCR meeting, working towards a target of 75%
- 2 policy positions that reflect 'students as students' matters per meeting
- 2 additional motions that reflect 'students as students' matters discussed or brought forward per meeting (not related to the Bye-Laws)
- At least 85% of Common Rooms maintain SU affiliation
- 75% of part time officers (not including Divisional Officers) attending the second meeting (as they will not be elected by the first)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to convey our sincere thanks to every student who responded to our calls for consultation, particularly those who have been involved in the development of the democratic model and drafting of the Bye-Laws over the past year. It has been a truly collaborative project between the SU and the wider student body, and we look forward to continuing this partnership as we pilot the Conference of Common Rooms in Trinity 2025.

Oxford SU