

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST STUDENTS' UNION
MINUTES

Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council
held on 20 January 2026, in The Cube, One Elmwood.

Present:

Abisha Rufina	Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS))
Adhamh Sterio	Student Associations (Irish Language Students' Association Chairperson)
Aditi Singh	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Postgraduate))
Anna Hutchinson	Students' Union Council (Sporting Clubs Representative)
Annuj Nadarajah	Undergraduate School Representative (School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering (SCHEM))
Arran Ashfield	Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative (Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS))
Callum Smith	Postgraduate Research School Rep (School of EE Engineering & Computer Science (SEECs))
Cameron Worbey	Student Associations (Disabled Students' Association Chairperson)
Chloe Beattie	Student Associations (Trans Students' Association Chairperson)
David Bingham	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Eli McBriarty	Student Officer (Student Officer Undergraduate Education)
Eliza Monaghan	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Emile Dowling	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Emma Edgar	Postgraduate Taught School Rep (School of Law (SLAW))
Emma Yeaman	Students' Union Council (Sporting Clubs Representative)
Eoghan Fitzpatrick-Harkin	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Erin Barnes	Student Associations (Student Parents' and Carers' Students' Association Chairperson)
Ewan McClelland	Student Associations (LGBT+ Students' Association Chairperson)
Georgia Miles	Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative (Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (MHLS))
Jack Lydon	Student Officer (Student Officer Welfare and Community)
Jay Basra	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Jodi Williamson	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Kenji Nagano	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Kwame Le Blanc	Postgraduate Taught School Rep (School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences (SMED))
Lee Walker	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Luke Teggart	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate))
Maithín OHagan	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Mál Farrell	Student Associations (Mature and Part-Time Students' Association Chairperson)
Matthew McCallion	Postgraduate Research Faculty Representative (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS))
Mórrigan McEvoy	Student Officer (Student Officer Accessible Education)
Muhammad Abdul Rehman	Student Associations (Ethnically Diverse Students' Association Chairperson)
Muskan Gujrati	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Postgraduate))
Nadine Curtis	Student Officer (Student Officer Postgraduate Education)
Nesochi Okezie-Enyioma	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Oliver Boyce	Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative (Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS))
Róisín Costelloe	Student Officer (Student Officer Activities and Engagement)
Sajid Khan	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Undergraduate)) – Union Speaker
Zachary Savage	Students' Union Council (Student Societies Representative)
Abisha Rufina	Postgraduate Taught Faculty Representative (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS))
Adhamh Sterio	Student Associations (Irish Language Students' Association Chairperson)
Aditi Singh	Students' Union Council (Student Councillor (Postgraduate))

In Attendance:

DAMIEN CORRIDAN (CLERK OF COUNCIL)
BARRY CRUICKSHANK (STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CO-ORDINATOR)
ANNA LEAHY (STUDENT PARTNERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR)
EMMA GOREY (STUDENT VOICE ASSISTANT)
EOIN KELLHER (STUDENT VOICE ASSISTANT)

The Speaker of Council welcomed all attendees to the third Statutory Meeting of the 2025-26 session of the Students' Union Council.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for the following Councillors:

Amy Smith	Student Officer (Students' Union President)
Beth Elder	Student Associations (Environmental Action Students' Association Chairperson)
Holly Dougan	Student Associations (Women Students' Association Chairperson)
Peter Campbell	Students' Union Council (Sporting Clubs Representative)

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

2.1 Minutes of Statutory Meeting of 17 November 2025 SUC/M/25/5

It was agreed that the minutes of the Statutory Meeting of 17 November 2025 (SUC/M/25/5) were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Policy Updates

3.1.1 A Welcome Inclusive Union Bar – Update

Amy Smith, the Union President, provided Council with an update on actions taken following the previous discussion on the Union Bar. It was noted that engagement had taken place with relevant internal stakeholders such as the Commercial Services Forum and that this work remained ongoing.

3.2 QSU Partnership with University Colleges – Update

Council received an update on progress regarding partnership working between QSU and University Colleges. Further engagement and development work was ongoing, with agreements to be made at a later date.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Condolences

There were none.

4.2 SU Voice Updates

The Student Voice Team provided Council with an update on recent and upcoming democratic activity within the Students' Union.

Members were reminded of the timeline for the SU Elections 2026, with nominations having opened on Wednesday 17 December 2025 and scheduled to close on Thursday 29 January 2026 at 5.00pm. Polling is set to open on Monday 2 March 2026 and will close on Thursday 5 March 2026, with results announced on Friday 6 March 2026.

Council was also reminded that the Autumn Elections took place from 7–9 October 2025, receiving 137 nominations for 63 roles. A total of 829 students participated in the vote, representing a 4% increase on the previous year. Work is ongoing to explore the longer-term transition of most elections to the February/March period to increase engagement and alignment across Union democratic activity.

Finally, Council was advised that SU Council membership currently stands at 52 members, with no change since the previous update.

4.3 Students' Union Elections 2026 - Updates

Council noted the following key dates for the 2026 Students' Union Elections:

- Nominations close: Thursday 22 January 2026 at 5.00 p.m.
- Voting: Monday 2 March 2026 at 10.00 a.m. – Thursday 5 March 2026 at 5.00 p.m.
- Results: Friday 6 March 2026 at 1.00 p.m.

4.4 Student Councillor Support and Priority Issues

The Student Voice Team updated Council on the range of support and priority issues currently being addressed through Student Councillor engagement. Council noted that councillor motivations and manifesto priorities continue to inform the work of the Students' Union, alongside issues recently raised through the Student Ideas webform, including (but not limited to) cost of living pressures, wellbeing support, inclusive facilities, accessibility, student space, and international student experience.

Council further noted that this work sits alongside the Student Officers' annual Plans of Work, delivery of the Students' Union Strategic Plan, responses to emerging and ongoing student issues, and significant day-to-day operational activity. It was highlighted that, collectively, this represents a substantial volume of work for the Student Officer team and Students' Union staff, which is increasingly challenging and may raise concerns around long-term sustainability and capacity.

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULE AMENDMENTS

- 5.1 Council considered the proposed amendment to Rule 8 (Clubs and Societies), Section 2 (Procedure for Recognition of a Club or Society), introducing requirements for declaration and consideration of conflicts of interest.

Proposer: Róisín Costelloe (Student Officer Activities and Engagement)
 Seconder: Jack Lydon (Student Officer Welfare and Community)

The amendment was approved by Council.

6. BUSINESS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 6.1 Clubs and Societies Committee – Recommendations

The following applications for recognition were considered by the Clubs and Societies Committee at its meetings on Tuesday 9 December 2025 and Wednesday 7 January 2026, and approved recognition and ratification of the following;

- 6.1.1 QUB Endocrinology Society (Academic Society)
- 6.1.2 QUB Tea Society (General Interest Society)
- 6.1.3 QUB Vascular Surgery Society (Academic Society)
- 6.1.4 QUB Symphony Orchestra Society (General Interest Society)
- 6.1.5 QUB Intellectual Property Law Society (Academic Society)

Róisín Costelloe, Clubs and Societies Committee Chair updated Council that all applications had completed required documentation and met the criteria in the Constitution to be considered for recognition.

She further stated that The Committee considered the application and met with representatives from each group and finally noted that the Clubs & Societies Committee recommends that Council formally recognise these groups as official Clubs & Societies, categorised as follows:

- QUB Endocrinology Society (Academic Society)
- QUB Tea Society (General Interest Society)
- QUB Vascular Surgery Society (Academic Society)
- QUB Symphony Orchestra Society (General Interest Society)
- QUB Intellectual Property Law Society (Academic Society)

Following a vote, the above Clubs & Societies were ratified.

7. BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 Cost of Living Crisis – Update

Council received an update on ongoing Students' Union work addressing cost-of-living challenges, including but not limited to the following;

- The Students' Union will be running a "Free Breakfasts" service from Tuesday 17th – Thursday 19th February 2026, offering a vital initiative for students who require Cost of Living support during challenging times.
- An update was given and received about the Students' Union Pantry – numbers of students attending the Pantry have increased to around 250 students per day.

7.2 QUB Academic / Support Services Issues – Update

There were none.

7.3 Students' Union Mental Health Activity – Update

There were none.

7.4 QSU Student Cooperative Housing Project – Briefing

The Students' Union President, Amy, provided Council with an update on the Housing Co-operative Project, giving an overview of the initiative and outlining the work that has taken place to date to progress the project towards completion.

Council was informed that the project received approval from the University's Planning and Finance Committee and was subsequently approved by Senate on 15 January 2026.

The proposal has now been submitted to Belfast City Council for planning permission to renovate the building from its original use into student accommodation as part of the Housing Co-operative initiative.

Council noted that a further update will be provided as the planning process progresses.

7.5 Student Safety Initiatives – Briefing

Council received a briefing about student safety initiatives including an introduction to the new SafeZone app, the potential for a student/staff safety event, and a discussion about the introduction of the new shuttle service, offering safe transport to different accommodations around campus from 8pm-1am

7.6 Student Safety – School of Natural and Built Environment Buildings

Specific safety concerns relating to buildings within the School of Natural and Built Environment were discussed.

7.7 QUB GIFT City (India) – Briefing

Council received an update on Queen's University Belfast's new campus in GIFT City, India, which is scheduled to launch in early 2026. Members were informed that the initial academic provision will focus on postgraduate programmes within Queen's Business School, with further academic expansion planned from September 2026.

It was noted that the GIFT City campus will operate as an additional multi-school campus of Queen's rather than a separate institution. Programmes will be delivered by Queen's University Belfast staff and aligned with UK quality assurance standards, with students graduating with a full Queen's University Belfast degree.

Council was advised that students studying at GIFT City will hold core Students' Union membership rights. This will include access to SU Advice services, participation in Students' Union elections, and representation through the development of student voice and academic representation structures. Due to visa and regulatory requirements, some restrictions will apply regarding eligibility to stand for Full-Time Officer roles.

Members noted that the Students' Union will support GIFT City students through induction activity, representation on relevant University working groups relating to the student experience, and ongoing support from the Student Voice team.

Operational constraints were acknowledged, including the absence of a physical Students' Union presence on site and limitations relating to the delivery of traditional Clubs and Societies, Student Associations, volunteering, and enterprise activity in India. In response, the Students' Union will provide remote support from Belfast-based staff, including virtual engagement opportunities, connections between Belfast and GIFT City student representatives, and advisory support for student-led initiatives where possible.

Council noted the importance of continuing to work closely with the University to ensure that the student experience at GIFT City is equitable, though not identical, to that of the Belfast campus, with the Students' Union's approach continuing to evolve as student numbers grow.

7.8 Student Sustainability Representatives – Development Plan

Council discussed the development of Student Sustainability Representative roles. Students were asked for feedback and voiced concerns & support regarding new ideas, engagement and progressiveness for the student body. Further development for the future includes discussions around consultations with schools.

7.9 Union President Updates

The Students' Union President provided Council with a number of updates on current Union activity and initiatives.

Council noted that a Student Safety Event would take place on Thursday 29 January in the Peter Froggatt Centre, delivered by staff from across the University. The Student Officer team would be attending and hosting a stall to engage with students, alongside a stall from the Drug and Alcohol Initiative (DAI).

The President also updated Council on her involvement in the interview process with the Head of Student and Campus Experience, Liz McLaughlin, regarding the proposed shuttle service between Queen's Accommodation sites and the Holylands. The service is intended to operate each evening during Semester 2 to support student safety and accessibility. Two Q-workers have now been offered positions, with the aim of launching the service as soon as possible.

Council was also informed that the Students' Union, in partnership with the University, will deliver Free Breakfast events as part of ongoing work to mitigate the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students. These events will take place in the SU Foyer on Tuesday 17 February, Wednesday 18 February, and Thursday 19 February. A range of breakfast items will be available, including fruit, yogurts, pastries and sausage rolls, alongside additional wellbeing items such as hot water bottles, beanies, gloves and socks. Vegan and gluten-free options will be available while stocks last.

Council further noted that demand for the SU Pantry remains high, with the service continuing into Semester 2. Usage continues to be monitored to ensure the sustainability of the provision.

8. BYE-ELECTIONS

There were none.

9. ELECTIONS

There were none.

10. MOTIONS

10.1 A review on the Irish Language Policies (Athbhreithniú ar na polasaithe Gaeilge)

This Council acknowledges:

- That there are Policies regarding the Irish Language and Bilingual Signage in the Students Union Policy File.

This Council recognises:

- That the Identity and Language Act 2022 (Acht Féiniúlachta agus Teanga 2022), gave the Irish language equal status to the English Language, and that Irish is an official language of the state.

This Council Believes:

- That the Students Union should work towards implementing the policies set out in the file regarding the Irish Language and Bilingual Signage.

This Council Notes:

- That in 2018, policy '8.15. Bilingual Signage on Campus' was added to file and the council mandated: "That the VP Equality and Diversity and Students' Union President work closely with An Cumann Gaelach to ensure that the bilingual signage is returned across campus at Queen's University Belfast and Queen's University Students' Union."
- That in 2020, policy '8.22. Irish Language Rights' was added to file and the council mandated: "*QUBSU to develop a campaign along with NUS-USI, USI and other Students' Unions to prevent cuts to Irish language courses, for the expansion of courses able to be studied jointly with Irish, increase funding to Irish faculties and to support the lobbying and activism of An Cumann Gaelach and the work of an Oifigeach Gaeilge.*"

This Council Mandates:

- That the Students Union will revisit all previous Irish Language Policies on file and work to ensure the implementation of what is set out in the policies.

- That Student Officers continue to support campaigns of An Cumann Gaelach and work together with An Cumann Gaelach to ensure previous Irish Language policies are implemented.

This Council Encourages:

- That the Students' Union arrange work with the Irish Language Commissioner An Coimisinéir Teanga to continue the promotion of the Irish Language An Ghaeilge in the Students' Union and within the University.
- That the Students' Union continues to engage with AMLÉ looking to their forward-looking Irish Language policy for guidance on the support for Irish Language development within Queen's University Belfast.

Proposer: Maithín Ó hÁgáin (Councillor – Student Societies Representative)
 Seconder: Ádhamh Sterio (Irish Language Association Chairperson)

Following a show of voting cards, the motion was carried.

11. REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were none.

12. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Report of the Executive Management Committee (January 2026) SUC/P/26/01

This report was accepted.

12.2 Report of the Union President (January 2026) SUC/P/26/02

This report was accepted.

12.3 Report of the Student Officer Activities and Engagement (January 2026) SUC/P/26/03

This report was accepted.

12.4 Report of the Student Officer Accessible Education (January 2026) SUC/P/26/04

This report was accepted.

12.5 Report of the Student Officer Postgraduate Education (October 2025) SUC/P/26/05

This report was accepted.

12.6 Report of the Student Officer Undergraduate Education (October 2025) SUC/P/26/06

This report was accepted.

12.7 Report of the Student Officer Welfare and Community (October 2025) SUC/P/26/07

This report was accepted.

13. REPORTS FROM OTHER UNION COMMITTEES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following reports were noted:

13.1 Report of the PGR Academic Representative Committee (November 2025) SUC/P/26/08

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| 13.2 | Report of the PGT Academic Representative Committee (November 2025) | SUC/P/26/09 |
| 13.3 | Report of the UG Academic Representative Committee (November 2025) | SUC/P/26/10 |
| 13.4 | Report of the Clubs and Societies Committee (January 2026) | SUC/P/26/11 |

14. REPORTS FROM UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

There were none.

15. CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

There were none.

16. QUESTIONS (TO ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES)

There were none.

17. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

18. DATE OF THIRD MEETING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION COUNCIL

The Annual Business Meeting of the Students' Union Council 2025-26 will take place at 4.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 10 March 2026, in The Cube, Students' Union Building.