



# **STUDENTS' COUNCIL HANDBOOK**

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# YOUR ROLE

Students' Council is made up of voluntary, elected Student Reps and your Elected Officers and is the Union's highest student decision making body. It is where your ideas and motions are discussed, debated, and voted on which helps lead the direction of the Union and your Elected Officers. Every member of Students' Council represents the views of a different community at the University of Chester, and are elected by students, for students every year.

## **Representing your community.**

Whether you're a Liberation, Faculty, Section, or Campus Rep, you represent your community by channelling student voice at Students' Council meetings and creating campaigns.

## **Listening to student needs, concerns, and feedback.**

The best way to make sure you're representing your peers is to gather feedback! You can speak to the students you represent via social media, societies or even MS Teams.

## **Lobbying for change.**

This can look different for everyone depending on what change you're looking to create and what your ideas are. It can start as a conversation, develop into an event, or a long term campaign; remember, change in Higher Education is slow!

# YOUR ROLE

## **Challenging Elected Officers constructively.**

As the student body and members of Students' Council, it's your job to hold the Elected Officers to account. You can do this by reading their reports and asking questions to see how they're working towards their manifesto.

# ELECTIONS AND BY-ELECTIONS

The main elections take place in March where you can nominate yourself for Student Rep and Full-time Officer roles. These will be promoted on the CSU website and social media.

In November, by-elections take place to fill any remaining positions that were not recruited in March.

The way elections work: you nominate yourself and you let other students know you're running for a position. Then, you campaign during voting week to secure votes. The more votes you get, the higher your chance of being elected!

Don't worry though! There'll be plenty of information available, including do's and don'ts, closer to the time.

# STUDENTS' COUNCIL MEETINGS & CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are how people achieve the change they want to see. To put it simply, we campaign to make things better for a specific group of people or to improve conditions around a certain issue.

You can do this by identifying an issue affecting you and your community, using your passion and enthusiasm to get people excited about your campaign, having a clear objective and setting achievable goals. This sounds like a lot, but don't worry! You'll be supported by the Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator.

Students' Council meets five times a year to discuss Big Ideas that have been submitted, whether they should become official Union policy, and to receive updates from Elected Officers. An agenda for the meeting is published 7 days in advance. This will be e-mailed to you and put on our website; we do this to give you and the wider student body a chance to read and understand any proposed changes or Ideas ahead of the meeting.

# BIG IDEAS

Big Ideas can be submitted by any student, including the members of Students' Council! They're live on the CSU website for 4 weeks and require 25 votes (with the majority voting positively) to be discussed at Students' Council.

## Here's some tips on how to structure your Big Ideas:

- Identify the issue you are going to solve.
- Build up an understanding of the issue; do your research and consult other students.
- Share an understanding of how the issue affects students.
- Set out what you think should be done to fix the issue and how you'll know when it is fixed.
- Staff are here to help so don't hesitate getting touch to talk through your idea.

Once your Big Idea is live on the website, campaign to get students to vote! The more votes and conversations, the better as it'll help you build your case at Students' Council. Make sure you lead by example by submitting Ideas, voting on current Ideas and working with other people on Council to make sure that passed Ideas become a reality!

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

We know that change in Higher Education can be slow but every conversation, meeting, event, and campaign leads to a wider developmental change. We encourage all Students' Council members to inform the Student Voice team of any successes (however big or small) so we can champion good practices and celebrate the wins led by our volunteers.

Being part of Students' Council will be recorded in your HEAR - Higher Education Achievement Report. The HEAR is designed to recognise and appreciate the various opportunities provided by higher education institutions in the UK, showcasing the achievements and experiences of students. Your HEAR record will be added to your transcript from the University of Chester and you will receive this at the end of your studies.

The University of Chester offers their own Volunteering Awards. Once you register as a volunteer, these awards provide recognition for your commitment based on the number of hours you contribute. They also give you the chance to document and reflect on your volunteering experience. Additionally, you may have the opportunity to participate in employability workshops and enhance your presentation skills.



# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

The Chester Difference Award (CDA) is a skills-based recognition program that acknowledges students who actively participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities during their time at the University of Chester. With the CDA, students can gain recognition for their contributions outside of their academic endeavours and develop techniques to effectively showcase their skills and experiences to future employers.

Each year we have our annual 1839 Awards, with awards for members of Students' Council. More information on these awards will be provided during the academic year.

# CONTACT INFO

## Elected Officer Contacts

### **Ellie Smith**

President

[CSUPresident@chester.ac.uk](mailto:CSUPresident@chester.ac.uk)

### **Jack Sanderson**

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### **Tom Scott**

Vice President (Student Life)

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## Student Voice Team Contacts

### **Nikita Patel**

Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator

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Academic Voice Consultant

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## **General Enquiries**

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