

PETROC STUDENT UNION CONSTITUTION

This constitution was approved by the Governing Body of Petroc on 22 October 2025 and invalidates all former constitutions.

About the Union

1.0 Name and Legal Status

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be "Petroc Student Union", hereinafter referred to as "PSU".
- 1.2 PSU is an unincorporated association with exempt charitable status and is the officially recognised student representative body of Petroc College.
- 1.3 PSU operates in accordance with the Education Act 1994 and its obligations under charity law, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- 1.4 PSU is a membership organisation, which means that it works for the benefit of its members, who are the students at Petroc College (see section 3).

2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 PSU exists to represent and support all enrolled students at Petroc College. Its aims are to:
 - Promote the interests, welfare and education of all students
 - Represent students within the College and to external bodies
 - Provide opportunities for social, cultural, recreational and personal development
 - Uphold the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Empower students to influence their education and College experience
- 2.2 PSU exists to 'advance the education' of all enrolled students of Petroc, regardless of gender, ability, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion or political belief. PSU does this in a number of ways:
 - Working to ensure students 'best interests within College

- Doing and promoting things that improve students' happiness and wellbeing
- Speaking out on students' behalf and ensuring that students' voices are heard and
- Offering students support and advice

2.3 By being the 'representative channel' between students, the College and any other external organisation. This means:

- that PSU will represent students and their voice (this could be within College, linking PSU members to the College Senior Leadership Team, Cross College Staff and Governors)

2.4 That PSU will support students' interests in line with:

- the mission, values, aims and objectives within the ,
- and its underpinning expectations of 'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe',
- the [Petroc Equality Policy](#)
- the principles set out within the

2.5 By providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of Petroc's students and to inform future planning. This means:

- that PSU will put on a range of different activities and events for students to enjoy and to help students learn new skills alongside their studies • that PSU will raise money for charitable causes

2.6 PSU is independent of any political party or religious organisation .

3.0 Membership

3.1 All students aged 16 and over at Petroc College are automatically members of PSU, unless they choose to opt out in writing.

3.2 Members are entitled to:

- Vote in PSU elections and attend general meetings
- Stand for office
- Participate in PSU activities and events
- Access support and representation services

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3.3 Students who opt out retain access to PSU events and services but may not vote, hold office, or be represented by PSU

3.4 Any student who does opt out may, subsequently, apply for membership, which will not be refused.

4.0 Governance Structure

4.1 PSU is led by an Executive Committee of elected student officers. The structure includes:

- President;
- Vice-President;
- Up to 10 additional roles determined by the Executive Committee to reflect student needs across all campuses

4.2 Executive officers serve for one academic year and may stand for re-election. Vacant positions may be filled by co-option until a by-election is held

4.3 To ensure that these elections are free and fair, all members receive a My Petroc notification asking them to vote online by secret ballot. All of our members have the right to vote in this election. A Returning Officer (someone who oversees the Election) will be appointed and Petroc College Board of Governors must be satisfied that the elections have been fair and properly conducted.

4.4 Officers failing to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation may be deemed to have resigned

4.5 Officers may be removed

- By two-thirds majority of the Executive Committee
- By a student ballot
- For serious misconduct in accordance with Petroc's Learner Success Standards

5.0 Meetings and Decision-Making

5.1 The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice per half term during term time

5.2 Any student member may attend and speak at Executive Committee meetings unless a confidential matter is discussed

5.3.1 PSU shall hold:

- An Annual General meeting (AGM) once per year, open to all members, with 5 College days' notice and to vote on any resolutions submitted
- Emergency General Meetings (EGM's), called by the President, a majority of the Executive Committee, or a petition of 25 members. Such a meeting will be held within 10 College working days of any request having been received. At least 5 College working days' notice of the date, time and venue of the meeting, and the reason for which it has been called, shall be given to the membership. It shall discuss only the business for which the meeting has been called
- Other General Meetings as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee

5.4 Quorum

5.4.1 The quorum¹ for:

- a General Meeting shall be 25 members of the PSU
- a meeting of the Executive Committee shall be 3 members of the Committee

5.4.2 At any meeting (with one exception), in the event of a quorum not being achieved, the meeting will be adjourned, and no business can be transacted. The exception is the Annual General Meeting which, if inquorate, will be permitted to continue in order to allow the Executive Committee concerned to account for its activities over the preceding year and be questioned by the members present. No resolutions can be considered or decisions taken, however, at such an inquorate meeting.

6.0 Affiliations

6.1 Affiliations to external organisations (e.g. NUS) require approval by the Executive Committee and the Governing Body of Petroc.

6.2 A petition of 200 students may trigger a referendum on any affiliation. The outcome of the vote shall be binding.

7.0 Elections

¹ Quorum - the minimum number of members that must be present at a meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

- 7.1 PSU shall conduct annual elections via secret ballot. All students are eligible to vote and stand for office
- 7.2 An Independent Returning Officer shall be appointed to oversee elections
- 7.3 Election results must be ratified by the Governing Body of Petroc to ensure compliance with the Education Act 1994

8.0 Ballots

- 8.1 A ballot may be called to determine the collective view of the student membership on significant issues, including but not limited to:
 - The removal of an officer;
 - Affiliations to external organisations;
 - Amendments to the Constitution, where deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee.
- 8.2 Ballots must be conducted in a fair and transparent voting process, typically online, and administered by the Returning Officer
- 8.3 The outcome of any ballot is binding, subject to final approval by the Governing Body of Petroc where applicable

9.0 Consultative / Advisory Groups or Arrangements

- 9.1 PSU may establish such groups for its members as it considers appropriate

10.0 Complaints and Disputes

- 10.1 PSU adopts the College's Complaints Procedure for students dissatisfied with PSU or affected by the opt-out process
- 10.2 Complaints about PSU elections, officer conduct or service delivery may also be raised under this process

11.0 Finance

11.1 PSU's budget is set annually and approved by the Governing Body of Petroc

- 11.2 PSU funds must be used in accordance with its aims and legal obligations. Annual financial reports are submitted to the Governing Body and made available to members

12.0 Minutes and Transparency

12.1 Minutes of all PSU meetings (excluding confidential items) will be recorded and made available to students on request. Meeting minutes will be made available in accessible formats upon request

13.0 Reporting and Accountability

13.1 The Executive Committee shall produce a termly report on PSU activities and progress against objectives

13.2 An annual report will be submitted to the Governing Body and made publicly available

14.0 Clubs and Societies

14.1 PSU may recognise, and support student led Clubs and Societies that align with its aims

14.2 All Clubs and Societies must operate within the PSU's code of conduct and Petroc's policies

15.0 Code of Conduct

15.1 PSU members, officers, and associated groups must adhere to:

- This constitution
- Petroc's Learner Success Standards
- The Equality Policy

15.2 PSU has the right to restrict access to PSU events, services or officer roles for breaches of conduct

16.0 Code of Practice

16.1 In accordance with section 22(3) of the Education Act 1994, the Governing Body of Petroc shall maintain and periodically review a code of practice for the Student Union

17.0 Amendments to the Constitution

17.1 This constitution will be reviewed by the PSU annually and by the Governing Body at least every 5 years.

17.2 Amendments may be proposed by the Executive Committee or by petition from 25 student members

17.3 All amendments require approval by the Governing Body of Petroc to take effect

18.0 Dissolution

18.1 In the event of dissolution, PSU assets will be transferred to Petroc College to support future student-led activities in line with charitable objectives

19.0 Indemnity

19.1 Members of the Executive Committee and any person approved to make decisions on behalf of the PSU shall be indemnified, out of assets of the PSU against all losses or liability incurred in the execution of their duties, provided that this does not extend to any negligence or unlawful act on their part

19.2 No officer, Appointee or Member of staff shall be personally liable for any loss, damage or misfortune incurred by the PSU in the execution of duties, except in cases involving negligence or unlawful conduct

20.0 Freedom of Speech

20.1 Petroc Student Union (PSU) upholds the principle of freedom of speech and expression as fundamental to education, democracy, and student representation.

20.2 In accordance with the Education (No.2) Act 1986, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023, the PSU will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for:

- All members and staff of the Student Union;
- Learners of Petroc College;
- Visiting speakers, external guests, and affiliated clubs or societies.

20.3 PSU recognises that lawful free expression includes the right to challenge, debate and question ideas and beliefs. PSU will not deny use of its facilities, platforms or services on the grounds of an individual's or group's lawful views, opinions or beliefs.

20.4 PSU also recognises that freedom of speech is not absolute and may be lawfully restricted where necessary to:

- Prevent the incitement of violence, hatred, harassment or discrimination;
- Protect the rights, safety and wellbeing of others;
- Comply with safeguarding, Prevent, equality and data protection duties; or

- Uphold the law and Petroc College's policies and Learner Success Standards.

20.5 PSU will operate within the College's External Speaker and Events Procedure, ensuring that all events and activities are risk assessed and managed appropriately.

20.6 PSU will promote an environment of respectful debate, tolerance and inclusion, encouraging members to engage with differing perspectives in a constructive and responsible manner.

20.7 Alleged breaches of this section will be managed through the College's Complaints, Learner behaviour and Safeguarding Procedures and reported to the Governing Body as part of the annual review of the PSU Constitution and Code of Practice.