

## **SOCIETY POLICY**

### **1. Preamble**

In its mission statement, the University of Cape Town outlines that it aims to produce graduates whose qualifications are internationally recognised and locally applicable. This is underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice through equipping them with values such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness and participation in the student community.

The University societies are an important means of helping students aspire towards these values. Students are able to develop interpersonal skills through interacting amongst themselves through organising of social activities and in the process enrich their own characters.

### **2. Definition**

- 2.1. University means the University of Cape Town;
- 2.2. Council means the University of Cape Town Council;
- 2.3. University Student Affairs Committee (USAC) means the Council committee responsible for advising council on policy in the area of student development and services;
- 2.4. Student Societies and Organisations Committee (SSOC) means the USAC committee responsible for advising USAC on policy and funding for student societies and organisations;
- 2.5. Students' Representative Council (SRC) means the highest decision-making body in student governance;
- 2.6. Societies' Council means the SRC sub-council responsible for advising the SRC on matters pertaining to the societies sector;
- 2.7. The Department of Student Affairs (DSA) means the University department responsible for societies.
- 2.8. Student means a registered student at the University of Cape Town.
- 2.9. Suspension means a society whose rights and support are temporarily withheld pending investigation and sanction by the DSA.
- 2.10. Dormant means the process whereby a society has all accounts and privileges suspended for failure to meet the requirements of a society.

### **3. Policy Objectives**

- 3.1. To regulate the administration, resourcing and approval of student societies at the University;
- 3.2. To clarify the relationship between the SRC, the DSA and the societies;
- 3.3. To establish a framework for the recognition of new societies at UCT;
- 3.4. To establish the responsibilities societies have to their members and the University; and
- 3.5. To establish the resources available to societies at UCT.

### **4. Classification of Student Societies**

- 4.1. The classification of societies is used purely as a method of identification unless further policy is created to regulate a group of societies.
- 4.2. Societies shall be classified as:
  - 4.2.1. Political Societies;

- 4.2.2. Academic Societies;
- 4.2.3. Religious Societies;
- 4.2.4. Special Interest Societies;
- 4.2.5. Community Development; and
- 4.2.6. National/cultural Societies;

## **5. Recognition of Student Societies**

- 5.1. The SSOC shall, in consultation with the SRC, be responsible for the recognition of societies;
- 5.2. The process will be administered by the DSA;
- 5.3. A society shall only be recognised where:
  - 5.3.1. It has a membership of at least fifty students;
  - 5.3.2. There is a demonstrable need for the society;
  - 5.3.3. No society currently exists that fulfils the objectives of the society;
  - 5.3.4. There is a clear plan of action for maintaining the sustainability of the executive, membership and activities of the society;
  - 5.3.5. It meets the broader goals, vision and mission of the University;
  - 5.3.6. It does not contravene the rules and policies of the University or the laws of South Africa
- 5.4. Society Recognition Procedure
  - 5.4.1. An application should be lodged with the DSA Co-ordinator: Societies and Dayhouse.
  - 5.4.2. The SSOC or its nominees should meet with the applicants of the Society. A meeting shall be arranged with the prospective society within two weeks of the application being lodged. This meeting will allow an opportunity for clarification and for the process of recognition to be explained.
  - 5.4.3. Should the applicant meet the requirements for recognition a monitoring phase will be initiated by the SSOC.
    - 5.4.3.1. The SRC and the Societies Sub-council shall be responsible for the monitoring phase.
    - 5.4.3.2. The monitoring phase will be conducted in the first semester of the academic year following the application.
    - 5.4.3.3. The monitoring phase will be used to determine organisational sustainability.
    - 5.4.3.4. Prospective societies will be required to host a minimum of three events during the monitoring phase. These events must be attended by a member of the SRC or the Societies Council. Event requirements:
      - 5.4.3.4.1. At least twenty-five prospective members should attend.
      - 5.4.3.4.2. Prospective members should be given the opportunity to make commentary on the event and their expectations.
  - 5.4.4. Following the monitoring phase the prospective society will be required to make a written submission, detailing the work of the prospective society during the monitoring phase, to the SRC Co-ordinator: Societies and the Co-ordinator: Societies and Dayhouse
  - 5.4.5. Upon completion of the monitoring phase the SRC Co-ordinator: Societies will submit a report to the SRC with a recommendation to endorse or reject the application.

5.4.6. The SRC shall vote to endorse or reject the application and forward its decision to the SSOC.

5.4.6.1. Where the SRC rejects an application it may request further information from the prospective society and subsequently review its decision.

5.4.6.2. This review shall be completed within two weeks and the decision forwarded to the SSOC.

5.4.7. The SSOC or its nominees, following the receipt of both the prospective society's submission and the recommendation of the SRC, shall interview each organisation.

5.4.8. The SSOC gives final approval of all new societies, taking into account the recommendation of the SRC.

5.4.9. Should a prospective society be approved, it may begin operating immediately as a recognised society.

5.4.10. Should a prospective society not be approved, it will be entitled to lodge an appeal with the SSOC which shall appoint a subcommittee to investigate and make recommendations to the SSOC.

5.4.10.1. An appeal must be lodged with the Co-ordinator: Societies and Dayhouse within one week of the prospective society being informed of the refusal by SSOC.

5.4.10.2. An appeal may be lodged only on the basis of incorrect procedure.

5.4.10.3. The decision of the SSOC will be final.

## **6. Support for Student Societies**

6.1. SSOC or its nominees, with student consultation, will be responsible for the oversight and fair and equitable distribution of all resources available to societies.

6.2. The distribution of resources will be subject to meeting the obligations of section 7.

6.3. All recognised societies shall be entitled to an administrative grant.

6.4. All recognised societies shall be entitled to the use of University venues.

6.5. All recognised societies shall be entitled to apply for support from such funds and grants as are administered by the SSOC, where the conditions of those grants are met.

6.6. No society shall be entitled to the allocation of University office space.

## **7. Rights and Responsibilities of Societies**

7.1. All recognised societies shall be entitled to the support and services from the DSA.

7.2. A society shall be free to hold such events as it deems appropriate.

7.3. A society may charge a subscription fee, with the approval of the SSOC.

7.4. A society's executive may vote for the election of Societies Sub-council members.

7.5. A society shall be entitled to affiliate to any organisation external of the University, with the approval of the Director, SD.

7.6. A society shall be open to all registered students and staff.

7.6.1. Staff membership may not exceed fifty percent of overall membership.

7.6.2. An executive shall include no more than 2 staff members.

7.7. A society has the right to extend membership to external parties.

7.8. A society is subject to the rules and policies of the University and the SRC.

7.9. A society executive shall be held responsible for the funds and equipment of the society.

- 7.10. A society shall declare in writing all external sponsorships, agreements and support prior to entering into such agreements.
  - 7.10.1. Such agreements will be subject to the approval of the Director, SD or nominee.
- 7.11. A society executive shall be required to attend grant interviews.
- 7.12. A society shall hold an AGM by the end of the third quarter of every academic year.
  - 7.12.1. The Chairperson will report on the activities of the Society.
  - 7.12.2. The Treasurer will report on the income and expenditure of the society.
  - 7.12.3. The ordinary membership of the society will elect the executive for the following year at the AGM, or failing quorum, some other democratic means.
- 7.13. A society shall hold a minimum of one event per quarter, excluding the society AGM.
- 7.14. All societies shall be required to submit biannual financial and organisational reports to the Co-ordinator: Societies and Dayhouse.
  - 7.14.1. Reports will be submitted at the end of the first and third quarters of the academic year.
  - 7.14.2. Financial Reporting
    - 7.14.2.1. Will include a detailed report of income and expenditure over the period.
    - 7.14.2.2. Will include a declaration of every external account held by the society.
    - 7.14.2.3. The first report will include a revised budget breakdown for the year based on the budget received during grant interviews.
  - 7.14.3. Organisational Reporting
    - 7.14.3.1. Shall include a list of all events that take place in the society during the period of reporting.
    - 7.14.3.2. A list of important decisions taken by the executive committee during the period of reporting.
    - 7.14.3.3. Any changes that take place in the composition of the executive committee, along with the contact details of any new members.
    - 7.14.3.4. The first organisational report the report should include the membership numbers of the society.
    - 7.14.3.5. The second report should include a list of the new members of the executive committee and their contact details.

## **8. Suspension or Dormancy**

### **8.1. Suspension**

8.1.1. The SSOC shall declare a society suspended where:

#### **8.1.2.**

- 8.1.2.1. A society shall be suspended where it contravenes the rights and responsibilities of a society.
- 8.1.2.2. Suspension entails the loss of all or certain privileges and the suspension of accounts.
- 8.1.2.3. Suspension is a temporary sanction.

### **8.2. Dormancy**

8.2.1. The SSOC shall declare a society dormant where:

- 8.2.1.1. A society consistently fails to meet its responsibilities;
- 8.2.1.2. A society no longer meets the requirements of a society as stipulated in article 5.3; or

- 8.2.1.3. A society has no elected leadership to manage the society's affairs.
- 8.3. Where a society has been made dormant, it may be reactivated by SSOC. This may happen where:
  - 8.3.1. There is a provisional executive;
  - 8.3.2. It has a membership of at least fifty students;
  - 8.3.3. There is a clear plan of action for maintaining the sustainability the executive, membership and activities of the society; and
  - 8.3.4. the terms of the existing constitution are acceptable to the membership.

APPROVED BY USAC ON 3 MAY 2012

AMMENDED BY SSOC 09 OCTOBER 2013