

# Showstoppers' Constitution

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## 1. Name

1.1. The name of the society shall be “University of Southampton Students’ Union Showstoppers” hereinafter referred to as the Society.

## 2. Society Type

2.1. Performing Arts

## 3. Aims and Functions

- 3.1. To provide staged musical theatre entertainment, while taking into account the aims of other current Performing Arts societies, ensuring that conflicts of interest are avoided where possible.
- 3.2. To provide a forum for the development of performance and related skills.
- 3.3. To put on two or more shows a year, one of which shall be a fully staged musical in the Autumn term, one in the Spring term, and one non-auditioned performance. Details are left to the committee's decision.

#### **4. Membership**

- 4.1. See section 12 for expulsion of members
- 4.2. Only current registered students are eligible to become Full Members of the Society, upon payment of an annual membership fee determined by the Committee, and shall be entitled to hold office, or nominate or vote in elections, or vote at meetings.
- 4.3. Any union member or member of staff is eligible to become an Associate Member of the Society, upon payment of an annual membership fee determined by the Committee. Associate Members shall be entitled to full rights and privileges as Full Members except that they may not hold office, or nominate or vote in elections, or vote at general meetings.
- 4.4. Society membership must be held in order to participate in society productions and perform in more than one cabaret event in an academic year.
- 4.5. No person who has ceased to be a member of the Society shall have any rights or interests in the property and funds of the Society.
- 4.6. All members shall be bound by these rules or any subsequent amendments thereto approved at a general meeting of the Society.
- 4.7. On joining the society, new members should be informed that a copy of the constitution is available on request.
- 4.8. Any member who fails to attend three rehearsals in a row without a valid reason may be deemed to have resigned from the Society (or the production) at the discretion of the committee (or the production team).
- 4.9. The Performing Arts Committee must always be provided with an up to date copy of all members' names and corresponding student numbers.

## 5. Conflict of Interests

A conflict of interest is defined here as a situation in which the concerns or aims of two different societies are seen to be in opposition. For example, if members of one society desire to put on a show that falls under the aims of another society.

5.1. In the event of a conflict of interest between two Theatrical Societies, the following procedure should be followed:

5.1.1. A meeting must be arranged at the earliest practical date between: the President/Chair of both societies; the Performing Arts Theatrical Representative and one additional member of each committee, as soon as either committee is aware of a situation that may cause a conflict of interest.

5.1.2. Should the conflict of interest concern a planned pitch, the appropriate committee must ask the relevant pitch team or potential pitch team to put preparations for the pitch on hold until the conflict has been resolved.

5.1.3. Prior to this meeting, each committee should discuss and, if necessary, vote on a stance the committee will take on said conflict.

5.1.4. During the meeting, the issue should be discussed and, taking into account the stance of each committee, an agreement should be made that the representatives of both societies feel is fair and in keeping with the best interests of the societies.

5.1.5. The result of this meeting will be brought back to each committee and if there are any further problems, the above process should be repeated until an appropriate agreement has been reached.

5.1.6. Each conflict of interest will be dealt with at the current committees' discretion, in the best interests of their society.

5.1.7. If the appropriate agreement is that the pitch to one committee should be stopped, then both committees must encourage and support the pitch team in pitching the show to the appropriate society.

5.1.8. If there is any doubt to whether a conflict of interests is present, this procedure should be followed.

## 6. Officers

There will be a committee which will oversee, and be responsible for, with limited liability, the actions of the Society. This will consist of the following officers:

- 6.1. The President - They shall be the figurehead of the Society to all external interests (including SUSU), and shall take overall responsibility for its actions. They are responsible for any other tasks that do not come under jurisdiction of other committee members (see below).
- 6.2. The Vice-President - They shall share the duties of the President if required, and do such tasks as directed by the committee.
- 6.3. The Treasurer - They shall maintain the accounts of the Society, which shall be available for examination at the AGM, by the Performing Arts Committee or VP Democracy and Creative Industries. They shall be responsible for all financial aspects of the society, particularly accounting for money within show budgets. Any funds spent by the Society must follow SUSU regulations and be authorised by both the Treasurer and President. They shall produce and maintain a list of all members, including up to date contact details, which shall be available to SUSU on request and do such tasks as directed by the committee.
- 6.4. The Secretary - They shall ensure all actions and decisions of all Society meetings are recorded and upheld, to be available to the Performing Arts Committee or VP Democracy and Creative Industries if required and do such tasks as directed by the committee.
- 6.5. Social Secretary- They shall be responsible for organising social events at the discretion of the committee, and shall actively propose and enact plans for social events. They shall take a supporting role for any social/fundraiser organised by a Production Team and also do such tasks as directed by the committee.
- 6.6. Web and Promotions Officer - They shall be responsible for the maintenance of the website and online infrastructure relating to the Society and keeping content accurate and up-to-date. They shall be responsible for the publicity, sponsorship, and marketing of the society, assisting the production teams at their discretion. They shall do such tasks as directed by the committee.
- 6.7. Development Officer- They shall be responsible for the organisation of regular workshops to provide a forum for the development of performance-

related skills, culminating in at least one Cabaret Night. They shall also do such tasks as directed by the committee.

6.8. Ordinary Members- Two members of the society are to be elected, acting as general representatives of society members. They shall do such tasks as directed by the committee.

6.9. Tours Officer - They will be responsible for organising and overseeing performing tours, including (when viable) the trip to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. They will liaise with Gone Rogue and its production(s), overseeing the formation of an organising sub-committee and chairing this in accordance with the committee, should this be deemed necessary. They will do such tasks as directed by the committee.

6.10. The role of Technical Liaison shall be fulfilled by the most suited committee member, by and at the discretion of the committee. Their role shall be to act as liaison with the backstage society, StageSoc, specifically attending their meetings when required. If no-one is deemed specifically suitable for the job the role should be filled by the Vice-President.

6.11. In the situation where a pair of officers take office, they will each get half of a vote in committee elections, at the committee's discretion.

## **7. Society Hand-Over**

Upon election of a new committee, the outgoing committee is responsible for overseeing the handover of responsibilities for a minimum of 2 weeks following the elections. The responsibilities of each outgoing officer are:

7.1. President - They must ensure that the all procedures relating to the society are transferred to the new officer and that handovers for all committee positions take place.

7.2. Treasurer - They must ensure that the Society's finances are up to date and in line with SUSU regulations and that the new officer has all bank account details transferred to him/ her, along with all relevant documentation.

7.3. Secretary - They will transfer all minutes and relevant documentation to the new officer.

7.4. Web and promotions officer - They will give all passwords and relevant information to the new web and promotions officer, and give them all relevant files for the maintenance of the website.

## 8. Committee Meetings

- 8.1. The President shall chair all meetings. In their absence, a chair shall be elected by those members present or as delegated by the President.
- 8.2. The President or Secretary may convene a committee meeting at their discretion by notifying members with at least 24 hours notice by email and/or general advertisement.
- 8.3. Three members of the committee can request a meeting by presenting to the secretary with 24 hours' written notice.
- 8.4. In the event of a committee meeting having not been called for two term weeks, the secretary must convene a meeting at the earliest practical date.
- 8.5. The quorum of voters for any meeting shall be 50% of the committee plus 1 additional officer including at least one of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary.
- 8.6. The following applies to votes that do not occur by ballot (usually votes by show of hand in committee meetings and at pitching events).
  - 8.6.1. In the event of a tied vote the President's initial vote will count as the deciding vote and cause a majority.
  - 8.6.2. Should the President be absent or abstain from voting the vote of the Vice President will cause a majority.
  - 8.6.3. If both the President and the Vice President are absent or abstain the deciding vote will become the vote of the Treasurer and so forth according to the hierarchy of committee roles as laid out in Section 5 of this constitution.
- 8.7. Any member of the society may attend committee meetings, but shall not be entitled to vote upon matters discussed at that meeting unless otherwise stated.
- 8.8. At least one appointed member from each current production team is required to attend committee meetings, or provide the Secretary with a written update addressing the progress of the production and rehearsals.
- 8.9. Any member of the Committee, who fails to attend two committee meetings without giving apologies or consistently fails to attend committee

meetings without appropriate reason, may be asked to resign from their post; this will not affect their membership of the society. This will be at the discretion of the committee.

## **9. General Meetings**

9.1. Every full member of the Society present at a meeting shall be entitled to one vote upon every voting matter. Only full members are entitled to vote and no proxy votes shall be accepted for any purpose.

9.2. The quorum at all general meetings shall be 25% of the full members.

9.3. At all general meetings, the President shall make an agenda available at least three working days in advance.

9.4. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of notice of a meeting by, any person entitled to receive notice, shall not invalidate the proceedings at that meeting.

9.5. Termly General Meeting (TGM)

9.5.1. If a TGM is held, it shall be advertised to members at least 10 days clear in advance

9.6. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

9.6.1. There shall be a Society AGM held in the Spring Term whenever possible. If it is not possible to secure a date for the AGM in the Spring Term then it will be held at the beginning of the Summer Term at the earliest convenience, and in advance of the SUSU-prescribed deadline of society AGMs.

9.6.2. The President will be responsible for informing all members of the meeting at least 14 clear days in advance.

9.6.3. Officers of the Society and Committee members shall be elected at the AGM.

9.6.4. The Society Secretary shall invite nominations at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Nominations may be received at the meeting.

9.6.5. Each member of the Committee may be invited by the Chairperson to make a short speech concerning his/her activities during the previous year. This speech is compulsory for the Treasurer who must present the year's accounts for examination.

9.6.6. The Performing Arts Officer shall be invited to attend the AGM.

9.6.7. Minutes of the AGM shall be made available at the start of the Summer Term, or at the earliest possible convenience.

#### 9.7. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

9.7.1. An EGM may be called by the President or Secretary of the Society, or by written application to the Society President of at least 6 members of the Society, together with a written statement of the objectives for which the meeting is being called.

9.7.2. At an EGM no business other than that specified in the written statement shall be discussed.

9.7.3. At least 24 hours' notice of an EGM shall be given. The meeting must be held within 7 days of the request being given to the Society President.

9.7.4. The Performing Arts Officer shall be informed of the meeting and the reason for it being called, before it is held.

### 10. Elections

10.1. Elections for Society Officers and Committee members shall be held at the AGM.

10.2. Voting for the elections shall be carried out by secret ballot. Should there be a tied result, another vote will occur between just those candidates that were tied. If this results in a second tie then the Chairperson may vote in favour of one of the candidates, or declare the post unfilled.

10.3. The chair-person shall not vote during the elections except for in the case where two rounds of votes have tied, in which case their vote shall cause a majority.

10.4. If a full committee is not elected for any reason, a President, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected and they will be responsible for ensuring that elections for the remaining positions are held by the end of the Summer Term.

10.5. Results of the elections, together with names, student numbers and contact details of those elected, shall be submitted to the Performing Arts Committee before the end of the Summer Term.



**10.6.**In the case where a committee member resigns or is expelled before the end of their session, then an EGM will be held, and the same voting process will be conducted as with an AGM but for that one position that is vacant only. Until this meeting, the committee will either share the responsibilities of the vacant position or delegate to another committee member.

**10.7.**In the instance where a current Committee member wishes to run for a vacant position, s/he must first resign his/her position on Committee at the EGM. His/her original Committee position will then also be vacant.

## **11. Financial Matters**

**11.1.**The Treasurer of the Society shall be responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Society, which shall be available to the Performing Arts Committee on request.

**11.2.**An annual statement of the Society accounts must be presented at the AGM by the Society Treasurer.

**11.3.**The officers of the Society are jointly liable for the proper management of the Society's finances in line with SUSU policy.

## **12. Expulsion of Members**

**12.1.**The Committee has the power to expel any member from the Society, after discussion with the Performing Arts Officer, on the grounds of misconduct, or for conduct of a nature opposed to the objectives of the Society or SUSU.

**12.2.**Where any member of the society is expelled by the committee, a report of the matter shall be made to the next committee meeting of the society.

**12.3.**Students who are expelled from any Society have the right of appeal to the Performing Arts Committee.

**12.4.**Any member expelled from the Society for whatever reason, or who resigns, cannot obtain a refund of their membership fee.

## **13. Affiliations**

**13.1.**The Society may affiliate to an external organisation which is in line with the aims of the Society and which provides a direct benefit to its members.

All external affiliations must be reported to the Performing Arts Committee and to the SUSU AGM.

## 14. Productions

14.1. The Society will produce a number of productions a year performed at various specified times throughout the year subject to availability. Any other performances or productions outside of these pre-arranged slots must be presented to the Committee for full discussion. The current specific slots in chronological order are as follows:

14.1.1. Cabaret Evenings - at least one Cabaret evening shall be held per semester, with non-auditioned participation made possible. Time, location, and content are to be decided with the Development officer.

14.1.2. Freshers' Show - held before Christmas and to have a cast consisting of members of the society who have not been in a cast with the society before (excluding Cabaret and the 24 Hour show). No performer or member of the creative team (including Directors, Musical Directors, Choreographers & Assistants) may be involved in both the Small show & Freshers' show.

14.1.3. Small Show - auditioned during the Autumn term and held in the Spring term. No performer or member of the creative team (including Directors, Musical Directors, Choreographers & Assistants) may be involved in both the Small show & Freshers' show.

14.1.4. Spring Show - held in the Spring Term, with the objective of involving as many Society members as possible.

14.1.5. Summer Show - held in the Summer Term, before the Summer exams.

14.1.6. 24 Hour Show - entirely rehearsed in a single 24 hour period, held after the Summer exams at the end of the Summer Term.

14.1.7. Independent Show - see Section 16 for more information

14.1.8. At least one Edinburgh show in August (when a viable option) with the option of previews beforehand.

14.2. Every production must be led by a production team consisting of at least one Director, Producer and Musical Director all of whom are responsible for overseeing the entire production process from start to finish.

- 14.3. Every production team must design a budget for their specific show that shall be monitored by the Treasurer & Committee and made available to the Performing Arts Committee upon request.
- 14.4. A show liaison will be appointed by the committee for every production throughout the year. A production liaison will be appointed by the committee at the beginning of the committee year. They will act as intermediaries between the production team, the cast and the committee.
- 14.5. The show liaison must act as a liaison between the cast, production team & committee. To this end, they must attend at least one rehearsal every two weeks, and let the purpose of their role be known to all parties. They are specifically assigned to detect and resolve any issues involving the cast; and to collect, anonymise, & distribute their feedback throughout the process.
- 14.6. The production liaison must act as a liaison between the production team & committee. To this end, they must be kept informed as to the activities of the production team and attend production meetings at their discretion. They are specifically assigned to detect and resolve any issues within the production team of the show to ensure it remains on course.
- 14.6.1.
- 14.6.2. The show liaison and the production liaison shall be members of the committee who are not involved in the specific show in any way, either on the production team or in the cast, subject to availability. The production liaison can be on the production team in a non-creative role.
- 14.6.3. In the event that the production liaison holds a creative role on a production team, a temporary production liaison should be elected for that specific show.
- 14.6.4. The Tours Officer shall be the show liaison for the Edinburgh production(s) by default unless they are a member of the Edinburgh show cast or production team.
- 14.6.5. In the instance that any liaisons cannot be appointed from within the Committee then a suitable candidate shall be appointed by Committee.

## **15. Pitching**

- 15.1. Any member of the society wishing to pitch a show which may cause a conflict of interest with another society (as described in Section 5) should

consult with their committee as soon as possible, and before the written pitch deadline. The committee should then follow the procedure outlined in Section 5.

15.2. Any member of the society that pitches a show which may cause a conflict of interest with another society without first consulting with their committee with sufficient notice, should be aware that their pitch will be declined solely on this basis.

15.3. Throughout the year, pitch meetings shall be held where production teams and shows are elected by Committee. Any Full Member or Associate Member shall be entitled to pitch a show.

15.4. A show must be pitched with a Director, a Musical Director and a Producer.

15.5. A deadline shall be given for when written pitches must be submitted by. Any pitches received after this deadline without valid reason shall be discounted at the committee's discretion.

15.6. The chair in question must be an impartial Committee member or Performing Arts Committee member and not affiliated with any pitch submitted.

15.7. The President shall be responsible for advertising the pitch meeting at least two weeks in advance of the written pitch deadline.

15.8. Any member of the committee who is on a production team may not vote on any decision made about that production. In the event that the committee does not reach quorum, for the decision on a particular production, an EGM should be held. In this instance the voting for that specific show will follow the same process as for elections but with a discussion.

15.9. In the case where no pitch is received or accepted for a defined slot, responsibility for carrying out that production is then assigned to committee members.

15.10. All Committee members must read all information pertaining to each pitch before the pitch meeting.

15.11. Any auditions will be held by the Director, Musical Director, and others chosen at the discretion of the production team, however any person auditioning may not be a member of the audition panel. This must be

followed in all circumstances except those that the committee deems exceptional.

15.12. The Committee reserves the right to Re-Open Nominations (RON) for any pitch.

## **16. Edinburgh**

16.1. In such years that performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is a viable option, then the pitching and production process shall follow the same format laid out in articles 10 and 11 unless otherwise stated below.

16.2. The trip aspect of performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe shall be entirely overseen by the tours officer and an Edinburgh Sub-Committee if necessary. The sub committee shall be chaired by the Tours officer and consists of a number of Society members at their discretion.

## **17. Independent Slot**

17.1. Independent show - pitched and held at any point throughout the year, these shows can be pitched with no restrictions in cast size, gender split, tech, location or length, original or righted. Any society member (or team of members) can pitch for an independent show at any scheduled round of pitches, or after approaching committee.

17.2. A pitch team should submit a self-sufficient budget (one that breaks even without any Showstoppers contribution) to Showstoppers committee for approval, as well as a written pitch. Any further expenditure is at the production team's discretion and risk, and any profits will go to Showstoppers' Independent Fund. Showstoppers will also cover any losses up to a pre-agreed amount, depending on Showstoppers' financial situation (up to a maximum of £400).

17.3. Showstoppers' Independent Fund will consist of profits from all independent shows, and may subsidise Independent shows in the future.

17.4. Showstoppers Committee will elect one or two show liaisons at the committee's discretion.

## **18. Constitutional Matters**

18.1. The Committee shall have the power to interpret any matter within this constitution.

18.2. The Committee shall first approve amendments to the constitution at a General Meeting.

18.3. The Committee shall hold a vote to pass any constitutional changes. This shall be done by secret ballot or show of hands as decided by the Committee. The voting must reach a 2/3 majority of a quorate meeting to pass.

18.4. The Society is to remain at all times an autonomous SUSU society, over which no outside body has any authority.

18.5. This constitution should be made available by the Committee to any member of the society.

This constitution was written by Showstoppers' Vice-President Sam Beath, updated by Showstoppers' President Robin Johnson and Vice-President Anna Pinnell and approved at the Annual General Meeting on 16th March 2015 under the presidency of Robin Johnson.

It was then updated by Showstoppers' President Sevan Keoshgerian and Vice-President Ben Willcocks and approved at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 7 January 2015 under the presidency of Sevan Keoshgerian.

It was further updated by Showstoppers' President Sevan Keoshgerian and Vice-President Ben Willcocks and approved at the Annual General Meeting on 10 March 2016 under the presidency of Sevan Keoshgerian.

It was then updated by Showstoppers' President Lydia Edge and Vice-President Charlie Taylor and approved at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 8 January 2016 under the presidency of Lydia Edge.

It was further updated by Showstoppers' President Lydia Edge and Vice-President Charlie Taylor and approved at the Annual General Meeting on 15 March 2017 under the presidency of Lydia Edge.

This replaces all previous constitutions on record.