Constitution of PLEXUS

A Group for LGBT+ students of the OU Students Association, Alumni and Staff members of the Open University
## Version Control

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents
Version Control .................................................................................................................................................................1
1 Name ........................................................................................................................................................................3
2 Mission .....................................................................................................................................................................3
3 Aims and Objectives .................................................................................................................................................3
4 Membership .............................................................................................................................................................3
5 Governance ..............................................................................................................................................................4
6 Officers and Committee ...........................................................................................................................................4
7 Pronouns ..................................................................................................................................................................6
8 Community Representatives ..............................................................................................................................6
9 Annual General Meeting ..........................................................................................................................................6
10 OU Students Association Constitution and Bye Laws ..........................................................................................6
11 Chair’s Ruling .......................................................................................................................................................7
12 Changes to the Constitution ................................................................................................................................7
13 Adoption of the Constitution ................................................................................................................................7
1 Name
1.1 The name of the Group shall be PLEXUS (referred to hereafter as the Group).
1.2 The name PLEXUS shall be the operating name of the Group.
1.3 Pride, Learning, Equality, No eXcuses, Unity and Safety are the further explanation of what PLEXUS represents and are used in conjunction with the name of the Group.

2 Mission
2.1 PLEXUS is devoted to providing support to LGBT+ students and alumni, advocating their voice within the OU and further afield, whilst partnering with the LGBT@OU staff network.

3 Aims and Objectives
3.1 To provide a safe space, contact and support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans, people associated with the Open University Student Association and Open University.
3.2 To be the consultative group for matters relating to sexual orientation and gender identity as described within the Equality Act (2010) and Open University Equality Scheme (2016 -2020)
3.3 To be a collective voice representing people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans. Where required, be a voice campaigning for equality/equity of these minorities and oppose any organisation, individual(s) or forces in society, which seek to foster divisions based on sexuality, class, religion, belief, gender, age, disability, race, creed or HIV status within the OU Student environment.
3.4 To work collectively with the OU Students Association Affiliated Support Groups and the Student Support Team

4 Membership
4.1 Full membership shall be open to those self-defining as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans and who are current members of the OU Students Association as defined in section 12 the Student Association’s Constitution.
4.2 Associate membership shall be given to self-defining Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans alumni or staff members of the Open University.
4.3 Friends of PLEXUS status shall be given to all members who wish to join the Group and are not defined in points 4.1 and 4.2.
4.4 Honorary Life Membership shall be given to any person in recognition of their work for and on behalf of the Group.
4.4.1 Honorary Life Members will be able to fully participate in activity conducted by the Group but will be ineligible to stand in any future elections, whether or not they become eligible as per point 4.1
4.5 Membership can be refused or rescinded for those who are opposed to the overall mission, aims and objectives of the Group.
4.6 All members will be treated with dignity, respect and have a right to be heard.
4.6.1 The tiered membership structure exists for the governance and official business of the Group; structuring the aims, objectives and activities to ensure adequate representation, and meeting the needs of current students who identify as per section 3.1.
5 Governance

5.1 The governing body and sole policy-making body of the Group shall be the General Meeting consisting of all members of the Group who choose to attend. The quorum for General Meetings shall be at least twenty-five Full Members and the Committee.

5.2 The affairs of the Group shall be administered between the General Meeting by the Committee.

5.3 Notice of General Meetings shall be given to all members not less than 28 days in advance of such meetings. Publication shall be made on the website, email, social media platforms and Virtual Learning Environment Forums.

5.4 All enquiries shall be addressed to the Secretary of PLEXUS to obtain details of the General Meeting’s business.

5.5 All Full members of the Group are entitled to speak and vote on any matter of business before [in writing] and during a General Meeting.

5.6 Associate members, Friends of PLEXUS and Honorary Life Members are able to speak on any matter of business before [in writing] and during a General Meeting but are unable to vote.

5.7 Minutes of all General Meetings shall be kept by the Secretary of PLEXUS and will be available online through the website. Copies will be made available for inspection within 20 days following the meeting.

5.8 There shall be an Annual General Meeting which is conducted via the Virtual Learning Environment as noted in section 9.

5.8.1 There shall be an opportunity for eligible members to contribute and, if applicable, vote on matters of business prior to and within 3 calendar days after the close of the General Meeting

5.9 Formal notification of an Annual General Meeting will be the same as section 5.3.

5.10 There shall be an Annual General Meeting every twelve months without another having been called less than 11 months and more than 15 months since the previous Annual General Meeting.

5.11 The Chair of PLEXUS will present the PLEXUS Annual Report to the AGM for approval before it is submitted to the OU Student Association Central Executive Committee.

5.12 An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the Committee or at the request of no less than thirty-three percent (33%) of the Full members of PLEXUS made in writing to the Secretary of PLEXUS. Such requests shall specify the business for which the meeting is to be called. Upon receipt of such request the Secretary of PLEXUS shall within 28 days give notice of the meeting to the Group. EGMs shall be subject to sections 5.3 to 5.9. The agenda for an EGM shall comprise only the business for which the meeting has been called.

5.13 Funding for PLEXUS shall be provided by the OU Student Association Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

5.13.1 Any expenditure must be approved by the Chair of PLEXUS and the Head of Student Support.

5.13.2 Any request for additional funding can be applied for using the pre-existing conditions of the OU Students Association as necessary.

5.13.3 The expenditure of PLEXUS shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting for illustrative purposes only.

6 Officers and Committee

6.1 The Committee of the Group shall consist of six officers and three committee members. The quorum for committee meetings shall be four members, one of which must be an officer.

6.2 The Officers of the Group shall be:

6.2.1 Chair of PLEXUS

6.2.2 Secretary of PLEXUS

6.2.3 Campaigns Officer

6.2.4 Equalities & Support Officer

6.2.5 Women’s Officer
6.2.6 Trans Officer

6.3 The committee members shall support the PLEXUS committee via a 'without portfolio' approach, the remit of the post shall be decided by the committee following each election cycle.

6.4 The Vice-President Equality and Diversity of the OU Students Association shall be invited to committee meetings but does not have voting privileges.

6.5 The PLEXUS dedicated VLE Forum Moderator shall be invited to the committee meetings but does not have voting privileges.

6.6 Officers shall normally be elected in Autumn biennially and shall hold office as noted in 6.8.

6.6.1 The Vice President Equality and Diversity shall be the returning officer for all PLEXUS elections. They however may wish to nominate a member of the OU Students Association staff team.

6.6.2 Notification of elections shall be presented by the Vice-President Equality and Diversity or their representative on behalf of PLEXUS six weeks prior to the date of the ballot.

6.6.3 Nominations are due one week after the announcement of the election and be accompanied by a statement of no more than 300 words. The Vice-President Equality and Diversity or their representative shall reject any nominations from candidates who are not Full members of the Group. Should the statement be greater than 300 words this will be edited to comply with the regulation.

6.6.4 Hustings shall be conducted online in a special forum thread on the OU Students Association Virtual Learning Environment.

6.6.5 Results of the Elections shall be announced within five working days after the close of the ballot by the Vice-President Equality and Diversity or their representative.

6.7 The term of office shall be two years commencing on 1st January for 24 months ending on 31st December.

6.8 Should there be a need to co-opt a committee member during the term of office, the minimum length that qualifies a term is 12 months.

6.9 Only full members of the Group are eligible to nominate using a self-nominated route, following the election rules set out in this constitution and election guidelines for posts on the Committee.

6.9.1 Ballots shall be cast using Simple Majority Voting system.

6.10 Members shall not be permitted to hold any single Officer position for more than two terms of office.

6.11 Members shall not be permitted to hold a Committee Member position for more than two terms of office.

6.11.1 Terms of office can be consecutive or non-consecutive.

6.12 In instances of where there are no nominations received or successful candidates elected the current Committee term of office may be extended or an interim Committee can be formed with preference going to the Officer Roles.

6.13 Where a vacancy arises within the Committee, the Committee may, at its discretion, leave the position vacant until the next election period, or co-opt from amongst the full membership of the Group or caucus as appropriate.

6.14 The President, Deputy President, Vice-Presidents and the Student Representative to Council of the OU Students Association Central Executive Committee (CEC) are unable to hold any position within PLEXUS whilst they are serving members of the CEC.

6.14.1 Excluding the Vice President Equality and Diversity as they hold an ex-officio position on all groups within their remit.

6.15 Area Association Representative and Faculty Association Representative roles within the OU Students Association Central Executive Committee (CEC) are unable to hold any Officer position within PLEXUS whilst they are serving members of the CEC.

6.15.1 If Committee members were to be elected to the CEC their position would become vacant at the point of their term of office commencing and the committee shall enact section 6.13.
7 Pronouns

7.1 Due to the nature and membership of PLEXUS it is prudent to recognise that individuals may wish to define their preferred pronoun reference.

7.1.1 Members have the right to define their preferred pronoun at the point of registering their membership.

7.1.2 All members are able to amend their preferred pronoun at any time by giving notification to the Secretary of PLEXUS who will update their membership record.

7.1.3 Committee members are to include their preferred pronoun within their signature of all outgoing communications.

7.1.4 All members should respect the preferred pronoun of all members.

8 Annual General Meeting

8.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the Summer annually, usually in July, with the date decided by the PLEXUS Committee.

8.2 The Annual General Meeting shall receive an Annual Report from the Chair and Financial Statements and shall determine policy and activities for the year ahead.

9 OU Students Association biennial conference

9.1 PLEXUS shall receive two voting places per 500 members as per the bye laws of the OU students association constitution.

9.2 The voting places shall be reserved to the Chair of PLEXUS and one other committee member selected on general consensus.

9.3 Should the Conference Steering Committee apply additional non-voting places these shall be made available to the membership of PLEXUS and be decided upon via a ballot.

10 OU Students Association Support Groups

10.1 PLEXUS shall proactively engage with the OU Students Association Support Groups

10.2 The Chair of each affiliated Support Group shall be invited to PLEXUS committee meetings on a bi-monthly basis to ensure there is a collaborative and harmonious working relationship

11 LGBT@OU (The Open University LGBT Staff Network)

11.1 PLEXUS shall proactively engage with The Open University LGBT Staff Network.

11.2 They will be invited to work collaboratively with PLEXUS surrounding engagement and campaigns.

11.3 The Co-Chairs of the Open University LGBT Staff Network shall be Invited to committee meetings as appropriate but will not have any voting status.

12 OU Students Association Constitution and Bye Laws

12.1 PLEXUS will consider the Constitution and bye-laws of the OU Students Association, in order to ensure that no conflict arises between the activities of PLEXUS and the Constitution and bye-laws of the OU Student Association.
13 Chair’s Ruling

13.1 The Chair shall rule upon any matter on which this Constitution is silent, ambiguous or otherwise requires interpretation.

14 Changes to the Constitution

14.1 Every two years, this Constitution is to be reviewed, updated and re-ratified by the membership of PLEXUS on the recommendation of the PLEXUS Committee and the Vice President Administration of the OU Students Association.
14.2 This constitution may be further changed only by a resolution supported by at least two-thirds of the Full Members present and voting at a General Meeting of PLEXUS.
14.3 Proposed changes to the Constitution must be notified in writing not less than six weeks before the AGM at which they will be discussed.
14.4 Changes to the Constitution shall be notified in writing to all membership of the Group. Each notification may be by published in a newsletter and other publications sent out

15 Adoption of the Constitution

15.1 This constitution was ratified at a General Meeting of PLEXUS held between __04/09/2018__(date)

Chairs Signature

[Signature]

15.2 This constitution was ratified by the Open University Students Association Vice-President Administration on __4/10/2018__(date)

Vice-President Administration Signature

[Signature] (acting on behalf of VP Admin)