

KCLSU Scrutiny Committee Guidelines

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1. Introduction¹

scrutinize, v.

trans. To subject to scrutiny; to examine methodically and with close attention.²

Scrutiny committees represent an increased opportunity for student involvement and debate. Indeed, for them to be effective it is important that the process is student-led, as it is they that are aware of the issues that are of concern to their community.

These committees have the opportunity to exert influence on the direction of KCLSU and to improve the way in which it operates. That is, for them to have any value, scrutiny committees need to be focussed on matters of importance and making a positive difference. By making recommendations and drawing attention to issues of importance, through them the organisation will develop.

They will therefore be considering matters of a strategic nature, such as the future of competitive sport or the way in which KCLSU communicates with students, as opposed to minor matters or individual concerns which are best dealt with by the appropriate service or individual.

Their influence can, and should, be far-reaching, but this is dependent on the development of the necessary skills and relationships. Members will need to be able question and analyse the information presented to them, considering past practice and future goals. In this way, scrutiny committees also represent an opportunity for personal development.

2. Memorandum & Articles of Association

2.1. Bye Law (2): General Governance of the Students' Union

12. There shall be up to four Scrutiny Committees coordinated by the Student Council at any one time.
13. The purposes of Scrutiny Committees shall be as follows:
 1. To review the performance and make recommendations on the future scope of a current service or activity;
 2. To conduct research and consultation;
 3. To consider mechanisms for widening membership participation;
 4. To scrutinise decisions of Trustees; and
 5. To scrutinise objectives, targets, and service areas of KCLSU.
14. Scrutiny Committees shall be governed in accordance with Guidance and/or Strategies made from time to time under clause 18.6 of this Bye-Law.

2.2. Bye Law (3): Student Council

2. The Student Council (the "**Council**") is established by these Bye-laws to fulfil the following purposes.:
 1. To receive and consider reports from the Trustees, Student Community Forums and Scrutiny Committees;
 2. To make non-binding recommendations to the Trustees of KCLSU;
 3. To make non-binding motions of no-confidence in one or a number of Trustees;

¹ The introduction and aims & objectives were informed by the Chorley Borough Council 'Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit', June 2003

² Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition 1989

4. To review and scrutinise the decisions and actions of the Trustees of KCLSU;
5. To discuss and debate issues pertinent to students making campaigning policy as appropriate;
6. To convene Student Community Forums;
7. To appoint and convene Scrutiny Committees and to determine their remit and membership;
8. To convene other committees, meetings and groups;
9. To consider the appointment and re-appointment of Non-Student Trustees
10. To admit and remove Associate Members, Honorary Life Members and any Patron of KCLSU.

3. Aims & objectives

- 3.1. Support the Trustee Board in achieving its vision.
- 3.2. Act as a watchdog for decision making.
- 3.3. Policy development and review.
- 3.4. Ensure continuous development, improvement, best practice and innovation to achieve best value.
- 3.5. Review and investigate external matters that are of concern to the King's College London community.
- 3.6. Promote open and transparent decision making and thereby increased accountability.

4. Membership

- 4.1. Council will elect one from amongst its number to convene each scrutiny committee.
- 4.2. Membership should include at least one member of Student Council.
- 4.3. Membership should usually consist of between four and eight individuals.
- 4.4. Membership may consist of Student Council members, King's College London students, KCLSU staff, King's College London staff or individuals from external organisations.
- 4.5. The determining of membership will be a flexible and fluid process as the only criterion is that the individuals most suited to the role be approached. This suitability may be due to experience, skill, objectivity, subjectivity etc. Therefore, for example,
 - 4.5.1. the trustees may suggest individuals to be considered for membership;
 - 4.5.2. Student Council may ask the trustees to approach individuals for membership;
 - 4.5.3. Student Council may decide the membership by debate and discussion; or
 - 4.5.4. a student, member of KCLSU or King's College staff may suggest individuals to be considered for membership.

5. Remit

- 5.1. A suggestion of areas for scrutiny in the academic year 2006-07 will be presented to the 2005-06 Student Representative Council for approval.
- 5.2. Council will decide the remit of scrutiny committees by debate, discussion and ballot if required.
- 5.3. Scrutiny committees may be convened for as long as required.

6. Contributors

- 6.1. Scrutiny committees may invite trustees, KCLSU staff, King's College London staff and other relevant individuals to attend meetings to answer questions, provide information or stimulate ideas.
- 6.2. The role of KCLSU staff is to support the work of the committee in two main ways:
 - 6.2.1. by offering guidance, advice, research, information and administrative support; and

6.2.2. by being a contributor, which should as far as possible be confined to factual statements and explanations relating to decisions and policies.

6.3. Contributors are not under interrogation and should not be made to feel as such. The process should not be confrontational, as this unnecessarily risks contributors becoming defensive and obstructive as opposed to open and cooperative, which is required in order to develop benefits for students. It is therefore the role of committees to ask questions in order to acquire the information they need whilst retaining a climate of cooperation and progress.

7. Reporting

7.1. After each meeting a report will be submitted to Council, detailing

7.1.1. progress;

7.1.2. relevant information;

7.1.3. recommendations; and

7.1.4. non-attendance of members of the committee and contributors.

7.2. On the basis of these reports, Student Council will review remit, convenor and membership.

7.3. Student Council will communicate the recommendations of scrutiny committees to students and the Trustee Board.

7.4. The Trustee Board will communicate a response to students and Student Council.

8. Servicing

Committees will be serviced by a member of KCLSU staff.

9. Attendance

In line with the Nolan Committee's Report on Standards in Public Life³ members and staff of King's College London and KCLSU are welcome to attend and observe all KCLSU meetings.

³ Seven Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership (<http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/parlment/nolan/nolan.htm>)

10. Scrutiny Committee Convenor role description

10.1. Responsible to

Student Council.

10.2. Supported by

Relevant KCLSU staff.

10.3. Summary of post

To convene the work of a scrutiny committee.

10.4. Specific duties

- 10.4.1. To help Student Council define the scope of the scrutiny topic including objectives, methods of inquiry, deadlines and clear outcomes.
- 10.4.2. To ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to the committee.
- 10.4.3. To report back to every Student Council progress of the committee.
- 10.4.4. To produce a final report of findings and recommendations to Student Council.
- 10.4.5. Ensure that the committee works within its allocated framework, including scope of investigation and resources.
- 10.4.6. To agree all agendas and meeting dates for the committee and be consulted on matters between meetings.
- 10.4.7. To ensure that each committee meeting is chaired efficiently and meets regularly and involves all committee members.
- 10.4.8. To ensure that the committee collects sufficient evidence to conduct its investigation.
- 10.4.9. To be responsible for calling in relevant people to the committee to help with the investigation.
- 10.4.10. The Scrutiny Committee Convenor is a full member of the committee with the associated duties and responsibilities.

10.5. Person Specification

- 10.5.1. Able to allocate sufficient time to preparing and attending the committee.
- 10.5.2. Able to communicate effectively with others with developed listening and questioning skills.
- 10.5.3. Previous experience of scrutiny committees desirable.
- 10.5.4. Able to plan work effectively.
- 10.5.5. Able to demonstrate sensitivity when working with others and to be able to work in a confidential manner.
- 10.5.6. Good team worker with good interpersonal skills.
- 10.5.7. Able to chair and lead meetings and discussions where necessary.
- 10.5.8. Good analytical skills with the ability to interpret information.
- 10.5.9. Able to report progress clearly and concisely.
- 10.5.10. Able to facilitate and support the involvement of others.
- 10.5.11. A commitment to equal opportunities.

10.6. General

- 10.6.1. The Scrutiny Committee Convenor must be a member of Student Council to be eligible for election by Student Council to the position. The period of office lasts from the time of election until 31 July. A Scrutiny Committee Convenor can only convene one scrutiny committee at any one time but there is no restriction to the number of times that a member of Student Council may stand for the post.

- 10.6.2. The Scrutiny Committee Convener has a high level of responsibility and will need to be able to dedicate time to the role. In addition to the requirements of being a member of Student Council, the Scrutiny Committee Convener will be expected to dedicate about 5 hours per month to the role.
- 10.6.3. Dedicated resources will be allocated to each scrutiny committee. These will include a budget, staff support, meeting space, and training and development opportunities for the Scrutiny Committee Members and Convener.
- 10.6.4. Reasonable legitimate expenses will be reimbursed following the financial procedures.
- 10.6.5. As KCLSU 'volunteers' Scrutiny Committee Convenors will be entitled to all rewards and recognition as laid out in KCLSU Volunteer Guidance & Strategy.

11. Scrutiny Committee Member role description

11.1. Responsible to

Student Council.

11.2. Supported by

Relevant KCLSU staff.

11.3. Summary of post

11.3.1. Student Council will decide the scrutiny topic areas. The Scrutiny Committee Convener will help define the scope of the area and ensure that adequate resources are allocated. Scrutiny committees are expected to scrutinise the decisions of the trustees or KCLSU and also to investigate future decision possibilities.

11.3.2. Scrutiny committees are expected to report back regularly to Student Council and to present a final report including recommendations. Scrutiny committees invite relevant people to attend meetings to assist with the investigation. It will also conduct its own research and consultation.

11.4. Specific duties

11.4.1. To work within the committee's allocated framework, including scope of investigation and resources.

11.4.2. To collect sufficient evidence to conduct the committee's investigation.

11.4.3. To help decide which relevant people to call in to the committee to help with the investigation.

11.4.4. Evaluate verbal submissions and interview relevant people that the committee has called in.

11.4.5. To evaluate written evidence relating to the scrutiny investigation.

11.4.6. To report back to every Student Council meeting progress of the committee.

11.4.7. To produce a final report of findings and recommendations to Student Council.

11.5. Person Specification

11.5.1. Able to allocate sufficient time to attending the committee.

11.5.2. Able to communicate effectively and assertively with others with good listening and questioning skills.

11.5.3. Able to demonstrate sensitivity when working with others and to be able to work in a confidential manner.

11.5.4. Good team worker with good interpersonal skills.

11.5.5. Experience of attending meetings desirable.

11.5.6. Good analytical skills with the ability to interpret information.

11.5.7. Able to report progress clearly and concisely.

11.5.8. Able to facilitate and support the involvement of others.

11.5.9. A commitment to equal opportunities.

11.6. General

- 11.6.1. The Scrutiny Committee Members will be Student Council members, students, KCLSU staff, King's College London staff or individuals from external organisations.
- 11.6.2. The Scrutiny Committee Member has a high level of responsibility and will need to be able to dedicate time to the role. Scrutiny Committee Members will be expected to dedicate about two hours per month to the role in addition to any other position held, e.g. Student Council.
- 11.6.3. Dedicated resources will be allocated to each scrutiny committee. These will include a budget, staff support, meeting space, and training and development opportunities for the Scrutiny Committee Members and Convener.
- 11.6.4. Reasonable legitimate expenses will be reimbursed following the financial procedures.
- 11.6.5. As KCLSU 'volunteers' Scrutiny Committee Members will be entitled to all rewards and recognition as laid out in KCLSU Volunteer Guidance & Strategy.