

# The Constitution of Nerdverse – The Aberdeen University Sci-fi and Fantasy Society

Nerdverse Committee

April 2020

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# 1 Name

1.1 The full title of the society shall be *Nerdverse - The Aberdeen University Sci-fi and Fantasy Society* and it shall be affiliated with AUSA.

# 2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Nerdverse stands for the promotion of science fiction and fantasy media.

2.2 Nerdverse aims to promote discussion and socialisation among fans of speculative fiction, providing both a social group and a forum in which media can be discussed.

2.3 Nerdverse aims to promote lesser-known and under-appreciated speculative fiction alongside more popular media.

2.4 Nerdverse aims to facilitate its objectives through:

2.4.1 Weekly term time screenings of films and television media.

2.4.2 Provision of the Nerdverse library to society members.

2.4.3 Shared recommendations among the community.

2.4.4 One-off events and trips, when relevant to the society's aims and objectives.

## **3 Membership**

**3.1** We are an open society and welcome non-members, within reason; we reserve the right to require membership of any frequent attendees.

**3.2** Membership is open to all Aberdeen or Robert Gordon University staff or students.

**3.3** Individuals who are not members of Aberdeen University Students' Association may purchase Associative Membership, which will be treated within the society as regular membership.

**3.4** Membership of Nerdverse may be acquired through payment of a membership fees and registration through AUSA's website.

### **3.5 Terms of Membership**

**3.5.1** Nerdverse is a safe space (as defined in the appendix) and members are required to maintain it as such. Discrimination or harassment of members, again as defined in the appendix, will not be tolerated.

**3.5.2** Members are required to respect the property and personal space of others, including university areas.

**3.5.3** Members and attendees are required to comply with AUSA policies and, when appropriate, Aberdeen University policies.

**3.5.4** Attendees are expected to contribute when they consume, either by providing communal food and refreshments, or a donation thereto.

**3.5.5** Attendees of certain events, whose price will be stated in advance, must be prepared to be rejected from said event if they do not pay.

**3.5.6** Problems with the society or other members should be dealt with according to society policy, as outlined in section 11.

**3.5.7** Unacceptable behaviour can be defined at the discretion of the committee.

**3.5.8** If you are no longer a student at Aberdeen University, you will be required to rebuy associate membership of the Society.

**3.5.9** Past committee members are granted honorary membership.

### **3.6** Terms of Society Library use

**3.6.1** Being a paid member of Nerdverse entitles you to borrow items from the library, provided the Secretary has given permission for that item to be borrowed.

**3.6.2** Any items borrowed may only be kept for up to the length of time specified by the Secretary.

**3.6.3** The Secretary may request the return of a library item before it is due to be returned, at any time and for any reason. You are expected to comply within a reasonable timeframe, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

**3.6.4** All borrowed library items are expected to be returned in the condition that they were borrowed, given reasonable wear and tear.

**3.6.5** If a library item is returned in a notably worse state than it was borrowed, or if the item is destroyed, the Secretary may request that the member in question provides a replacement copy of said item or the monetary value thereof. The quality of the replacement may be decided at the discretion of the Secretary.

**3.6.6** If an item is returned after the date requested, or if section 3.6.3 is not upheld, the Secretary may charge the member a fine of 0.20 per day since the date requested. The money from said fine will be logged by the society treasurer and added to the society funds.

**3.6.7** If an item is not returned and 14 days have passed since the item was due to be returned, the Secretary may seek disciplinary action via the committee.

**3.6.8** No items may be borrowed less than 14 days before the end of the academic year.

**3.6.9** Items may be renewed a maximum of three times. The item cannot be renewed if someone else has requested.

**3.6.10**

**3.6.10.i** If any of the library terms are not upheld, the Secretary may temporarily or permanently ban a member from using the library; additionally seeking society disciplinary procedure if they deem it necessary.

**3.6.10.ii** The Secretary may choose to restrict library access of a member, if they can provide good reason to the committee that the member is unlikely to uphold the terms of the library.

**3.7 Honorary Membership**

**3.7.1** Attenders not currently enrolled at the University of Aberdeen or associated institutions may in exceptional circumstances be granted honorary membership.

**3.7.2** The first form of honorary membership shall be Nerdverse Honorary Membership. This shall be awarded on the grounds of significant contribution to the Society. This guarantees the honouree a free membership of the Society, although honorary members may not vote on Society policy or hold committee positions. Nerdverse Honorary Membership must be renewed by the Society (as in 3.7.4) every two academic years. Ex-committee members' honorary membership can be removed at this time if sufficient reason is



brought forward.

**3.7.3** The second form of honorary membership shall be Contributory Honorary Membership. This shall be awarded on the grounds of significant contribution to the field of science fiction or fantasy media. This guarantees the honouree a free and permanent membership of the society, although honorary members may not vote on Society policy or hold committee positions.

**3.7.4** In order to award honorary membership, a general meeting of the Society must be held and agree to the award by a majority. The full Committee must approve any nominations by a gross majority before the name can be put forwards to the general meeting. The nominee must be excluded from these votes.

**3.7.5** Nerdverse Honorary Members are responsible for putting their own names forwards to the Committee for renewal.

## **4 Subscriptions and Finance**

**4.1** If membership is revoked for any reason, no refunds of the fee will be offered.

**4.2** The Society shall be funded primarily on an event-by-event basis, where members and attenders shall pay an entry rate decided by the Committee. Final entry rates shall be published at least a week in advance of the event.

**4.3** Money raised by the Society shall be used to facilitate the aims and objectives outlined in Section 2. These expenditures may include, but are not limited to: purchase or renting of media for viewing events, establishing

and maintaining the Society Library, paying for transport and entry for trips, and upkeep and hosting of the website.

## **5 Fundraising**

**5.1** Fundraising events shall be the joint responsibility of the Events Co-Ordinator and the Treasurer.

**5.2** The Society welcomes donations, both of media and money, subject to the approval of the Committee.

**5.3** All profit from Society fundraising events shall go to the Society fund, and not be for personal use.

## **6 Society Committee Members**

**6.1** President

**6.1.1** The President shall maintain executive control and responsibility for the smooth running of all aspects of the Society.

**6.1.2** The President shall have the right to delegate appropriate responsibilities to other Committee members, but maintains responsibility for the job's completion.

**6.1.3** The President is expected to preside over all general and committee meetings, or, where this is impractical, to delegate responsibility for these meetings to the next appropriate committee member.

**6.1.4** The President is required to attend all appropriate AUSA meetings, or delegate responsibility as in 6.1.3

- 6.1.5** The President is the first contact point between the Society and the wider University administration.
- 6.1.6** It is the responsibility of the President to offer assistance to other Committee members where appropriate.
- 6.1.7** The President shall be responsible, where appropriate, for bringing forward agenda items of Society grievances and feedback.
- 6.1.8** The President shall be responsible for liaising with the AUSA President.
- 6.1.9** The President shall be responsible for booking the room for all events, including the viewing session.
- 6.2** Secretary
- 6.2.1** The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping and distributing minutes and agendas of all Society meetings. This includes uploading the minutes online for the committee to access, whether on social media like the Facebook groups or on the Nerdverse website, or both.
- 6.2.2** The Secretary shall be responsible for the media presence of the Society, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
- 6.2.3** The Secretary shall be responsible for the organisation of Society email and communication, including all social media accounts of the society.
- 6.2.4** The Secretary has the power to delegate responsibility for appropriate tasks to the IT Co-ordinator.
- 6.2.5** The Secretary shall share responsibility with the Events Co-ordinator for the arrangement and publishing of the Society viewing schedule and one-off events.
- 6.2.6** The Secretary shall share responsibility with the Events Co-Ordinator for advertising and accessibility of the Society.

**6.2.7** The Secretary shall share responsibility with the Treasurer for keeping track of membership applications.

**6.2.8** The Secretary will be responsible for the library. They will keep track of the inventory and lent items.

**6.2.9** The Secretary will ensure that library items are returned on time and may fine members whose items are overdue.

### **6.3 Treasurer**

**6.3.1** The Treasurer is responsible for keeping financial records for the Society, both in physical and digital form. These records may be required at any time by the committee or AUSA.

**6.3.2** The Treasurer is responsible for holding, distributing and banking all Society funds.

**6.3.3** The Treasurer is required to report back to committee and general meetings on the state of Society finances, and to answer to the Events Co-ordinator, President, or Secretary when questions of affordability arise.

**6.3.4** The Treasurer shall share responsibility with the Secretary for keeping track of membership applications.

**6.3.5** The Treasurer may not hold their position if they are in their last year of study. Furthermore, no person can be elected as Treasurer if they will enter their final year of study within 10 academic weeks.

### **6.4 Events Co-Ordinator**

**6.4.1** The Events Co-Ordinator shall be responsible for ensuring that room bookings, media availability, and resources for all Society events are organised.

**6.4.2** The Events Co-Ordinator shall share responsibility with the Secretary for advertising and accessibility of the Society and shall be responsible for

creating the Facebook events for each viewing session.

**6.4.3** The Events Co-ordinator shall share responsibility with the Secretary and IT Co-Ordinator for the arrangement and publishing of the Society viewing schedule and one-off events.

**6.4.4** The Events Co-Ordinator shall be responsible for raising agenda items related to future events or event feedback.

**6.4.5** The Events Co-Ordinator has the power to delegate responsibility for appropriate tasks to the IT Co-ordinator.

**6.4.6** The Events Co-Ordinator shall be responsible for bringing food and refreshments to the viewing sessions.

**6.4.7** The Events Co-Ordinator shall be responsible for organising events other than the Saturday watching sessions.

## **6.5 IT Co-Ordinator**

**6.5.1** The IT Co-Ordinator will have the responsibility of maintaining, updating and expanding, where necessary, the society's digital presence. This includes, but is not limited to, the website, the society's AUSA listing and the Society newsletter.

**6.5.2** The IT Co-Ordinator will ensure that all systems used by the society operate as effectively and securely as possible; effectively being defined insomuch as to inobtrusively aid the activities of the society. This includes, but is not limited to, the domains, email accounts and servers used by the society and under the control of the IT Co-ordinator.

**6.5.3** The IT Co-ordinator will, where possible, mitigate any fallout from interruptions to users' access of services owned or used by Nerdverse.

**6.5.4** The IT Co-ordinator will be responsible for migrating systems used by Nerdverse to environments that best suit the needs and financial abilities of the society. During any migrations, 6.5.3 must be upheld.

**6.5.5** The IT Co-ordinator will assist committee members, within reason, with any technical issues that affect said committee members' contribution to the society.

**6.5.6** The IT Co-ordinator will be responsible for configuring any systems required for specific events. Including, but not limited to, calibrating the projector and ensuring a suitable media player is installed at media watching events as well as obtaining appropriate media for viewing sessions

**6.5.7** If the IT Co-ordinator has reasonable grounds to believe that the integrity of society IT services would be threatened by continued access, or access by specific users, the IT Co-ordinator may act against 6.1.6iii and take steps to disable the relevant services, or block access of said users to the services.

**6.5.8** The IT Co-ordinator may not use any Nerdverse systems for personal use or gain. This does not apply if said systems are financed personally by the IT Co-ordinator and the use/gain does not have any impact on the performance of said systems.

**6.5.9** The IT Co-Ordinator shall teach the IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice (IT Co-ordinator Apprentice; 6.6.2) the necessary skills to take over eventually

## **6.6 IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice**

**6.6.1** The IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice shall take on the role of the IT Co-Ordinator when the Co-Ordinator is not present or available.

**6.6.2** The IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice shall learn from the IT Co-Ordinator all the necessary skills to take over the role afterwards.

**6.6.3** The IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice should preferably be a first year student or someone who will be present at the University or at least at Nerdverse for at least another year so that they can take on the role of IT Co-Ordinator afterwards.

**6.6.4** The IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice shall make sure that Samurai Jack is always on the Watch List in the suggestions for viewing sessions submitted to committee meetings.

#### **6.7 First Year Representative**

**6.7.1** The First Year Representative will be elected from first years at second meeting of the first term of the academic year.

**6.7.2** The First Year Representative will be charged with voicing any concerns First Year and new members in general may have, as well as serve as a point of contact for those members to discuss anything that may make them feel uncomfortable at events with the Society, including but not limited to the weekly viewing sessions.

**6.7.3** The First Year Representative will be granted a voice like any other member of the committee and will be allowed to participate in the selection of media to watch during the viewing sessions, but will also have the responsibility to ensure that the interest of new members are protected during those meetings.

## **7 Voting/Elections of Committee Members**

**7.1** Committee Members will ordinarily be elected at an AGM, for the year following.

**7.1.1** Where a Committee position is vacant and no AGM is imminent, an Emergency General Meeting shall be called by the remaining Committee to fill the position.

### **7.2 Nominations**

**7.2.1** Any member or attender of the Society is free to nominate any full member, including themselves, for any vacant position.

**7.2.2** The nomination must be accepted by the nominee in order for the nominee to be eligible for election.

**7.2.3** The opening date of nominations will be announced by the committee.

**7.2.4** Nominations for a position will close when elections opens for that position.

**7.2.5** If a nominee has been elected to a position, any further nominations of that person are withdrawn.

**7.2.6** Each nominee is allowed a speech of up to 2 minutes, before the elections.

### **7.3 Voting regulations**

**7.3.1** Votes shall be cast by secret ballot.

**7.3.2** All current paid members in attendance are each entitled to vote once per position. This vote may be abstained.

**7.3.3** The recipient of a simple majority of votes shall be elected to the position.



**7.3.4** A recipient of a majority may choose to conditionally accept a position if they are running for a different position which they would prefer. The individual may choose to accept one or none of the positions they are eligible to accept.

**7.3.5** If a conditionally accepted position is declined, elections for that position will be re-held.

**7.3.6** In the event of a tie, an additional vote will be held. If a second tie is reached, the departing Committee shall hold the deciding vote.

**7.3.7** At least 10 people eligible to vote must be present, provided there are at least 20 members of the society.

**7.3.8** Elections must be held during term time, with at least 2 weeks notice given.

## **8 Meetings**

**8.1** The Committee shall meet monthly in termtime, with additional meetings called when necessary by any Committee member.

**8.2** The Committee has oversight on the timing of General Meetings, which must be held at least once a year.

**8.3** Minutes shall be kept in all official Committee meetings, and shall be posted on the Minutes page of the Nerdverse website.

## **9 Resignation**

**9.1** Any committee member who wishes to resign from their position should attempt to give three weeks notice. The vacated space should be filled as soon as possible.

**9.2** If the president resigns they must inform both the committee and the Societies Union.

**9.3** Honorary members may resign at any time by informing the secretary.

## **10 Changes to Society Constitution**

**10.1** Changes to the society constitution must be unanimously approved by the committee and then agreed at a gross majority by a general meeting vote.

**10.2** Changes made to the constitution cannot be retroactively applied.

## **11 Society Complaints Procedure**

**11.1** This procedure should be applied in cases where members have a grievance either with members/attendees of the Society, or the policy or organisation of the Society itself. These grievances may include, but are not limited to: safety or inclusivity of events, failure of members or attendees to comply with the constitution (see section 3), internal conflicts or drama, leadership or organisation of the committee, equipment or technical issues.

**11.2** The complainant should first attempt, where reasonable and safe, to address the issue directly. Committee members may be asked to mediate where appropriate.

**11.3** If 11.2 is unsuccessful or inapplicable, a report of the issue should be sent to the committee at [nerdverse@nerdverse.co.uk](mailto:nerdverse@nerdverse.co.uk), who will attempt to remedy the situation by any means at their disposal. Alternatively, complaints can be directed to AUSA in accordance with University procedure.

**11.4** If the issue directly involves a committee member, another committee member can be contacted personally using their Nerdverse email address. Primary contacts should be the President or Secretary of the Society.

**11.5** All grievances will be treated as confidential, unless circumstances require otherwise and permission is granted by the plaintiff.

**11.6** The committee will meet to address major Society grievances, except in cases where a committee member is the subject of the complaint, when said member will be temporarily suspended from the committee's role in the investigation.

**11.7** A vote of no confidence may be brought against any member of the Committee, if raised as an agenda item at a general meeting with more than ten members plus Committee present. This agenda item can be added by discussion with a Committee member. If a majority votes in favour of discharging the Committee member, the member in question will be removed from their Committee position, but remain a society member. A new member will be elected to the vacated position as soon as possible, as per 7.1.1

**11.8** A vote of no confidence may be raised at any time by the Committee against any given Committee member. If the entire Committee (minus the member under investigation) votes in total majority to remove the member, the member will be removed from their position and a new member elected, as in 11.7.

## **12 Disciplinary Procedures**

**12.1** Disciplinary procedures within the Society are up to the discretion of the committee. No non-committee member should take it upon themselves to apply these procedures.

**12.2** Minor offences will be responded to with a warning from an appropriate Committee member.

**12.3** Major or repeat offences may be punished by temporary or permanent suspension of membership and/or banning from events. Committee members against whom this is brought will also be required to step down from their position.

**12.4** Offences costing the Society damages should be paid for by the offender.

**12.5** Any behaviour contradicting the Universitys rules will be reported to the University administration, and may also lead to other disciplinary action as detailed above.

## **13 Declaration**

**13.1** Views expressed by Society members, including committee members, do not necessarily reflect the views of AUSA, the University of Aberdeen, or the Society itself.

**13.2** No members may steal the declaration.

**13.2.1** Except Nicolas Cage

**13.2.2** But hes not a member so thats cool

**13.3** We raise a glass to all the brave souls who fell during the reading of this annoyingly long pseudo-legalese document.

**13.3.1** Except Nicolas Cage

## 14 Appendix

### 14.1 Definitions

**14.1.1 Safe Space** - A place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability.

**14.1.2 Discrimination** - The unjust or prejudicial treatment of someone. Particularly on grounds of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability.

**14.1.3 Harassment** - The act of systematic and/or continued unwanted, annoying, harmful or threatening actions against an individual or group.

## 14.2 Changes to the Constitution

14.2.1 Implemented modifications voted for at the 2014 EGM on 9/11/14

14.2.2 Implemented modifications voted for at the 2015 EGM on 7/10/15

14.2.2.i Removed the Vice President from committee members.

14.2.2.ii Removed the First Year Rep from committee members. This should have apparently been previously removed.

14.2.2.iii Changed *objectives by* to *objectives through* in 2.4

14.2.2.iv Corrected spelling of *Nicholas Cage* to *Nicolas Cage* in 13.3.1

14.2.2.v Removed section 6.1 to avoid pointless nesting.

14.2.3 Implemented modifications voted for at the 2016 AGM on 2/3/16

14.2.3.i Added definitions for *Safe Space*, *Discrimination* and *Harassment* to Appendix.

14.2.3.ii Changed Terms of Membership to use Appendix's definitions of *Safe Space*, *Discrimination* and *Harassment*.

14.2.3.iii Removed section 10.3 which stated: *The constitution shall be reviewed annually by the committee.*

14.2.4 Implemented modifications voted for at the 2017 AGM on 28/1/17

14.2.4.i Merged Librarian position into Secretary

14.2.4.ii Changed definition of harassment

14.2.4.iii Corrected *another* spelling of *Nicholas Cage* to *Nicolas Cage* in the Declaration (this wasn't brought up at the AGM)

14.2.5 Implemented modifications voted for at the 2019 and 2020 AGMs on 22/04/2020

14.2.5.i Re-arranged the attributes of the roles of IT Co-Ordinator, President, Secretary and Events Co-Ordinator, as voted.

**14.2.5.ii** Created the position of IT Co-Ordinator Apprentice

**14.2.5.iii** Created the position of First Year Representative

**14.2.5.iv** Added the provision that past committee members will be granted honorary membership; this meant an addendum to the vote every two years for honorary membership which states that the status can be removed every two years but is otherwise granted indefinitely.