AF/25-26/07/06
14/05/2026

Activities Forum

Approval of Disabilities Society

Author(s): Tom Gordon — Deputy President (Activities)

Decision(s): To **approve**

Union Notes

1. A Disabilities Society was proposed during the fast-track round of the New Activities Committee (NAC).
2. In its meeting on March 4, 2026, the New Activities Committee opted:
    a. Not to immediately approve the creation of Disabilities Society due to concerns around overlap with the Students with Disabilities Liberation and Community Network, and
    b. To give the proposer an opportunity to submit a revised proposal, addressing these concerns, for approval at Activities Forum.
3. The society proposal can be found overleaf.

Union Resolves

1. To create a Disabilities Society under the New Activities Incubator scheme.

New Activities Committee

78. Disabilities Society

Application Details

Proposer: Sifeng Lucy Chen

Aims of the Society
The aim of the society is to create an inclusive and welcoming environment where students with disabilities can meet each other and have a safe space to make friends, find support, and participate in group events that are fully accessible and disability-informed. We aim to supplement the existing efforts of the College's Disabilities LCN by providing a community space that will handle student-to-student interaction and run socials more regularly outside of Disability History Month, to ensure that disabled students have representation year-round and to maintain a socially-cohesive environment. In the meantime, this will allow the Disabilities LCN to handle the broader, more systemic issues within the university. In this way, the Disability Society can act as a "first point of contact" and enable the university to stay more updated with disabled students' concerns about university policy, which can then be actioned by the LCN.

Disability is an umbrella term for a wide range of conditions. Two people with the same condition can have widely different presentations. Because of this, it is essential to have varied, visible representation within the university so that people with different conditions can feel empowered to voice their opinions and be more socially present within the student body, as being disabled can be a very isolating experience. Through the Society, we aim to aid the Disabilities LCN in its goal to improve visibility and accessibility, as well as to ensure that the lived experiences of individual disabled students can be connected and unified.

Please provide three SMART milestones for your society
Milestone 1: Host group talk on accessibility (or to host our first event before September with at least 10 attendees)

Milestone 2: To achieve 50 followers on our society Instagram account by September / to post at least 10 times on our society Instagram account before September

Milestone 3: To establish our society whatsapp group and to achieve 50 members within one year.

What is your goal?
Our goal is to provide students with disabilities with a space where they can form friendships with people who know about the disabled lens through lived experience, as student life can be quite isolating and lonely among an able-bodied majority. We also want to use this society to inform students about the significant breadth of the disability spectrum as well as its place in wider society, and how our different lived experiences can be united towards empowering all disabled students at Imperial. We would like to be involved in representing and advocating for students with disabilities at Imperial and to provide a forum where they can discuss the

challenges they may face and support one another. We aim to provide a space that is fully accessible and inclusive to all students, and provide opportunities to engage with events and student life where accessibility needs are often not met.

How will this be measured?
People in the society will be able to meet and connect at socials and be able to explore group activities without the fear of asking for their needs to be met. This will be measured by attendance to group activities such as accessible arts and crafts, accessible group sports, among other things, which we aim to implement as a recurring event in the future. We will also measure the depth of engagement with the society through collecting feedback from attendees.
We will keep note of the work we do with the university through the requests we receive for support and advice for university projects.

What does success look like?
If disabled students are able to make friends and become more confident in their disabled identity, and if we are able to host events with good retention of people between socials. We aim to make a meaningful impact on the lives of students with disabilities at Imperial, and allow them to feel comfortable and empowered to advocate for themselves and celebrate their disabled identity. Reducing ableism at Imperial and improving the visibility of students with disabilities would also be a success for our society.

Disabled students should be able to have a middle-management to liaise between the student body and the Network.

We also aim to create an online community for students with disabilities at Imperial by creating a Whatsapp community where students can interact, share their experiences and form friendships. A success here would look like a community that regularly interacts in ways that are constructive and supportive.

Are you confident that this can be achieved?
Yes. There are many disability organisations and community advocacy groups with this exact goal in mind for those outside of the university structure. There is no reason for this not to be achieved within the university, and I would argue that having a disability society is even more relevant for young disabled people's wellbeing as they navigate university life presumably away from previous support systems, especially considering that a lot of students need a point of interaction more frequently than what the Disabilities LCN can realistically provide at the moment. It would also be beneficial to have a society where students can see that they are being represented at a personal as well as institutional level.

When would you expect this to be achieved?
Our aim to reduce ableism at Imperial may take several years, however we aim to see tangible improvements within one year of establishing the society.
We believe that we could see a new sense of community among students with disabilities at Imperial within a term, however we hope this community will continue to grow for many years after establishing the society.

What would your main activity be?
Please include: Activity name, if this activity is weekly/monthly/termly, and the cost for members to attend (£ per person)

Board Games - every month, people bring their own stuff so costs: £0

What other regular and/or one-off events and activities would your group organise?

- Sports events at Ethos (eg. Red Ball tennis) currently one-off, but aiming for yearly in future. Cost: £0, as Ethos already has all the equipment and booking necessary.
- Powerpoint night - Twice a year, collaboration with NDSoc. Cost: £0
- Zine making workshops - Termly. Cost: £5 (can use existing scrap newspaper/magazines, glue and scissors from arts and crafts events)
- Disability awareness talks/events - Termly. Aiming to get a range of voices in, to show that disability intersects and has a place in all spaces, from the arts to the sciences, history and politics. Cost: £0.
- Movie nights - Termly. Cost: £0
- BSL taster - Twice a year, collaboration with SignSoc. Cost: £0
- Arts and crafts - Termly. Would roughly cost £10 per person (for materials and accessible tools eg. grip aids?)
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Do you expect to bring in any other extra Income?
No.

Your Committee

President:
Sifeng Lucy Chen, sifeng.chen18@imperial.ac.uk

Treasurer:
Amy Lloyd Evans, icu-disabilities@imperial.ac.uk

Secretary:
Harshil Patel, harshil.patel23@imperial.ac.uk

Additional Information

Do you expect to bring in any other extra income? No
Please list your expected income: