



RCASU

Bye – Laws

Approved by:

Ratified by: Royal College of Art Students' Union Trustee Board

Date: 08/03/2024

1. The General Election of Sabbatical Officers

- 1.1. The General Elections of Sabbatical Officers of the Union will take place during the months of March or April-
- 1.2. General Elections will be held for the posts of President/Vice President, which are defined as Full-time Sabbatical Officer positions within the Union.
- 1.3. General Elections will be held for any Sabbatical positions, which have been approved and Ratified by both Students' Union General Assembly and the Trustee Board.
- 1.4. Sabbatical Officers will be elected for a term of one year commencing 1st August.
- 1.5. Sabbatical Officers will enter into a contract of employment with the SU. Contracts of employment will set out the duties and method of remuneration. Contracts of employment will be amended from time to time to reflect good employment practice.
- 1.6. If a Sabbatical Officer resigns or is disqualified after the date of the announcement of their election but before the start of their term of office the vacancy will be filled by the candidate not already elected, who has the most votes.
- 1.7. If a Sabbatical Officer resigns or is disqualified after the start of their term of office or if no candidate can be elected under clause 1.6 there will be a general election to replace that post following the process for elections set out in these by-laws amended to take into account the time of year of the vacancy as agreed between the Director of the SU, the remaining Sabbatical Officer of the SU and the Academic Registrar of the Royal College of Art.

2. Functionaries for Elections of Sabbatical Officers

- 2.1. There shall be two Electoral Signing Officers: one of the currently elected Sabbatical Officers of the Union and the Academic Registrar of the Royal College of Art.
- 2.2. The Electoral Signing Officers shall be jointly responsible for calling for nominations. They shall also sign the notice giving the results of the election.
- 2.3. The Electoral Signing Officers will appoint the Returning Officer on the recommendation of the Students' Union Director. This will usually be the NUS.
- 2.4. The Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer shall supervise the count and shall appoint duly impartial tellers. The Electoral Officers may attend the count. The Director of the Students' Union shall appoint the Deputy Returning Officer.

- 2.5. The Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer shall appoint and supervise any electronic voting mechanism, and shall appoint a duly impartial teller.
- 2.6. Candidates for any posts must have a proposer and seconder.
- 2.7. Proposers and Seconders must be full members of the Union.
- 2.8. The Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer shall be responsible for the observation of these regulations.
- 2.9. The Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer shall have the power either to suspend or to declare a nomination invalid.

3. Conduct of Elections of Sabbatical Officers

- 3.1. The Electoral Signing Officers will initiate the elections procedure by opening nominations. The Electoral Signing Officers will ensure that adequate notices announcing the elections and calling for nominations are posted around the College.
- 3.2. The Electoral Signing Officers, along with the Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer, will set the dates for the election, as well as the duration of the election. These shall be published on all Election Communications.
- 3.3. Nominations shall be open for ten (10) College working days.
- 3.4. Nominations shall close ten (10) College working days before the date fixed for the election.
- 3.5. The Students' Union Director will confirm eligibility of all candidates for the post prior to candidates being confirmed on the ballot paper.
- 3.6. Any complaints about the election, process or candidates will be dealt with by the Students' Union.
- 3.7. The Returning Officer and/or Deputy Returning Officer shall publish on the Union website the names and photographs of all candidates.
- 3.8. All candidates may produce a Campaign Paper (Manifesto). Candidates shall be responsible for the content and the cost of any election or canvassing materials bearing their names (excluding notices of election and ballot forms). All candidates are limited to spending £0.06 per Students' Union member. The total figure will be confirmed in the Election Handbook annually. The Union reserves the right to dictate the format of the manifesto.
- 3.9. Ballot forms shall have the names of all the candidates nominated for sabbatical officer. The final space on the ballot forms shall be reserved for 're-open nominations'. A vote for 're-open nominations' is to advocate for a reset of the election process and open nomination again. Electors may choose to vote for 're-open nominations'.

- 3.10. The Election Handbook will detail all campaigning rules, funding rules, candidate behaviour etc. The handbook will be made available 5 business day before the nomination period.
- 3.11. The elections shall be held over a defined period, minimum 24 hours > maximum 72 hours, and will commence at 14:00 on the agreed date and close at 14:00 on the agreed date.
- 3.12. Voting will take place online, via the secure online voting page on the Union website. The voting system will be Single Transferable Voting. Each voter will rank the candidates in order of preference.
- 3.13. Candidates may call for recounts wherever due cause can be provided.
- 3.14. In the event of a tie the incumbent Sabbatical Officers will conduct a coin toss to determine the winner of the Election.
- 3.15. The results of the elections will be announced within twenty-four hours of the close of the elections.
- 3.16. In the event that 're-open nominations' receives more than 50% of the votes cast, or that there are no candidates at the close of nominations, the full election procedure (as in paragraphs 1-12) shall be repeated until a candidate is successfully elected

4. Student Representative Assemblies

- 4.1. Student representative assemblies consist of School Assemblies and College Assembly.
- 4.2. The student representative assemblies will normally meet at least once per academic term.
- 4.3. The RCASU Terms of Reference for Assemblies sets out the scope of all representative assemblies. The Terms of Reference should be reviewed at least annually by the Sabbatical Officers and School Deans. The Terms of Reference annual review will identify if the current assemblies are adequate.
- 4.4. There is a School Assembly for each school, with representatives from each school invited to their own school assembly. The College Assembly membership consists of all student representatives.
- 4.5. MA Programmes would normally have two (2) programme representatives per programme per year, and one (1) EDI representative per programme. Each programme only has one vote.
- 4.6. Research programmes would normally have one (1) representative per programme, and one (1) EDI representative per programme.
- 4.7. Only representatives that have been elected have voting rights at representative assemblies.
- 4.8. Regardless of the number of elected representatives from any one programme, each programme will only have one (1) vote at any Assembly meeting.
- 4.9. Observers/non representative students are welcome to attend student representative assemblies by prior agreement with the Chair.
- 4.10. College representatives will be invited to each assembly and will usually consist of: one College observer, one relevant Academic representative, one Technical Services representative, one Estates representative.

Student Representative Assembly Meetings

- 4.11. Meetings of the student representatives assemblies shall be convened by one of the Sabbatical Officers.
- 4.12. The agendas of every student representative assembly meeting must - at least five (5) business days before the meeting is to take place - be sent to each member of that assembly.
- 4.13. Any member of a student representative assembly who is unable to attend a meeting should inform the Sabbatical Officers of the Union prior to the meeting and appoint a proxy. For the duration of the meeting the Proxy shall be a full member of the assembly. Proxies must be full members of the Union. Proxies can

include Sabbatical Officers.

- 4.14. The quorum at student representative assembly meetings shall constitute 25% of those eligible to vote. Proxy votes will be included in the quorum.
- 4.15. The Chair of the assembly shall have the power to allow non-Union members to speak at meetings of student representative assemblies.
- 4.16. The Chair shall ensure that the minutes from the assembly be distributed to all no later than 7 working days after the meeting. The Chair will ensure that the minutes from the assembly be posted on the Union website no later than 7 working days after the meeting.

5. Students' Union Assembly

- 5.1. Students' Union Assembly will normally meet at least once per academic term.
- 5.2. Students' Union Assembly is for members to discuss Students' Union issues, and vote on Students' Union matters and direction. The full Terms of Reference will be confirmed by the Sabbatical Officers annually.
- 5.3. Students' Union Assembly is made up of all current student members, each student member may vote at the Students' Union Assembly.
- 5.4. Only current members have voting rights at the Students' Union Assembly.
- 5.5. Observers are welcome to attend Students' Union Assembly by prior agreement with the Chair

Students' Union Assembly Meetings

- 5.6. Meetings of the Students' Union Assembly shall be convened by one of the Sabbatical Officers.
- 5.7. The agendas of every assembly meeting must - at least seven (7) clear days before the meeting is to take place - be sent to each member of that assembly.
- 5.8. Any member of the Students' Union Assembly who is unable to attend a meeting should inform the Sabbatical Officers of the Union prior to the meeting and appoint a proxy. For the duration of the meeting the Proxy shall be a full member of the General Assembly. Proxies must be full members of the Union. Proxies can include Sabbatical Officers.
- 5.9. The quorum at Students' Union Assembly meetings shall constitute 50 current members eligible to vote. Proxy votes will be included in the quorum and will be announced prior to any votes made.
- 5.10. The Students' Union Assembly shall have the power to allow non-Union members to speak at meetings of the Students' Union Assembly

6. Proceedings of the Students' Union Assembly

- 6.1. Agenda
- 6.2. Minutes of the previous meeting
- 6.3. Matters arising
- 6.4. Reports, statements, discussions and motions submitted and published in notices convening the meeting
- 6.5. Emergency motions
- 6.6. Any other business
- 6.7. One of the Sabbatical Officers shall chair the Students' Union Assembly.
- 6.8. If the Sabbatical Officers are absent or relinquishes the Chair, it shall be taken by another member of Student's Union Assembly nominated by the Sabbatical Officers.
- 6.9. The Chair shall ensure that minutes are taken.
- 6.10. The Chair shall be responsible for keeping the meeting in order
- 6.11. The meeting shall remain silent when the Chair speaks.
- 6.12. Members wishing to speak shall address the Chair.
- 6.13. The Chair shall decide priority in speaking.
- 6.14. Every member shall have the right (subject to a five (5) minute guillotine on each debate and to the Chair's decision on priority in speaking) to speak once on each motion submitted to each meeting.
- 6.15. Each member shall have one vote. The Chair shall have a single vote, which may be used only in the event of a hung vote.
- 6.16. Every motion shall have a proposer and a seconder.
 - 6.16.1 The proposer may choose to withdraw a motion at any point
 - 6.16.2 The proposer shall have the right to sum up on the debate immediately before the vote is taken.
- 6.17. Emergency motions may be moved only if they deal with matters, which have arisen since the date for submission of motions, and if a simple majority of the members present at the meeting vote for the discussion of this motion.
- 6.18. All amendments to motions must be signed by a proposer and a seconder.
- 6.19. All amendments to motions must be handed to the Students' Union

at least forty-eight (48) hours before the start of the meeting.

- 6.20. Amendments shall be discussed immediately after the substantive motion has been tabled.
- 6.21. There shall be no discussion of any substantive motion until all amendments to that motion have been discussed and votes on the amendments have been taken.
- 6.22. Where there is more than one (1) amendment to a motion, they shall be discussed in the order they were received by the Chair.
- 6.23. The proposer of an amendment shall have the right to sum up before the vote
- 6.24. In the event of any amendment being carried that did the proposer of the substantive motion not accept, the amended motion shall become the substantive motion, and the proposer of the amendment shall become the proposer of the substantive motion.
- 6.25. The following procedural motions may be put
 - 6.25.1 a vote of no confidence in the Chair: 'that the Chair be removed for the duration of the meeting'
 - 6.25.2 a challenge to the Chair's ruling: that the Chair be removed for the duration of the meeting
 - 6.25.3 that the motion not be put
 - 6.25.4 that standing orders be suspended for a stated period of time
 - 6.25.5 that the guillotine be suspended until a stated time
 - 6.25.6 that the meeting be suspended until a stated time
 - 6.25.7 that the motion be referred back for investigation or re-examination
 - 6.25.8 that the meeting be adjourned till a specific date
 - 6.25.9 that the motion be taken in parts
 - 6.25.10 that a named individual be expelled from the meeting
- 6.26. A procedural motion (with a proposer and seconder) shall take priority over all other business.
- 6.27. A specific procedural motion may be moved once only during any single debate.
- 6.28. There shall be a one (1) minute speech in favour of a procedural motion, and a one (1) minute speech against.
- 6.29. Votes on a procedural motion shall require a 75% majority of the Student's Union Assembly quorum (50) to be passed.
- 6.30. Where procedural motions 8.24.1 or 8.24.2 are moved, the Chair shall be taken by another member of Student's Union Assembly
- 6.31. Points of information may be offered only if the member holding the floor signifies his or her intention to give way.
- 6.32. Points of order take precedence over any other business, shall not be discussed, and may be raised at any time.

- 6.33. Motions shall require a simple majority except where otherwise specified in this constitution.
- 6.34. Any suspension of standing orders shall apply for the duration of the matter under discussion only.
- 6.35. Should any situation arise which is not covered by the Standing Orders, the Chair shall rule on the procedure to be adopted. This ruling may be challenged by procedural motion 6.25.2

7. Partnership Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal College of Art

- 7.1. Any Agreement or Memorandum will be consistent with the Constitution of the SU and these Bye-Laws

8. Delegations, limits of Financial Responsibility and Decisions restricted to the Student' Union Assembly and/or Trustees

- 8.1. Delegations are agreed from time to time by the Trustees and will be reported annually to the Students' Union Assembly. The current delegations will be published on the Students' Union website.

9. Committee Membership

- 9.1 The membership of Committees of the Board will be agreed by the Trustees

10. Opting out of Membership

- 10.1. A Student of the RCA may opt out of membership of the SU by giving written notice. Written notice may be by electronic means. Membership ceases on the date of acknowledgement of the receipt of the opt out notice or seven days after sending a written notice, whichever is sooner.

11. Amending the Constitution - time limits

- 11.1. The Trustees must circulate to the Student Members any proposal, or revised proposal, to amend the Constitution. Student Members will have two weeks, from the date of distribution of the proposal or revised proposal, to submit any amendment to the proposal or revised proposal to the Trustees.

12. The Conduct of Referendums

- 12.1. The Director shall act as the Returning Officer for the purposes of the conduct of Referendums and carry out all the functions of a Returning Officer as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 of these Bye-Laws which are relevant to a referendum, subject to paragraph 14.3
- 12.2. If the issue on which the referendum is called concerns the Director such that, in the opinion of the Sabbatical Officers, the Chair, and one External Trustee if the Chair is a Sabbatical Officer, there is a direct conflict of interest then they will appoint another person as Returning Officer who does not have a direct conflict of interest.
- 12.3. All referendums must be accompanied by a record of the voting on the issue to show that it has been called in accordance with the Constitution.
- 12.4. On receipt of the referendum the Director, the Sabbatical Officers, the Chair and

one External Trustee if the Chair is a Sabbatical Officer, will agree on the timetable for the voting process.

- 12.5. The timetable, the referendum and the voting process will be published on the SU website and communicated to members of the SU within seven days by electronic means and by notices on appropriate notice boards of all campuses of the College.
- 12.6. The voting shall be held over a defined period, minimum 24 hours > maximum 72 hours, and will commence at 12:00 noon on the agreed date and close at 12:00 noon on the agreed date.
- 12.7. Voting will take place online, via the secure online voting page on the Union website. The voting system will be a yes or no system.
- 12.8. The results of the vote will be announced within twenty-four hours of the close of the voting.

13. Rights of Removed Trustee

- 13.1. A resolution to remove a Trustee shall not be passed unless the Trustee concerned has been given at least 14 clear days' notice in writing that the resolution is to be proposed, specifying the circumstances alleged to justify removal from office, and has been afforded a reasonable opportunity of being heard by or making written representations to the Trustees.
- 13.2. A Trustee removed from office shall be entitled to appeal the decision to remove them to an Appeals Panel within 14 days of the resolution. The Appeals Panel shall be made up of a nominee of the Royal College of Art and two independent persons. The independent persons shall not be Trustees nor members of the Students' Union Assembly. The Union may consult with the NUS in relation to the appeals process and in particular the appointment of independent persons to the Appeals Panel.
- 13.3. The independent members of the Appeals Panel will be selected by the Director in consultation with the current HR advisors to the Students' Union.
- 13.4. The Appeals Panel procedure will be in accordance with best practice for appeal panels as advised by the current HR advisors to the Students' Union.
- 13.5. The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final.

14. Student Members Meeting

- 14.1. Student Members Meeting will normally meet at least once per academic year, usually in the second term.
- 14.2. Student Members Meeting is for:
 - 14.2.1 ratification of minutes of the previous annual Student Members' meeting
 - 14.2.2 receiving the report of the Trustees on the Union's activities since the previous annual Student Members' meeting

- 14.2.3 formally presenting the accounts of the Union to the Student Members
- 14.2.4 approving the list of affiliations of the Union
- 14.2.5 open questions to the Trustees by the Student Members
- 14.2.6 notifying the appointment of the auditors for the next financial year
- 14.2.7 notifying the appointment of trustees

- 14.3. Students' Union Assembly is made up of all current student members, each student member may vote at the Students Members Meeting.

- 14.4. Only current members have voting rights at the Student Members Meeting.

- 14.5. Observers are welcome to attend Student Members Meeting by prior agreement with the Chair

Student Members Meeting, proceedings

- 14.6. Meetings of the Student Members Meeting shall be convened by one of the Sabbatical Officers or an external trustee.

- 14.7. The quorum at Student Members Meeting meetings shall constitute 25 current members eligible to vote.