



Royal College of Art Students' Union Constitution

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Approved by:

RCA SU Board of Trustees – 22 February 2016
RCA Students' Union Assembly – 15 February 2016

Ratified by:

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Table of Contents and Comments

Name, Objects and Powers	4
This section describes the organisation, its purpose, the activities it can engage in and the boundaries of its work. It describes what happens if the organisation was to be dissolved and how the constitution can be amended.	
Membership	13
This section describes who the members of the students' union	
Referenda	15
This section describes how referendum may be called	
General Meetings	16
This section described how general meetings are called and what business will take place within them.	
Trustees	20
This section describes who the trustees are, how they are appointed, how they can be removed and their powers.	
Proceedings of the Trustees	29
This section lays out how trustee meetings will be called and run and how trustees can make decisions.	
Students' Union Assembly	35
This section deals with the powers and responsibilities of the Students' Union Assembly .	
General	36
This section deals with miscellaneous questions and a table of definitions and interpretations.	



Constitution of Royal College of Art Students' Union

Background

- A. The Royal College of Art Students' Union (the "Union") is a students' union within the meaning of the Education Act 1994. The Union is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its Members.
- B. The Union will seek at all times to:
 - (i) ensure that the diversity of its membership is recognised and that equal access is available to all Members of whatever origin or orientation;
 - (ii) pursue its aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious group; and
 - (iii) pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society.
- C. This Constitution has been structured to give the Board of Trustees reasonable authority to manage the affairs of the Union in a professional manner. The Members enjoy the right, which must be exercised in accordance with charity law, to elect a proportion of the Trustees and to dismiss all of the Trustees. The Board of Trustees will give the utmost consideration to the views of Members.
- D. Under the Education Act 1994, the Royal College of Art has a statutory duty to ensure that the Union operates in a fair and democratic manner and is held to proper account for its finances. The Union therefore works alongside the Royal College of Art in ensuring that the affairs of the Union are properly conducted and



that the educational and welfare needs of the Union's Members are met.

Definitions and Interpretation

1. The meanings of any defined terms used in this Constitution are set out in Clause 104. If any dispute arises in relation to the interpretation of this Constitution or any of the Bye-Laws, it shall be resolved by the Board of Trustees.

Name, Objects and Powers

Name

2. There shall be a students' union in the name of the Royal College of Art Students' Union (and in this Constitution it is called "the Union").

Objects

3. The Union's objects are the advancement of education of Students at the Royal College of Art for the public benefit by:
 - 3.1 promoting the interests and welfare of Students at the Royal College of Art during their course of study and representing, supporting and advising Students;
 - 3.2 being the recognised representative channel between Students and the Royal College of Art and any other external bodies; and
 - 3.3 providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities and forums for discussions and debate for the personal development of its Students.



Power

4. To further its objects, but not to further any other purpose, the Union may:

4.1 provide services and facilities for Members;

4.2 establish, support, promote and operate a network of student activities for Members;

4.3 support any RAG or similar fundraising activities carried out by its Members for charitable causes, including the provision of administrative support, banking facilities and acting as a holding trustee of any funds raised;

4.4 alone or with other organisations:

4.4.1 carry out campaigning activities;

4.4.2 seek to influence public opinion; and

4.4.3 make representations to and seek to influence governmental and other bodies and institutions

regarding the reform, development and implementation of appropriate policies, legislation and regulations provided that all such activities shall be confined to the activities which an English and Welsh charity may properly undertake and provided that the Union complies with the Education Act and any guidance published by the Charity Commission;

4.5 write, make, commission, print, publish or distribute materials or information or assist in these activities;

4.6 promote, initiate, develop or carry out education and training and arrange, provide or assist with exhibitions, lectures, meetings, seminars, displays or classes;

4.7 promote, encourage, carry out or commission research, surveys, studies or other work and publish the useful results;



- 4.8 provide or appoint others to provide advice, guidance, representation and advocacy;
- 4.9 co-operate with other charities and bodies and exchange information and advice with them;
- 4.10 become a member, affiliate or associate of other charities and bodies;
- 4.11 support, set up or amalgamate with other charities with objects identical or similar to the Union's objects, and act as or appoint trustees, agents, nominees or delegates to control and manage such charities;
- 4.12 purchase or acquire all or any of the property, assets, liabilities and engagements of any charity with objects similar to the Union's objects;
- 4.13 incorporate and transfer all its assets to a charitable limited liability legal entity, and dissolve at any time following such incorporation and transfer if the Trustees consider it appropriate to do so;
- 4.14 raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person provided that the Union shall not carry out any taxable trading activities in raising funds;
- 4.15 borrow and raise money on such terms and security as the Union may think suitable (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act 1993);
- 4.16 purchase, lease, hire or receive property of any kind including land, buildings and equipment and maintain and equip it for use;
- 4.17 sell, manage, lease, mortgage, exchange, dispose of or deal with all or any of its property (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act 1993);
- 4.18 make grants or loans of money and give guarantees;
- 4.19 set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure;



- 4.20 invest and deal with the Union's money not immediately required for its objects in or upon any investments, securities, or property;
- 4.21 delegate the management of investments to an appropriately experienced and qualified financial expert provided that:
 - 4.21.1 the investment policy is set down in writing for the financial expert by the Trustees;
 - 4.21.2 every transaction is reported promptly to the Trustees;
 - 4.21.3 the performance of the investment is reviewed regularly by the Trustees;
 - 4.21.4 the Trustees are entitled to cancel the delegation at any time;
 - 4.21.5 the investment policy and the delegation arrangements are reviewed at least once a year;
 - 4.21.6 all payments due to the financial expert are on a scale or at a level which is agreed in advance and are notified promptly to the Trustees on receipt; and
 - 4.21.7 the financial expert may not do anything outside the powers of the Trustees;
- 4.22 arrange for investments or other property of the Union to be held in the name of a nominee (being a company or a limited liability partnership registered or having an established place of business in England and Wales) under the control of the Trustees or a financial expert acting under their instructions and to pay any reasonable fee required;
- 4.23 lend money and give credit to, take security for such loans or credit and guarantee or give security for the performance of contracts by any person or company;
- 4.24 open and operate banking accounts and other facilities for banking and draw, accept, endorse, negotiate, discount, issue or execute negotiable instruments such as promissory notes or bills of exchange;



- 4.25 trade in the course of carrying out any of its objects;
- 4.26 establish or acquire subsidiary companies to carry on any taxable trade;
- 4.27 subject to Clause 5 (Limitation on private benefits), employ and pay employees and professionals or other advisors;
- 4.28 grant pensions and retirement benefits to employees of the Union and to their dependants and subscribe to funds or schemes for providing pensions and retirement benefits for employees of the Union and their dependants;
- 4.29 pay out of the funds of the Union the cost of any premium in respect of any indemnity insurance to cover the liability of the Trustees (or any of them) which by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to them in respect of any negligence, default, breach of trust or breach of duty of which they may be guilty in relation to the Union provided that no such insurance shall extend to:
 - 4.29.1 any claim arising from any liability incurred by the Trustees to pay a fine imposed in criminal proceedings or a sum payable to a regulatory authority by way of a penalty in respect of non-compliance with any requirement of a regulatory nature (however arising);
 - 4.29.2 any liability incurred by the Trustees in defending any criminal proceedings in which the Trustees are convicted of an offence arising out of any fraud or dishonesty, or wilful or reckless misconduct; or
 - 4.29.3 any liability incurred by the Trustees to the Union that arises out of any conduct which the Trustees knew (or must reasonably be assumed to have known) was not in the interests of the Union or in the case of which they did not care whether it was in the best interests of the Union or not; and
- 4.30 do all such other lawful things as shall further the Union's objects.



5. Limitation on private benefits

- 5.1 The income and property of the Union shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its objects.
- 5.2 Except as provided below no part of the income and property of the Union may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any Member of the Union. This shall not prevent any payment in good faith by the Union of:
- 5.2.1 any payments made to any Member in their capacity as a beneficiary of the Union;
 - 5.2.2 reasonable and proper remuneration to any Member for any goods or services supplied to the Union provided that if such Member is a Trustee Clause 5.3 shall apply;
 - 5.2.3 interest on money lent by any Member to the Union at a reasonable and proper rate; and
 - 5.2.4 any reasonable and proper rent for premises let by any Member to the Union.
- 5.3 Except as provided below no Trustee may sell goods, services or any interest in land to the Union; be employed by, or receive any remuneration from, the Union; or receive any other financial benefit from the Union. This shall not prevent any payment in good faith by the Union of:
- 5.3.1 any payments made to any Trustee or Connected Person in their capacity as a beneficiary of the Union;
 - 5.3.2 reasonable and proper out of pocket expenses of the Trustees;
 - 5.3.3 reasonable and proper remuneration to any **Sabbatical** Trustee or Connected Person for any goods or services supplied to the Union on the instructions of the Trustees provided that:



- (a) for the avoidance of doubt, the authorisation under this provision shall extend to the remuneration of **Sabbatical** Trustees and Connected Persons under contracts of employment with the Union;
 - (b) subject to Clause 5.3.3(a), the authorisation under this provision shall not extend to the service of acting as Trustee;
 - (c) if the person being remunerated is a Trustee the procedure described in Clause **88** (Conflicts of Interest) must be followed in considering the appointment of the Trustee and in relation to any other decisions regarding the remuneration authorised by this provision;
 - (d) if the person being remunerated is a Connected Person the procedure described in Clause **88** (Conflicts of Interest) must be followed by the relevant Trustee in relation to any decisions regarding such Connected Person;
 - (e) subject to Clause 5.6, this provision may not apply to more than half of the Trustees in any financial year (and for these purposes such provision shall be treated as applying to a Trustee if it applies to a person who is a Connected Person in relation to that Trustee); and
 - (f) at all times the provisions of the Education Act are complied with;
- 5.3.4 interest on money lent by any Trustee or Connected Person to the Union at a reasonable and proper rate;
- 5.3.5 any reasonable and proper rent for premises let by any Trustee or Connected Person to the Union;
- 5.3.6 reasonable and proper premiums in respect of indemnity insurance effected in accordance with Clause 4.29;
- 5.3.7 any payments made to any Trustee or **Sabbatical** under the indemnity provisions set out at Clause **102**; and
- 5.3.8 any payments authorised in writing by the Charity Commission.



- 5.4 In Clauses 5.2 and 5.3, references to the Union shall be read as references to the Union and/or any Subsidiary Company.
- 5.5 For any transaction authorised by Clause 5.2 or Clause 5.3, the Trustee's duty (arising under the Companies Act 2006) to avoid a conflict of interest with the Union shall be disapplied provided the relevant provisions of Clause 5.2 or Clause 5.3 have been complied with.
- 5.6 Where a vacancy arises on the Board of Trustees with the result that Clause 5.3.3 applies to more than half of the Trustees, the Union may continue to pay remuneration to its **Sabbatical** Trustees and any Connected Persons receiving remuneration in accordance with Clause 5.3.3 provided that the Union uses all reasonable endeavours to fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

Dissolution

6. If any property remains after the Union has been wound up or dissolved and all debts and liabilities have been satisfied, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Union. It shall instead be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having similar objects to those of the Union and which prohibits the distribution of its or their income and property among its or their members to an extent at least as great as this Constitution imposes upon the Union. The institution or institutions, which are to benefit, shall be chosen by the Members of the Union at or before the time of winding up or dissolution.

Amendments to the Constitution

7. The Trustees and the Royal College of Art shall review this Constitution every five years, with effect from the date that this Constitution comes into effect.
8. No amendment of this Constitution shall be made which would have the effect of the Union ceasing to be a charity.



9. Clause 3 (Objects) and Clause 5 (Limitation on private benefits) may not be amended without the prior written consent of the Charity Commission.
10. Save where the amendment to the Constitution is a consequential amendment due to a change in the Bye-Laws (for example, the number or heading names of Clauses), the Constitution may be amended by:
 - 10.1 a resolution of the Members passed at a general meeting by at least 75% of those present and voting; or
 - 10.2 a resolution passed by a 75% majority of the Members voting in a Referendum provided that at least 15% of the total registered Members cast a vote in the Referendum

provided the Royal College of Art approves the amendments (as required for the purposes of compliance with Section 22 of the Education Act).



Membership

Members

11. The Members of the Union shall be as follows:
 - 11.1 each and every Student who has not opted out by notifying the Royal College of Art of **their** wish not to be a Member of the Union; and
 - 11.2 the **Sabbatical** Trustees of the Union.
12. Membership shall not be transferable and shall cease on death. A Member shall automatically cease to be a Member of the Union if:
 - 12.1 **they** cease to be a Student;
 - 12.2 **they** cease to be an **Sabbatical** Trustee;
 - 12.3 **they** opt out of membership by giving written notice to the Union in accordance with the Bye-Laws; or
 - 12.4 in the case of Members other than the **Sabbatical** Trustees, a resolution is passed by a majority vote of the **Students' Union Assembly** resolving that the Member be expelled on the ground that **their** continued membership is harmful to or is likely to become harmful to the interests of the Union. Such a resolution shall not be passed unless the Member has been given at least 14 clear days' notice that the resolution is to be proposed, specifying the circumstances alleged to justify expulsion, and has been afforded a reasonable opportunity of being heard by or of making written representations to the **Students' Union Assembly**.
13. Members' details shall be entered in a register of Members.
14. Members of the Union shall be entitled to the benefits set out in the Code of Practice.



Associate Members

15. Associate Members of the Union shall be as follows, subject to application procedures as agreed with the RCA:
 - 15.1 each and every Alumni who has opted to register with the Royal College of Art Students' Union for associate membership; and
 - 15.2 each and every Staff member employed at the Royal College of Art who has not opted out by notifying the Royal College of Art of **their** wish not to be an Associate Member of the Union; and
 - 15.3 each and every Student registered at Imperial College London who is a member of Imperial College Union; and
 - 15.4 each and every Student registered at the Royal College of Music who is a member of the Royal College of Music Students' Association; and
 - 15.5 each and every registered member of the National Union of Students
16. The **Students' Union Assembly** may elect to and remove from associate membership of the Union such persons, or group of persons, as they consider to be fit. The **Students' Union Assembly** shall determine the form of application for associate membership, and associate membership shall be subject to such rights and obligations as the **Students' Union Assembly** consider appropriate.
17. Associate members shall not be Members for the purposes of this Constitution and shall not be entitled to vote on any matter.



Referenda

18. A Referendum may be called on any issue by:
 - 18.1 a resolution of the Trustees;
 - 18.2 a majority vote of the **Students' Union Assembly**; or
 - 18.3 a Secure Petition signed by at least 10% of the Members.
19. Subject to Clause 10.2, a resolution may only be passed by Referendum if at least 15% of Members cast a vote in the Referendum and a majority of the votes cast are in favour of the resolution.
20. Referenda shall be conducted in accordance with this Constitution and the Bye-Laws.
21. Subject to Clause **58**, the Members may set Policy by Referenda. Policy set by Referenda may overturn Policy set either by the Members in general meeting or by the **Students' Union Assembly**.



General Meetings

Annual General Meeting

22. The Union shall hold an Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) once in each calendar year. Not more than 18 months shall pass between the date of one **AGM** and the next. The **AGM** shall be held at such time and place as the Trustees shall think suitable to allow the maximum number of Members to attend. The **AGM** should be held in conjunction with a **Students' Union Assembly** Meeting.

Other General Meetings

23. The Trustees may call a general meeting at any time. The Trustees shall call a general meeting on receiving a requisition to that effect, signed by at least 10% of Members having the right to attend and vote at general meetings.

Location of Meetings

24. **AGM** and general meetings may be carried out at one single venue or simultaneously at a maximum of three separate venues with a video, audio or other real-time link between all of the venues. At the start of such meetings, each venue must indicate by majority vote that they are satisfied with the meeting set-up and technology.

Length of Notice

25. A general meeting shall be called by at least 7 clear days' written notice.



Contents of Notice

26. Every notice calling a general meeting shall specify the place, day and time of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted. If the meeting is an **AGM**, the notice must say so and the business to be transacted shall include:
 - 26.1 ratification of minutes of previous AGM;
 - 26.2 receiving the report of the Trustees on the Union's activities since the previous AGM;
 - 26.3 receiving the accounts of the Union for the previous financial year;
 - 26.4 appointment of the auditors;
 - 26.5 approving the list of affiliations of the Union; and
 - 26.6 open questions to the Trustees by the Members.

Service of Notice

27. Notice of general meetings shall be given to every Member and to the Trustees and any patron of the Union.

Quorum

28. No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present. For the **AGM**, quorum will be the same as **Students' Union Assembly**; namely **25 %** of **Students' Union Assembly** Members.
29. For other General Meetings 10% of persons entitled to vote upon the business to be transacted, each being a Member (but excluding Trustees), shall be a quorum. If such a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting shall stand adjourned to the same day in the next week at the same



time and place or to such other day, time and place as the Trustees may determine.

Chair

30. There shall be a Chair for the AGM who shall normally not be a member of the Union. It shall be the job of the Trustees to select a Chair as part of their duties in organising the meeting. In the absence of a Chair the Members present and entitled to vote shall choose one of their number to be Chair.

Attendance

31. A Trustee may, even if not a Member, attend and speak at any general meeting.

Adjournment

32. The chair may, with the consent of a meeting at which a quorum is present (and shall if so directed by the meeting), adjourn the meeting from time to time and from place to place, but no business shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than business which might properly have been transacted at the meeting had the adjournment not taken place. When a meeting is adjourned for fourteen days or more, at least seven clear days' notice shall be given specifying the time and place of the adjourned meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted. Otherwise it shall not be necessary to give any such notice.

Votes of Members at General Meetings

33. Every Member has the right to attend general meetings and the right to vote. A resolution put to the vote of a general meeting



shall be decided on a show of hands, and every Member shall have one vote.

34. Every resolution put to the vote of a general meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast unless this Constitution provides otherwise.



Trustees

Appointment of Trustees

35. The Trustees shall be made up of the following persons:
- 35.1 not more than 3 **Sabbatical** Trustees, elected in accordance with Clause 36;
 - 35.2 not more than 4 Student Trustees, elected in accordance with Clause 41;
 - 35.3 not more than 4 External Trustees, appointed in accordance with Clause 45.
 - 35.4 **Sabbatical** and Student Trustees should always outnumber External Trustees

Sabbatical Trustees

36. Up to 3 **Sabbatical** Trustees shall be elected by secret ballot by the Members of the Union at an election to be held in accordance with the Bye-Laws. The **Sabbatical** Trustees shall be elected to posts set out in the Bye-Laws.
37. The **Sabbatical** Trustees shall remain in office for a term of one year commencing in accordance with the Bye-Laws. The term of office may be shorter or longer on a transitional basis to coincide with an alteration of the year start or end. Subject to a transitional change in the year of office, a **Sabbatical** Trustee may be re-elected for a maximum further term of one year by the Members of the Union at an election to be held in accordance with the Bye-Laws. For the avoidance of doubt, a **Sabbatical** Trustee's terms of office may be either consecutive or non-consecutive.
38. Each **Sabbatical** Trustee must be a Student or a **Sabbatical** Trustee at the time of **their** election. A **Sabbatical** Trustee shall become a Member of the Union on commencement of **their** appointment or re-appointment as an **Sabbatical** Trustee. Such membership shall



cease when the **Sabbatical** Trustee ceases to be a **Sabbatical** Trustee.

39. The **Sabbatical** Trustees shall be deemed to be "major union office holders" for the purposes of Section 22 of the Education Act.
40. At the same time as commencing the term of office as a Trustee, the **Sabbatical** Trustee will enter into a contract of employment with the Union for a term to be determined by this Constitution. The duties and method of remuneration of each **Sabbatical** Trustee shall be as set out in the Bye-Laws.

Student Trustees

41. Subject to Clause 42 below, up to 4 Student Trustees shall be elected by the **Students' Union Assembly** provided that the election of each Student Trustee is ratified by a 75% majority vote of the **Students' Union Assembly**. For the avoidance of doubt, such election shall not take effect until it has been ratified by the **Students' Union Assembly**.
42. Each Student Trustee must be a Student at the time of **their** election (and shall continue to be a Student for the duration of **their** term as a Student Trustee).
43. Student Trustees shall remain in office for a term of one year commencing in accordance with the Bye-Laws. The term of office may be shorter or longer on a transitional basis to coincide with the alteration of the year start or end.
44. A Student Trustee may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

External Trustees

45. Up to 4 External Trustees shall be appointed by a 75% majority vote of the **Students' Union Assembly**. For the avoidance of doubt, such appointment shall not take effect until it has been ratified by the **Students' Union Assembly**.



46. Unless their appointment is terminated in accordance with Clauses **48 to 52**, External Trustees shall remain in office for a term of up to four years commencing in accordance with the Bye-Laws.
47. External Trustees may serve a maximum of two terms, which may either be consecutive or non-consecutive.

Disqualification, Resignation and Removal of Trustees

48. The office of a Trustee shall be vacated if:
 - 48.1 **they** become prohibited by law from being a charity trustee;
 - 48.2 in the case of a **Sabbatical** Trustee, **they** cease to be an employee of the Union;
 - 48.3 in the case of a Student Trustee, **they** cease to be a Student;
 - 48.4 **they** resign by notice to the Union (but only if at least four Trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect);
 - 48.5 the Trustees reasonably believe **they are** suffering from mental or physical disorder and is incapable of acting as a trustee and they resolve that **they** be removed from office;
 - 48.6 **they** fail to attend three consecutive meetings of the Trustees and in the opinion of the Trustees there are no mitigating circumstances for that failure and the Trustees therefore resolve that **they** be removed for this reason; or
 - 48.7 **they are** removed from office under Clauses **49 to 52**.

Removal of Trustees by the Members or the **Students' Union Assembly**

49. The office of a Trustee shall be vacated if:



- 49.1 a motion of no confidence in the Trustee is passed by a simple majority of the Members voting in a Referendum, provided that at least 15% of Members cast a vote in the Referendum. Such a motion shall only be triggered by a Secure Petition of no confidence signed by at least 10% of Members; or
- 49.2 a motion of no confidence in the Trustee is passed by a two thirds majority in a vote of the **Students' Union Assembly**.

Removal of Trustees by the Board

50. The office of an External Trustee shall be vacated if a resolution of no confidence is passed by the Trustees. For the avoidance of doubt, the Trustee concerned and any Trustee who has a conflict of interest in relation to the matter shall not vote on this resolution and the quorum shall be adjusted accordingly in accordance with Clause **78**.

Rights of Removed Trustee

51. A resolution to remove a Trustee in accordance with Clauses **48 to 50** 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.
52. A Trustee removed from office in accordance with Clauses **48 to 50** 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 be Members who are not Trustees or members of the **Students' Union Assembly**. The selection of the members of the Appeals Panel and its procedures shall be set out in the Bye-Laws. The Union may consult with NUS in relation to the appeals process and in particular the appointment of independent persons to the Appeals Panel.



Replacement of Trustees

53. If an **Sabbatical** Trustee resigns, is disqualified or removed from office at any time prior to the commencement of the Academic Year, the vacancy that results on the board of Trustees shall be filled in accordance with the Bye-Laws.
54. If an **Sabbatical** Trustee resigns, is disqualified or removed from office after the commencement of the Academic Year the vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the Bye-Laws. Any person elected under this Clause may be required to assume the responsibilities of the **Sabbatical** Trustee.
55. If a Student Trustee resigns, is disqualified or removed from office, a Student Trustee may be elected to the vacancy in accordance with Clause **41**.
56. If an External Trustee resigns, is disqualified or removed from office, an External Trustee shall be appointed to the vacancy in accordance with Clause **45**.

Powers of the Trustees

57. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the management and administration of the Union and (subject to the Education Act, this Constitution and the Bye-Laws) may exercise all the powers of the Union. A meeting of the Trustees at which a quorum is present may exercise all powers exercisable by the Trustees.
58. No alteration of this Constitution or the Bye-Laws shall invalidate any prior act of the Trustees which would have been valid if that alteration had not been made.
59. The Board's powers under Clause **57** shall include but not be limited to responsibility for:
 - 59.1 the governance of the Union; **and**
 - 59.2 the budget of the Union; and



59.3 the strategy of the Union.

59.4 establishing, publishing and administering the complaints procedure required by section 22(2) of the Education Act.

60. The Board of Trustees may decline any decision and Policy made by the Members in general meeting or Referendum or by the **Students' Union Assembly** which the Trustees consider (in their absolute discretion):

60.1 has or may have financial implications for the Union;

60.2 is or may be in breach of, contrary to or otherwise inconsistent with charity or education law or any other legal requirements (including ultra vires);

60.3 is not or may not be in the best interests of the Union or all or any of its charitable objects; or

60.4 will or may otherwise affect the discharge of any or all of the responsibilities referred to in Clause 59.

61. The continuing Trustees or a sole continuing Trustee may act notwithstanding any vacancies in their number. However, if and so long as the number of Trustees is less than the number fixed as the quorum in Clause 78, the Trustees may only act to increase the number of Trustees (including by arranging an election) so that there is a quorum.

62. All acts done by a meeting of Trustees, or of a committee of the Trustees, shall be valid, even if it is later discovered that any Trustee who participated in the vote:

62.1 was not properly appointed;

62.2 was disqualified from holding office;

62.3 had vacated office; or

62.4 was not entitled to vote.



if, without the vote of that Trustee and without that Trustee being counted in the quorum, the act was done by a majority of the Trustees at a quorate meeting.

Delegation of Trustees' powers

63. The Trustees may, by power of attorney or otherwise, appoint any person to be the agent of the Union for such purposes and on such conditions as they determine.
64. The Trustees may delegate any of their powers or functions to any committee or the implementation of any of their resolutions and day-to-day management of the affairs of the Union to any person or committee in accordance with the conditions set out in this Constitution.

Delegation to committees

65. In the case of delegation to committees:
 - 65.1 the resolution making that delegation shall specify those who shall serve or be asked to serve on such committee (though the resolution may allow the committee to make co-options up to a specified number);
 - 65.2 subject to Clause 67, the composition of any such committee shall be entirely in the discretion of the Trustees and may comprise such of their number (if any) as the resolution may specify;
 - 65.3 the deliberations of any such committee shall be reported regularly to the Trustees and any resolution passed or decision taken by any such committee shall be reported forthwith to the Trustees and for that purpose every committee shall appoint a secretary;
 - 65.4 all delegations under this Clause shall be revocable at any time; and



- 65.5 the Trustees may make such regulations and impose such terms and conditions and give such mandates to any such committee or committees as they may from time to time think fit.
66. The Trustees shall establish the following committees (which is a non-exhaustive list) in accordance with their powers under Clauses 63 and 64:
- 66.1 Finance Committee; Remuneration Committee; **Sabbatical Development Committee;**

Delegation of day-to-day management powers to the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff**

67. In the case of delegation of the day-to-day management of the Union to the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff**:
- 67.1 the delegated power shall be to manage the Union by implementing the policy and strategy adopted by and within a budget approved by the Trustees and if applicable to advise the Trustees in relation to such policy, strategy and budget;
- 67.2 the Trustees shall provide the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff** with a description of **their** role and the extent of **their** authority;
- 67.3 the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff** shall report regularly to the Trustees on the activities undertaken in managing the Union and provide them regularly with management accounts sufficient to explain the financial position of the Union; and
- 67.4 the Trustees shall provide the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff** with a performance management structure to aid **their** work plan and development.



Bank Account

68. For the avoidance of doubt, the Trustees may (in accordance with Clauses 63 and 64) delegate all financial matters to any committee provided that such committee shall include at least one Trustee. The Trustees may empower such committee to resolve upon the operation of any bank account according to such mandate as it shall think fit provided that the signature of at least one Trustee shall be required for cheques above a certain amount as set out in the Bye-Laws and provided always that no committee shall incur expenditure on behalf of the Union except in accordance with a budget which has been approved by the Trustees.

Proceedings of Committees

69. The meetings and proceedings of any committee shall be governed by the provisions of this Constitution regulating the meetings and proceedings of the Trustees so far as the same are applicable and are not superseded by any Bye-Laws made by the Trustees and the **Students' Union Assembly**.

Bye-Laws

70. The Trustees and the **Students' Union Assembly** shall have the power from time to time to jointly make, repeal or amend Bye-Laws as to the management of the Union and its working practices provided that such Bye-Laws shall not be inconsistent with this Constitution.



Proceedings of Trustees

71. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and the Bye-Laws, the Trustees may regulate their proceedings as they think fit.

Trustees' meetings

72. The Trustees shall hold a minimum of three meetings in any Academic Year.
73. Two Trustees may, and the **most senior member of the permanent Union staff** at the request of two Trustees shall, call a meeting of the Trustees.
74. Guests or observers can attend meetings of the Trustees at the discretion of the Chair.

Length of notice

75. A Trustees' meeting shall be called by at least seven clear days' notice unless either:
- 75.1 all the Trustees agree to shorter notice; or
- 75.2 urgent circumstances require shorter notice.

Contents of notice

76. Every notice calling a Trustees' meeting shall specify the place, day and time of the meeting and the general particulars of all business to be considered at such meeting.



Service of notice

77. Notice of Trustees' meetings shall be sent to each Trustee by post or by electronic communication.

Quorum

78. The quorum for Trustees' meetings shall be four and such quorum must include at least two **Sabbatical** Trustees. Where the resolution or issue under discussion concerns a matter in respect of which some or all of the Trustees have a conflict of interest, the quorum shall be four.

Chair and Deputy Chair

79. The Trustees shall appoint ~~an External~~ Trustee to be Chair of the Trustees and may at any time remove **them** from office.
80. The **Trustees shall appoint a Trustee to** be the Deputy Chair of the Trustees. The role of the Deputy Chair will be to support the Chair.
81. The role of Chair at Trustee Meetings may be delegated to another Trustee with the agreement of the Trustees that were present at the previous meeting.
82. The Chair and Deputy Chair jointly set the agenda for Trustee Meetings.

Decision making by Trustees at meetings

83. Questions arising at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes. In the case of an equality of votes, the **Chair** shall be entitled to a casting vote in addition to any other vote **they** may have.



Virtual meetings

84. A Trustees' meeting may be held by telephone or by televisual or other electronic or virtual means agreed by resolution of the Trustees in which all participants may communicate simultaneously with all other participants.

Trustee decisions without a meeting

85. The Trustees may take a unanimous decision without a Trustees' meeting by indicating to each other by any means, including without limitation by electronic communication, that they share a common view on a matter. Such a decision may, but need not, take the form of a resolution in writing, copies of which have been signed by each Trustee or to which each Trustee has otherwise indicated agreement in writing.
86. A Trustees' resolution which is made in accordance with Clause 85 shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been passed at a meeting of the Trustees duly convened and held, provided the following conditions are complied with:
- 86.1 approval from each Trustee must be received by one person being either such person as all the Trustees shall have nominated in advance for that purpose or such other person as volunteers if necessary ("the Recipient"), which person may for the avoidance of doubt, be one of the Trustees;
- 86.2 following receipt of response from all of the Trustees, the Recipient shall communicate to all of the Trustees by any means whether the resolution has been formally approved by the Trustees in accordance with this Clause;
- 86.3 the date of the decision shall be the date of the communication from the Recipient confirming formal approval; and
- 86.4 the Recipient prepares a minute of the decision in accordance with Clause 94.



OR:

Majority decisions without Trustees' meeting

87. The Trustees may, in the circumstances outlined in this Clause, make a simple majority decision without holding a Trustees' meeting.

87.1 If:

87.1.1 a Trustee has become aware of a matter on which the Trustees need to take a decision;

87.1.2 that Trustee has taken all reasonable steps to make all the other Trustees aware of the matter and the decision;

87.1.3 the Trustees have had a reasonable opportunity to communicate their views on the matter and the decision to each other; and

87.1.4 a simple majority of the Trustees vote in favour of a particular decision on that matter

a decision of the Trustees may be taken by majority and shall be as valid and effectual as if it had been taken at a Trustees' meeting duly convened and held.

87.2 Trustees participating in the taking of a majority decision otherwise than at a Trustees' meeting in accordance with this Clause:

87.2.1 may be in different places, and may participate at different times; and

87.2.2 may communicate with each other by any means.

87.3 No decision shall be taken by the Trustees in accordance with this Clause unless a quorum participates in the decision-making process. The quorum for Trustees' decision-making in accordance with this Clause shall be the same as the quorum for Trustees' meetings as set out in Clause 78.



87.4 The Chair or such other Trustee as shall be appointed by the Trustees shall be the chair of the process of decision-making in accordance with this Clause. The process shall include:

87.4.1 circulation of the proposed decision with an indication of the time period for discussion and the date by which Trustees are asked to cast their votes;

87.4.2 the nomination of a person to whom all Trustees' votes must be communicated;

87.4.3 if a majority of the Trustees votes in favour of the decision, the nominated person shall communicate the decision to all the Trustees and the date of the decision shall be the date on which the vote is cast to bring the number of Trustees voting in favour into the required majority; and

87.4.4 the nominated person must prepare a minute of the decision in accordance with **Clause 94**.

87.5 In the case of an equality of votes in any decision-making process in accordance with this Clause, the chair shall be entitled to a casting vote in addition to any other vote **they** may have but this does not apply if, in accordance with the **Clauses**, the chair or specified Trustee is not to be counted as participating in the decision-making process for quorum, voting or agreement purposes.

Conflicts of Interest

88. Whenever a matter is to be discussed at a meeting or decided in accordance with **Clause 87** and a Trustee has a Personal Interest in respect of that matter then **they** must:

88.1 declare **their** interest to the Trustees;

88.2 remain only for such part of the meeting as in the view of the other Trustees is necessary to inform the debate;



- 88.3 not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting or decision-making process; and
- 88.4 withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the matter.
89. If any question arises as to whether a Trustee has a Personal Interest, the question shall be decided by a majority decision of the other Trustees.
90. In particular, Clause 88 shall apply to any matter that may directly or indirectly relate to the position of an **Sabbatical** Trustee who is or is to be remunerated as an employee by the Union.



Students' Union Assembly

91. The **Students' Union Assembly** shall have the authority to:
 - 91.1 represent the voice of the Students;
 - 91.2 subject to Clause **60**, set the Policy of the Union and refer Policy to Referenda of the Members (in accordance with the Bye-Laws);
 - 91.3 make, repeal and amend the Bye-Laws jointly with the Trustees in accordance with Clause **70**;
 - 91.4 receive a quarterly report from the Trustees; and
 - 91.5 appoint associate members in accordance with Clause 15 and the Bye-Laws.
92. The composition and proceedings of the **Students' Union Assembly** shall be set out in the Bye-Laws. No Member may hold more than one seat on the **Students' Union Assembly** at any one time.



General

Irregularities

93. The proceedings at any meeting or the passing of a written resolution or the making of any decision shall not be invalidated by reason of any accidental informality or irregularity (including any accidental omission to give or any non-receipt of notice) or by reason of any business being considered which is not specified in the notice.

Minutes

94. The Trustees shall keep minutes of:
- 94.1 all proceedings at general meetings of the Union and of meetings of the Trustees, and of committees of Trustees, including the names of the Trustees present at each such meeting; and
- 94.2 all resolutions of the Members and of the Trustees
- and any such minute, if purported to be signed by the chair of the meeting at which the proceedings were had, or by the chair of the next succeeding meeting, shall, as against any Member or Trustee of the Union, be sufficient evidence of the proceedings or the resolution.
95. The minutes of the meetings referred to in Clause 94 above shall normally be considered open and shall be available to the Members on the Union's website, except where those minutes relate to any reserved or confidential matters, including without limitation staff-related or disciplinary matters. Copies of the minutes shall also be kept in the Union's offices.



Accounts and Reports

96. The Trustees shall comply with the requirements of the Education Act and the Charities Act 1993 as to keeping financial records, the audit or examinations of accounts.
97. The Members of the Union have the right to ask the Trustees questions in writing about the content of any documents referred to in Clause 96.

Notices

98. Subject to Clause 99, any notice to be given to or by any person pursuant to this Constitution shall be in writing except that a notice calling a meeting of the Trustees need not be in writing.
99. The Union may give any notice to a Member either:
 - 99.1 personally;
 - 99.2 by sending it by post in a prepaid envelope addressed to the Member at **their** address;
 - 99.3 by leaving it at the address of the Member; or
 - 99.4 by electronic communication to the Member's address; and
 - 99.5 by posting it on the Union's website.
100. A Member present at any meeting of the Union shall be deemed to have received notice of the meeting and, where requisite, of the purpose for which it was called.
101. Proof that an envelope containing a notice was properly addressed, prepaid and posted shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given. A notice shall be deemed to be given at the expiration of 48 hours after the envelope containing it was posted or, in the case of a notice contained in an electronic communication, at the expiration of 48 hours after the time it was sent or in the case of a notice



posted on the Union’s website at the expiration of 48 hours after it was posted.

Indemnity

102. Without prejudice to any indemnity to which a Trustee may otherwise be entitled, every Trustee shall and every other officer or auditor of the Union may be indemnified out of the assets of the Union against any liability incurred by **them** in defending any proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in **their** favour or in which **they are** acquitted or in connection with any application in which relief is granted to **them** by the court from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the affairs of the Union, and against all costs, charges, losses, expenses or liabilities incurred by **them** in the execution and discharge of **their** duties or in relation thereto.

Trustees’ Indemnity Insurance

103. The Trustees shall have power to resolve pursuant to Clause 4.29 to effect trustees’ indemnity insurance, despite their interest in such policy.

Definitions and Interpretations


104. In this Constitution, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

	Term	Meaning
104.1	“Academic Year”	the period between September in one Year to June in the next Year determined by the Union as the period during which Students are



		required to be registered with the Royal College of Art. Each Academic Year is for the time being divided into three terms;
104.2	“Operations Committee”	the committee set up in accordance with the Bye-Laws;
104.3	“Board of Trustees” or “Board”	the board of Trustees of the Union;
104.4	“Bye-Laws”	the bye-laws setting out the working practices of the Union made from time to time in accordance with Clause 70;
104.5	“Chair”	the chair of the Board of Trustees, who shall be the appointed External trustee in accordance with Clause 79;
104.6	“clear days”	in relation to the period of a notice, that period excluding the day when the notice is given or deemed to be given and the day for which it is given or on which it is to take effect;
104.7	“Code of Practice”	the code of practice relating to the Royal College of Art’s obligations under Section 22 of the Education Act;
104.8	“Connected Person”	any person falling within one of the following categories and where payment to that person might result in the relevant Trustee obtaining benefit: (a) any spouse, civil partner, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild of a Trustee; or (b) the spouse or civil partner of any person in (a); or (c) any other



		person in a relationship with a Trustee which may reasonably be regarded as equivalent to such a relationship; or (d) any company or LLP or firm of which a Trustee is a paid director, member, partner or employee, or shareholder holding more than 1% of the capital;
104.9	“Constitution”	this constitution of the Union;
104.10	“Deputy Chair”	the deputy chair of the Board of Trustees, who shall be appointed in accordance with Clause 78;
104.11	“Education Act”	the Education Act 1994; 
104.12	“External Trustee”	a Trustee appointed in accordance with Clause 45 who for the avoidance of doubt shall not be deemed to be either a major union office holder or a sabbatical union office holder for the purposes of section 22 of the Education Act;
104.13	“in writing”	means written, printed or transmitted writing including by electronic communication;
104.14	“Members”	members of the Union being Students at the Royal College of Art as further defined in Clause 11.1 and the Sabbatical Trustees;
104.15	“NUS”	National Union of Students;
104.16	“Office”	the head office of the Union;
104.17	“Sabbatical Trustee”	a Trustee elected in accordance with Clause 36;
104.18	“Personal Interest”	a financial interest or an interest that does not arise in the ordinary



			course of being a Member or a Trustee (for example, being a member of a club or society);
104.19	"Policy"		representative and campaigning policy set by Referenda or the Students' Union Assembly in accordance with Clauses 18 to 21 and Clause 91.2 respectively;
104.20	"RAG"		the raise and give society which develops Students by providing them with an opportunity to raise funds for charitable causes;
104.21	"Referendum"		a ballot in which all Members of the Union are entitled to cast a vote, the protocol for which is set out in the Bye-Laws;
104.22	"Secure Petition"		a written request to the Union which shall be fixed in a pre-arranged place or places or held securely on-line;
104.23	"Student"		any individual who is formally registered for an approved programme of study provided by the Royal College of Art. For the avoidance of doubt, the Royal College of Art shall determine whether or not an individual has student status;
104.24	"Students' Assembly"	Union	the Student body elected by and from Students constituted in accordance with this Constitution and the Bye-Laws of the Union;
104.25	"Student Trustee"		a Trustee elected in accordance with Clause 41 who is a Student and for the avoidance of doubt shall not, for the purposes of



Section 22 of the Education Act,
be a major union office holder;

- 104.26 “Subsidiary Company” any company in which the Union holds more than 50% of the shares, controls more than 50% of the voting rights attached to the shares or has the right to appoint a majority of the board of the company;
- 104.27 “Trustee” and the **Sabbatical** Trustees, the “Trustees” Student Trustees and the External Trustees;
- 104.28 “Union” Royal College of Art Students’ Union; and
- 104.29 “**most senior member of the permanent Union staff**” the Senior Manager of the union who is appointed by the Board of Trustees;
- 104.30 “The Royal College of Art” The Royal College of Art, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1967.

105. Words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and words importing the masculine shall include the feminine and vice versa.

106. Any reference to a statute, statutory provision or subordinate legislation (“legislation”) shall (except where the context otherwise requires) be construed as referring to such legislation as amended and in force from time to time and to any legislation which (either with or without modification) re-enacts, consolidates or enacts in rewritten form any such legislation.

This document was last amended at a full meeting of the RCA SU Board of Trustees Meeting on the 16th of March 2016.