

Byelaw E	Student Communities
Version: 1	Effective Date: 21/09/2026

Purpose
1. This Byelaw has been established to set out how the Union will establish and operate Student Communities at Royal Holloway.
Definition
2. Student Communities are politically autonomous bodies within the Union, responsible for the advancement of education by providing educational, social, cultural (including political), sporting and recreational activities and forums for students at Royal Holloway. 3. There are number of forms these communities can take, they are: 3.1. Inclusion Communities 3.2. Academic Communities 3.3. Societies Communities 3.4. Sports (Clubs) Communities 4. Student Communities are established under the following core principles: 4.1. They are ratified by the Union by this definition, and therefore have access to shared funding and support services provided by the Union 4.2. They are student-led, providing core leadership and development opportunities for members 4.3. They are regulated by the Union to ensure the safety and success of the group and its members 4.4. They are intended to exist for a substantial period of time, most likely more than one academic year.
Membership
5. Each community can define how their membership model is constructed. Where groups and their activities do not require significant financial investment they are encouraged to offer free or low priced memberships. 6. The Union may intervene with groups membership models if it can be evidenced that financial sustainability or safe is as risk. 7. Student members may join, and lead, a student community, upon completing a membership process.
Student Leadership
8. The Union will set out a process for communities that wish to have a leadership or membership structure outside of the principal roles and standard membership. The presumption is that within the boundaries of its Articles and charitable obligations the Union will try to grant flexibility to, where appropriate, Student communities on how they wish to operate.

9. The leaders must provide the Union with evidence that the group:

- 9.1. Is run democratically
- 9.2. Accounts for its finances
- 9.3. Keeps accurate records of its activity and Health and Safety is managed
- 9.4. Acts in line with the aims stated at the time of its commencement
- 9.5. Acts in line with appropriate RHSU policies and procedures.

10. Groups will have the power to co-opt roles into their leadership structure, the Union will set out a process by which this can happen at the start of the year.

11. Appointed roles may be removed by a vote of no confidence, in which all elected committee members of the Student Community can vote. Elected roles may be removed by a vote of no confidence, in which all student members of the Community can vote. In all cases, these will be overseen by the Union's Returning Officer, who will issue specific guidance.

Funding of Communities

12. Communities will manage their own finances based on income and expenditure they wish to take on as a group. The Union will support them and provide training to ensure they can be financially sustainable.

13. The Union will also set an annual grant process for Student Communities and set priorities for its distribution to support their aims and objectives.

14. The Union may use participatory budgeting, focus groups, meetings of student groups, polls, meetings of student group leaders, or other mechanisms, to decide how funding may be distributed

Creation and Removal

15. In consultation with the Board, the Union Council will determine any specific criteria for creation of new communities and will publish the the process to members. This must include:

- 15.1. A consideration of the purpose of the group, and how its activities meet the charitable objects of the Union and comply with wider Charity Law.
- 15.2. A consideration of the key activities proposed to be undertaken by the group, and the relevant risks associated with this
- 15.3. A consideration of the financial plan for the group, and how it intends to fund its activities
- 15.4. A consideration of potential duplication, and how it is different from established groups

16. Any Student Community may be removed by the Union Council under the following conditions:

- 16.1. If the Community becomes dormant with no visible activities or leadership.
- 16.2. If the Community fails to elect a committee or fails to fill vacancies for the key leadership roles.
- 16.3. If the Community requests to be removed, after a vote in which all members can participate.

17. For the avoidance of doubt, any Community may also be removed under provisions set out in the Members' Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints and Discipline

18. All Student Communities are encouraged to provide for their own complaints and disciplinary procedure within their constitutions if applicable.

19. The Union would usually expect that a concern involving Student Community could be settled informally in the first instance. Any person or group considering a complaint or alleging misconduct is urged to contact the Union to consider what options for informal resolution may be available.

20. For the avoidance of doubt, the Union's own complaints and disciplinary procedure is applicable to Student Communities.