

Byelaw G: Student Groups

1. Purpose

This Byelaw has been established to provide further details regarding the operation of student groups, under Article 21 of the Constitution.

2. Definition

Student Groups are politically autonomous bodies within the Union, responsible for providing social, cultural (including political), sporting and recreational activities and forums for students at Royal Holloway.

Student Groups are established under the following core principles:

- i. They are ratified by their peers as meeting this definition, and therefore have access to shared funding and support services provided by the Union
- ii. They are student-led, providing core leadership and development opportunities for members
- iii. They are regulated by the Union to ensure the safety and success of the group and its members
- iv. They are intended to exist for a substantial period of time, most likely more than one academic year.

3. Ratification

In consultation with the Board, the Societies, Sports & Opportunities (SSO) Executive will determine any specific criteria for ratification, and will publish the application process to members. This must include:

- i. A consideration of the purpose of the group, and how its activities meet the charitable objects of the Union
- ii. A consideration of the key activities proposed to be undertaken by the group, and the relevant risks associated with this
- iii. A consideration of the financial plan for the group, and how it intends to fund its activities
- iv. A consideration of potential duplication, and how it is different from established groups

Any Student Group may be de ratified by the SSO Executive under the following conditions:

- v. If the Student Group is dormant for an academic year, with no visible activities
- vi. If the Student Group fails to elect a committee, or fails to fill vacancies for the three principal committee roles
- vii. If the Student Group requests to be de ratified, after a vote in which all paid members are able to participate

For the avoidance of doubt, any Student Group may also be de ratified under provisions set out in the Members' Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Membership

Student members may join, and lead, a student group, upon completing a membership application process and payment of a fee, to be annually determined by the Union's Board of Trustees (or delegated subcommittee).

The SSO Executive will consider applications from Student Groups which wish to have a membership and leadership structure aligned to certain protected characteristics. This

consideration will require a Student Group to continue to observe all other regulations and procedures that apply to its operation

5. Student Leadership

All Student Groups must elect their own leadership, who will be accountable to the Union and its members for the success and good conduct of the club or society. The elected leaders must provide the Union with evidence that the student group:

- i. Is run democratically (e.g. the majority of its voting committee roles are elected, and there is an elected President)
- ii. Accounts for its finances (e.g. there is an elected role specifically designated as Treasurer)
- iii. Keeps accurate records of its activity (e.g. there is an elected role specifically designated as Secretary)
- iv. Acts in line with the aims stated at the time of its ratification (i.e. the committee regularly communicates its activities with its members)

The SSO Executive will approve and annually review a model constitution for new Student Groups.

Groups will have the power to co-opt roles into their leadership structure, but the majority of roles must be elected.

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

6. Funding of Student Groups

The SSO Executive will receive an annual budget for Student Groups, and set priorities for its distribution.

The SSO Executive will be the principal body to agree the mechanism to distribute this funding, although it will be required to consider input from the professional staff team of the Union.

7. Complaints and Discipline

All Student Groups are encouraged to provide for their own complaints and disciplinary procedure within their constitution.

The Union would usually expect that a concern involving Student Groups 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.

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

8. Ad Hoc Groups

The Union will also look to support the activities of ad-hoc groups of students, who do not satisfy the criteria for either Student Group, or Student Collective. The Board (or a subcommittee) will be responsible for setting further guidance on this.