

Bye-Law 5: Student Voice

5.1. Purpose

- 5.2. This bye-law sets out Roehampton Students' Union's (the Union) democratic system. It covers how Student Members make policy, hold representatives to account, and participate in decision-making.

5.3. Union Policy

- 5.4. Union Policy means any official statement of values, beliefs, principles, or process of the Union.

- 5.5. Union Policy is created by the following channels:

- 5.5.1. Students' Union Council
- 5.5.2. Referendums
- 5.5.3. The Board of Trustees
- 5.5.4. The Student Officer Executive, on an interim basis

- 5.6. A policy shall be considered active for the remainder of the academic year in which it is approved, and for the two subsequent academic years. After this period, the policy shall automatically lapse unless renewed or superseded.

- 5.7. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for oversight of policy implementation and will delegate responsibility for this implementation to the elected representatives and staff teams of the Students' Union as appropriate.

5.8. Students' Union Council

- 5.9. Students' Union Council (also known as SU Council) is the Union's central policy-setting body. It considers motions, debates proposals, receives officer accountability reports, and may call referenda.

- 5.10. SU Council shall provide a democratic space to:

- 5.10.1. Gather the views of students and determine positions that are representative of the wider student body (setting Union Policy).
- 5.10.2. Provide student-led direction for the work of the Students' Union by mandating Sabbatical Officers within the law and Articles.
- 5.10.3. Discuss, consult on, and receive reports regarding the representative work of the Sabbatical Officers and the wider Board of Trustees.
- 5.10.4. By resolution, call a Referendum on any matter within the Union's Objects, and endorse proposals for amendments to the Articles or Bye-Laws in accordance with Bye-Law 7.
- 5.10.5. Receive reports from and provide direction to SU Council Sub-Committees.

- 5.11. Nothing in these Bye-Laws authorises SU Council to direct staff employment, finances or other areas reserved to the Trustees under the Articles and charity law.

5.12. Membership and Voting Rights

- 5.13. The voting members of SU Council shall be:

- 5.13.1. Part-Time Officers – one vote per College, exercised by the College President. The College President may delegate their vote to the College Deputy President.
 - 5.13.2. Schools Representatives – one vote per School, exercised by consensus between the UG and PG School Representative for that School. Where consensus cannot be reached, the vote shall be abstained.
 - 5.13.3. Student Groups – one vote per affiliated Student Group, exercised by the Student Group President. The President may delegate their vote to another committee member of that Student Group.
 - 5.13.4. Sabbatical Officers – voting rights on SU Council Policy motions and Referendums only. Sabbatical Officers may not vote on SU Council Mandates or Accountability Actions.
- 5.14. Any student may attend, observe and speak at a meeting of SU Council but may not vote, unless they hold voting rights under the membership provisions above.
- 5.15. Postholders
- 5.16. There shall be an appointment of an independent paid Chair who is not a current Sabbatical Officer or Part-Time Officer. The Chair is subject to the private benefit restrictions in the Articles of Association. The Chair is non-voting, except that they hold a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- 5.17. The Sabbatical Officers shall be the Deputy Chairs of SU Council.
- 5.18. The Postholders shall be responsible for setting the agenda of meetings, chairing meetings of SU Council, and ensuring that decisions are taken in line with these Bye-Laws.
- 5.19. A Deputy Chair may act on behalf of the Chair in their absence.
- 5.20. Sabbatical Officers
- 5.21. Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union (as defined in Bye-Law 3) shall attend SU Council as ex-officio members. Sabbatical Officers have voting rights on SU Council Policy motions and on Referendums. Sabbatical Officers shall not vote on SU Council Mandates or on Accountability Actions, given their role as the persons subject to mandates and accountability processes.
- 5.22. Each Sabbatical Officer shall provide a report to each meeting in relation to matters arising, their performance to date, and any SU Council Mandates.
- 5.23. Sabbatical Officers may submit agenda items and motions subject to the normal process as outlined in the Submission of Motions section below.
- 5.24. Meetings
- 5.25. SU Council shall meet once per academic term.
- 5.26. The Union will publish the date and venue/online details of any meeting on the website with at least ten working days' notice.
- 5.27. Roehampton SU shall provide staff resource and support for SU Council meetings, including minute taking, advice and guidance on decision-making, and ensuring adherence to the Bye-Laws and Articles of Association.

- 5.28. Roehampton SU shall ensure that meeting minutes are published on the Union's website and shall include a record of SU Council member votes.
- 5.29. An extraordinary meeting of SU Council may be called at the discretion of the Chair if a request is received, in writing, by five voting SU Council members or two Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union.
- 5.30. Ordinary business of SU Council includes the approval of minutes, Sabbatical Officer reports and questions, policy motions, petitions received, reports from Sub-Committees, referrals from the Board, and any urgent items admitted by the Chair.
- 5.31. Quorum
- 5.32. A meeting of SU Council shall be quorate when 40% of voting SU Council members are present. Where quorum is not met, the meeting may continue for discussion and reporting purposes but no decisions may be taken. Any motions on the agenda shall be deferred to the adjourned meeting. Where the adjourned meeting also fails to reach quorum, the deferred motions shall be considered dismissed. SU Council members who choose to abstain from a vote shall be counted towards quorum but their vote shall be considered neutral.
- 5.33. Where a meeting of SU Council is adjourned due to lack of quorum, the Postholders shall reschedule the meeting at the earliest practicable opportunity and give all members reasonable notice of the new date. The adjourned meeting shall be conducted as a voting-only meeting, which may be held online, to consider the motions deferred from the original meeting. The same quorum requirement shall apply.
- 5.34. Decision Making
- 5.35. When making decisions, SU Council may make any of the following types of decision:
- 5.36. *SU Council Policy* – a position deemed to be representative of students that does not require any specific action to be taken. Such a decision shall require a two-thirds majority of votes cast. SU Council Policy may not include the attribution of Students' Union resources towards that position. All Sabbatical Officers shall be expected to respect SU Council Policy once passed until it lapses, is succeeded, or is repealed. Sabbatical Officers are entitled to vote on SU Council Policy motions.
- 5.37. *SU Council Mandate* – a decision which directs the Students' Union and its Sabbatical Officers to take a specific action. Such a decision shall require a simple majority of votes cast. An SU Council Mandate will only be accepted if the Chair considers it appropriate, taking into account the educational purposes of the SU, how those purposes may be furthered by debate and forming views on political issues, and the extent to which it is appropriate to expend SU resources on such activity. Sabbatical Officers shall not vote on SU Council Mandates.
- 5.38. *Accountability Actions* – There will be two types of Accountability Action, a motion of censure or a motion of no confidence. Sabbatical Officers shall not vote on any Accountability Action:
- 5.38.1. A motion of censure is similar to a warning and may be passed in relation to any Sabbatical Officer or Part-Time Officer of the Students' Union, or the Chair of SU Council. Such a motion shall be submitted in accordance with the Submission of Motions section below and shall require a two-thirds majority of voting SU Council members. Where a Sabbatical Officer or the

Chair of SU Council is subject to a censure or removal process, this must be managed in accordance with employment law and the Union's HR policies as applicable. Where a Part-Time Officer is subject to a censure or removal process, this must be managed in accordance with the Union's volunteering policies.

- 5.38.2. A motion of no confidence may be passed in the Chair of SU Council. Such a motion shall be submitted in accordance with the Submission of Motions section below and shall require a two-thirds majority of voting SU Council members.
 - 5.38.3. A vote of no confidence in a Sabbatical Officer shall require a referendum conducted in accordance with the Referendums section below. The relevant Sabbatical Officer shall be given appropriate notice and a reasonable opportunity to make representations before any such referendum is held.
 - 5.38.4. A motion calling for a referendum shall require a two-thirds majority vote of SU Council members.
- 5.39. All SU Council members shall be expected to vote in line with mandates received by their constituent members. For this reason, individual SU Council member votes shall be made public.
- 5.40. Any decision taken by SU Council shall remain active for the remainder of the academic year in which it was passed and for the two subsequent academic years, unless renewed, superseded, or in the case of a Mandate, the specific action directed has been completed or has otherwise ceased to be applicable.
- 5.41. Submission of Motions
- 5.42. Motions can be proposed by voting SU Council Members or Sabbatical Officers of the SU.
- 5.43. A motion proposal shall be valid if one of the following criteria is met:
- 5.43.1. Any voting SU Council Member may submit a motion provided it is seconded by four other voting SU Council Members or Sabbatical Officers.
 - 5.43.2. Any Sabbatical Officer may submit a motion provided it is seconded by one other voting SU Council Member or Sabbatical Officer.
- 5.44. Motions must be submitted at least ten working days before the relevant meeting and on the required form.
- 5.45. Motions and agendas shall be published at least five working days before the SU Council meeting, subject to sufficient time being available after the submission deadline. Where bank holidays fall within this window the Postholders shall use reasonable endeavours to publish as soon as practicable.
- 5.46. The Chair shall accept or reject a motion on the following grounds:
- 5.46.1. The Chair shall reject a motion which is substantively similar to existing or previously submitted SU Council Policy or Mandates, or which would supersede existing Policy or Mandates, if submitted within 12 months of the original motion being passed or rejected, unless the motion adds substantively to the existing position.
 - 5.46.2. The Chair shall reject a motion which, in the Chair's reasonable opinion, is not a Valid Motion. A Valid Motion is one that: falls within the Union's

Objects, does not breach the Articles, these Bye-Laws, or the law, and does not raise concerns under charity law that would prevent SU Council from properly considering it. The Chair shall notify the proposer in writing of the reasons for rejection.

5.47. The Postholders, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees (or their nominee) shall have the discretion to postpone the hearing of a motion if it is determined that further consultation, information or risk mitigation is required, including where the Board's risk assessment has not been completed.

5.48. The Postholders shall be responsible for setting the agenda of the meeting, including determining which items shall be considered 'below the line'. Items below the line are those included on the agenda but for which no time has been allocated for debate. They may be noted or voted on without discussion unless a Member requests that the item be brought above the line. Members may request that the Postholders bring an item above the line by notifying the Chair at least 24 hours before the meeting. The Postholders shall have the discretion to approve or reject such a request.

5.49. Amendments

5.50. Amendments to submitted or existing SU Council Policies or Mandates may be proposed as follows:

- 5.50.1. An online form for submitting amendments shall be made available following publication of the agenda and motions. This form shall remain open until 10:00 on the day before the relevant SU Council meeting.
- 5.50.2. Amendments may be submitted by voting SU Council Members and Sabbatical Officers of the SU.
- 5.50.3. The Postholders, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees (or its nominee), shall review all amendments and assess the impact of each on the overall motion. Amendments shall be categorised as follows: (1) Clarifying or 'friendly' amendments – the Postholders may accept these without putting them to a vote, normally in discussion with the proposer. (2) Amendments that raise concerns under charity law or significantly alter the legal, financial, or reputational risk profile of the motion – the Postholders shall reject these without putting them to a vote, and shall notify the proposer in writing of the reasons. (3) All other substantive amendments – these shall be put to SU Council for a vote during the meeting.
- 5.50.4. The Postholders, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees (or their nominee), shall have the discretion to postpone the hearing of a motion if any amendment raises concerns sufficiently serious to require further consultation.
- 5.50.5. The Postholders shall determine the order in which any amendments should be voted upon within the meeting. The order shall be based on the materiality of the amendment where possible, and otherwise in order of submission.
- 5.50.6. Proposers of substantive amendments may be given time to propose their amendment, and debate may be had if there is sufficient time or if the Chair has deemed debate necessary.
- 5.50.7. Amendments will be voted on by SU Council Members during the meeting, by electronic or other means as determined by the Chair.

5.50.8. Once all amendments have been considered, the final motion as amended shall be published and put to a vote of SU Council Members within 48 hours of the meeting, by electronic vote.

5.51. Role of the Board of Trustees

5.52. These Bye-Laws recognise the role of the Board of Trustees as outlined in Bye-Law 2. The Board has a legal duty to oversee governance and finances and is ultimately responsible for determining whether and how to expend the Union's resources on implementing student voice decisions, as the body held accountable under charity law. The Board does not seek to override student democracy but supports, safeguards and implements decisions made through democratic processes, ensuring they are legally sound, financially sustainable, and in the best interests of the Union.

5.53. For any motion proposed, Roehampton SU shall provide a risk assessment including an assessment of any financial, legal or reputational risks on behalf of the Union's Board of Trustees. This shall be provided within five working days of the motion being submitted, however, the Board may extend this timeline where necessary. Where the risk assessment has not been completed, the Postholders may postpone the hearing of the motion in accordance with the Submission of Motions section above.

5.54. In cases where decisions or discussions may present legal, financial, reputational or operational risks, the Board shall work collaboratively and transparently with the Postholders and SU Council to find solutions that balance student interests, manage risks, and protect Roehampton SU's long-term stability.

5.55. The Board of Trustees, as the body charged with determining how the Union's resources are expended, shall have the final say where a collaborative resolution is not forthcoming. Where the Board exercises this power, its representatives shall be invited to attend SU Council to explain the decision openly and transparently.

5.56. In deciding how and whether to implement an SU Council Mandate, Sabbatical Officers and Trustees shall have discretion in how to achieve the goals of any proposal, allowing for flexibility and adaptation where new legal, financial, reputational or operational challenges and opportunities arise, but always in the best interests of the Union.

5.57. Rules around the role of employees are described in Bye-Law 2 and apply at all times in SU Council.

5.58. The Trustees may delegate responsibility to a nominee from within the Roehampton SU staff team, but retain ultimate responsibility for any decision made.

5.59. Petitions

5.60. Any Student Member may submit a petition requesting that an item be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of SU Council.

5.61. A petitioned item is not a motion, does not create Union Policy or an SU Council Mandate, and shall be scheduled for discussion only.

5.62. Following discussion, any voting SU Council Member or Sabbatical Officer may subsequently choose to bring forward a motion through the process outlined in the Submission of Motions section above.

- 5.63. The Chair must schedule any petition supported by 50 Student Members or any five voting SU Council Members.
- 5.64. Petitions must state the proposal, proposer, and rationale, and be submitted through the Union's website or other approved method. Eligibility and support will be verified using membership records.
- 5.65. Where SU Council discusses a petition and there is support to progress the matter into a motion, any voting SU Council Member may act as the submitting member for the purposes of the motion-submission requirements in this Bye-Law. The originating Student Member shall remain the motion's author and may present it at the meeting, unless they choose otherwise.
- 5.66. The Chair shall rule a petition out of order where it is not a Valid Motion (as defined in the Submission of Motions section above) or where it duplicates an item considered within the previous 12 months.

5.67. Student Priorities

- 5.68. Student Priorities are the key areas of focus that guide the Students' Union's work for the following academic year.
- 5.69. Each year, the Union will develop a list of potential priorities, informed by student feedback, research, democratic processes, and emerging issues affecting students.
- 5.70. During the annual Student Leadership Elections, all Student Members shall have the opportunity to vote on the proposed priorities.
- 5.71. The Union will integrate the agreed priorities into its annual planning, campaigns, officer objectives, and organisational work. Progress updates will be reported to students throughout the year.
- 5.72. The Union may adapt the process for developing, presenting, or implementing Student Priorities to ensure it remains representative, accessible, and responsive to student needs.

5.73. Academic Representation

- 5.74. The Students' Union shall work in partnership with the University to support effective academic representation and ensure that students have meaningful opportunities to provide feedback on their academic experience.
- 5.75. The Union will support the recruitment, training, and ongoing development of Academic Reps, and work collaboratively with relevant University departments to ensure Reps are able to gather and present student views effectively.
- 5.76. Feedback gathered through Academic Reps, School and College level structures, and wider student engagement mechanisms shall be used to identify themes, highlight issues, and shape the Union's representative work on education and academic quality.
- 5.77. The Students' Union and the University will jointly agree processes for the consideration, escalation, and resolution of academic feedback. These processes may be updated from time to time to ensure they remain effective and responsive.

- 5.78. Nothing in this section prevents the Union from establishing additional methods of gathering student academic views or from raising issues directly with the University where urgent or systemic concerns arise.

5.79. Affiliations

- 5.80. In accordance with Article 7.7.7 of the Articles, the Board of Trustees shall prepare and present to SU Council, at least once per academic year, a list of the external organisations to which the Union is currently affiliated, together with details of any subscriptions, fees, or donations paid or proposed.
- 5.81. SU Council shall vote to approve or reject the current list of Affiliations by simple majority. Where SU Council rejects any Affiliation, it shall notify the Board of Trustees, which shall determine how to proceed having regard to its duties under charity law and the Union's Objects.
- 5.82. Any Student Member may, in addition, trigger a secret ballot on whether the Union should continue its Affiliation to any particular external organisation by submitting a request supported by at least 5% of Student Members. Such a ballot shall be conducted in accordance with the Referendums section of this Bye-Law, save that the quorum for such a ballot shall be 5% of Student Members and a simple majority of votes cast shall determine.

5.83. Referendums

- 5.84. Referendums are a mechanism for all Student Members to vote directly on a matter of Union Policy or other significant question within the Union's Objects.
- 5.85. A referendum may be called in any of the following circumstances:
- 5.85.1. By a two-thirds majority vote of SU Council, in accordance with the Students' Union Council section above.
 - 5.85.2. By the Board of Trustees in relation to any decision within the Union's Objects, including but not limited to affiliation to external organisations. Any such referendum shall be called in collaboration with SU Council.
 - 5.85.3. By Student Members, where 2% of individual Student Members have submitted a request to hold a referendum on a particular issue through the Union's website or other approved method.
- 5.86. Any proposal for a referendum must include:
- 5.86.1. The specific proposal to be voted on, worded so that students can clearly vote for or against.
 - 5.86.2. The proposed timeline for the referendum.
 - 5.86.3. The number of hours voting shall be open.
- 5.87. All referendum proposals shall be subject to a risk assessment by the Board of Trustees (or their nominee) before the referendum is held. The Board of Trustees may postpone or decline to hold a referendum where it determines that doing so would present legal, financial, reputational or operational risks to the Union, or where the proposal is not a Valid Motion as defined in the Submission of Motions section above. Where the Board exercises this power it shall notify the proposer in writing with reasons

- 5.88. Quorum for a referendum is 5% of all individual Student Members of the Students' Union.
- 5.89. A referendum requires a simple majority of votes cast to pass.
- 5.90. Referendums will only be considered valid if conducted through the Roehampton SU voting system.
- 5.91. A referendum result shall constitute Union Policy for the purposes of the Union Policy section above and shall be subject to the same lapsing provisions.

5.92. SU Council Sub-Committees

- 5.93. SU Council may establish Sub-Committees to carry out specific functions within its remit. Sub-Committees are accountable to SU Council, may not exercise powers reserved to SU Council, the Board of Trustees, or the Sabbatical Officers under these Bye-Laws or the Articles, and shall operate in accordance with Terms of Reference approved by SU Council, published on the Union's website, and reviewed annually.
- 5.94. The current Sub-Committees of SU Council are the Education Executive, the Community Executive, and the Student Officer Executive.
- 5.95. SU Council may establish additional Sub-Committees or dissolve existing Sub-Committees by resolution, provided that any such change is consistent with these Bye-Laws and the Articles.
- 5.96. Each Sub-Committee shall report to every meeting of SU Council on its activities and any matters requiring SU Council's consideration.
- 5.97. Roehampton SU shall provide staff support for Sub-Committee meetings, including minute-taking and advice on compliance with these Bye-Laws and the Articles. Minutes shall be published on the Union's website.

5.98. Quick Reference Guide to Thresholds

- 5.99. The following thresholds apply to the democratic processes outlined in this Bye-Law. Where there is any discrepancy between thresholds in this Bye-Law and the Articles of Association, the higher threshold shall prevail.

Process	Threshold	Notes
Petition to add a discussion item to an SU Council agenda	50 Student Members or any 5 voting SU Council Members	Petitions add discussion items only. They do not create motions or policy.
Motion submission by a voting SU Council Member	Proposer + 4 seconders (voting SU Council Members or Sabbatical Officers)	Motions must be a Valid Motion. Motions follow standard submission process and deadlines.
Motion submission by a Sabbatical Officer	Proposer + 1 seconder (voting SU Council Member or Sabbatical Officer)	Motions must be a Valid Motion. Motions follow standard submission process and deadlines.
SU Council Policy	Two-thirds majority of votes cast	Creates a representative position without requiring

		action. Sabbatical Officers may vote.
SU Council Mandate	Simple majority of votes cast	Directs Sabbatical Officers/the Union to take specific action, subject to Board oversight. Sabbatical Officers may not vote.
Motion of Censure	Two-thirds majority of voting SU Council Members	Applies to any Sabbatical Officer, Part-Time Officer, or the Chair of SU Council. Employment law applies where relevant. Sabbatical Officers may not vote.
Motion of No Confidence in Chair	Two-thirds majority of voting SU Council Members	Triggers removal process as defined in these Bye-Laws. Sabbatical Officers may not vote.
SU Council Quorum	40% of SU Council Members	Where quorum is not met, the meeting may continue for discussion and reporting purposes but no decisions may be taken. Abstentions count toward quorum.
Motion calling for a Referendum	Two-thirds majority of voting SU Council Members	Referendum conducted in accordance with Referendums Section.
Referendum Petition	2% of Student Members	As defined in Referendums section. Subject to Board risk assessment before proceeding.
Referendum Quorum	5% of Student Members	As defined in Referendums section.
Referendum Result	Simple majority of votes cast	Constitutes Union Policy. Subject to same lapsing provisions. Sabbatical Officers may vote.