

Bye-Law 6: Student Groups

6.1. Purpose

6.2. This Bye-Law establishes the governance framework for the establishment, operation, support, and removal of Student Groups within Roehampton Students' Union ("the Union"). Operational procedures shall be set out in the Student Group Knowledge Base ("Knowledge Base").

6.3. For the purposes of this Bye-Law, "Knowledge Base" means the online resource maintained by the Union which sets out procedures, requirements, and expectations for Student Groups.

6.4. Definition and Principles of Student Groups

6.5. A Student Group is a student-led collective of Student Members, formally affiliated to the Union, formed around a shared interest, activity, identity, or purpose.

6.6. Student Groups operate under these principles:

6.6.1. They are democratically led by Student Members.

6.6.2. They must comply with the Union's Articles, Bye-Laws, Policies, and University policies.

6.6.3. They are supported and regulated by the Union to ensure safety, legal compliance, and good governance.

6.6.4. They operate in accordance with the detailed requirements set out in the Knowledge Base.

6.7. Categories of Student Groups (e.g. Societies, Student Media, Raising and Giving, Community Projects) may be defined and revised by the Union within the Knowledge Base.

6.8. Establishing New Student Groups (Affiliation)

6.9. Any Student Member of the Union may apply to affiliate a new Student Group in accordance with the application process set out on the Union's website and in the Knowledge Base.

6.10. The Union will assess applications against criteria published in the Knowledge Base, including alignment with the Union's aims and non-duplication of existing activity.

6.11. Affiliation grants recognition and access to Union support and resources; it does not confer entitlement to Union funding or facilities, which are allocated in accordance with Union policy.

6.12. The Union will maintain an up-to-date list of all affiliated Student Groups.

6.13. Maintaining Affiliation

6.14. To remain affiliated, Student Groups must:

6.14.1. Appoint Student Group Leaders annually in accordance with a process set out in their constitution or the Knowledge Base.

6.14.2. Remain active and engaged with members.

6.14.3. Comply with the Union's Articles, Bye-Laws, Policies, and University policies.

- 6.14.4. Meet ongoing requirements set out in the Knowledge Base (e.g. development planning, reporting, training, risk management).
- 6.15. Groups are free to determine their own succession process, which may include elections, nominations, co-option, or a combination of these, provided it is transparent and accessible to all eligible members. The Chief Executive (or nominee) reserves the right to require a supervised election where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the leadership selection process has been compromised, including where there is evidence of external interference, factional manipulation, or a credible complaint from a significant proportion of the group's membership that the process was unfair. In such cases the process shall be determined by the Chief Executive (or nominee) in accordance with procedures set out in the Knowledge Base, and the outcome shall be reported to the Board of Trustees.
- 6.16. Suspension and Disaffiliation**
- 6.17. The Union may suspend or disaffiliate a Student Group where there is evidence of inactivity, misconduct, financial mismanagement, or serious breach of Union or University policy.
- 6.18. Before a decision is made, the Union will:
- 6.18.1. Notify the Student Group of the concerns;
 - 6.18.2. Allow reasonable time to respond;
 - 6.18.3. Consider any evidence submitted by the group; and
 - 6.18.4. Consider reasonable steps to support the group back to compliance.
- 6.19. These steps may be abridged or omitted where the urgency of the matter makes it impracticable to follow them in full, for example where there is an immediate risk to the safety of members or to Union finances. In such cases the Union shall document the reasons for departing from the standard process and shall provide the Student Group with the earliest practicable opportunity to make representations.
- 6.20. Suspension and disaffiliation decisions shall be made by the Chief Executive (or nominee) under delegated authority from the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the grounds above and the procedures in the Knowledge Base. The outcome of any suspension or disaffiliation decision shall be reported to the Board of Trustees.
- 6.21. A Student Group may appeal a decision to suspend or disaffiliate within ten working days by submitting a written notice of appeal to the Chief Executive (or nominee). Appeals shall be heard by an independent appeals panel convened by the Board of Trustees, whose decision shall be final. The composition and procedure of the appeals panel shall be set out in the Knowledge Base.
- 6.22. The appeal outcome may be to reinstate the Student Group, lift the suspension, continue the suspension (with or without conditions), or confirm disaffiliation.
- 6.23. Detailed procedures, including expected timelines, criteria for reinstatement and trial period arrangements, shall be set out in the Knowledge Base.

6.24. Membership of Student Groups

- 6.25. All Student Members may join Student Groups and stand for leadership roles. Associate Members may join but may not hold leadership roles.
- 6.26. Membership fees, where charged, must be paid through the Union's online system.
- 6.27. The Union shall maintain the definitive membership list for each Student Group, which determines eligibility for participation, voting, and leadership roles.
- 6.28. Student Group members must adhere to the Union's Articles, Bye-Laws, and all Union and University policies.

6.29. Student Group Leaders

- 6.30. Each Student Group must have at least three Student Group Leaders – President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The roles and responsibilities of these posts will be defined in the Knowledge Base.
- 6.31. Student Group Leaders must uphold the Union's Articles, Bye-Laws, and all Union and University policies and the standards expected of their role.
- 6.32. Removal of Student Group Leaders may occur for:
 - 6.32.1. Loss of Student Member status.
 - 6.32.2. Resignation.
 - 6.32.3. Non-performance or misconduct.
 - A successful vote of no confidence by the group's membership, which may be triggered regardless of the method by which the leader was originally appointed.
- 6.33. Removal decisions shall be made by the Chief Executive (or nominee) under delegated authority from the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the grounds above and the procedures in the Knowledge Base. Where a removal decision raises broader concerns about the integrity of the group's governance, the Chief Executive shall report the matter to the Board of Trustees.
- 6.34. Vacancies will be filled either by elections, co-option or other processes detailed in the Knowledge Base.

6.35. Group Operations and Activities

- 6.36. Student Groups must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in accordance with the Knowledge Base.
- 6.37. Student Groups must comply with Union policies relating to external speakers, freedom of speech, safeguarding, risk assessment, data protection, and insurance.
- 6.38. Student Groups may not sign contracts. All contracts must be signed by the Chief Executive or nominee.
- 6.39. Student Media Groups shall operate with freedom of expression and editorial independence subject to the Union's Student Media Charter and applicable policies.

6.40. Finance

- 6.41. All Student Group finances must be managed through Union-administered accounts. External bank accounts are prohibited.
- 6.42. Funding for Student Groups is allocated in accordance with the Student Group Funding Policy, which is subject to approval by the Community Executive in accordance with Bye-Law 5, and detailed processes within the Knowledge Base.
- 6.43. All income and expenditure must comply with Union financial procedures.
- 6.44. Complaints and Disciplinary**
- 6.45. All complaints and disciplinary matters relating to Student Groups or their members shall be handled under the Union's Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.