

Royal Academy of Music Students' Union Constitution

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1. Name

There will be a Students' Union the name of which will be 'Royal Academy of Music Students' Union' or 'RAMSU' (hereafter referred to as 'RAMSU').

2. Aims and Objects

The aims and objects of the RAMSU will be:

- (a) To support and advance the well-being of the students.
- (b) To represent students and/or pursue, where deemed appropriate by the Students' Union Committee (hereinafter referred to as 'the RAMSU Committee') any matter of interest to its members.
- (c) To provide a recognised channel of communication between the students, the Governing Body, Academic Board, Principal and any relevant external bodies.
- (d) To create and maintain a sense of community across the student body through social events, activities or collaborative projects.

3. Membership

- (a) All matriculated students of the Royal Academy of Music and (hereinafter referred to as the 'Academy') will be full members of the RAMSU.
- (b) All students have the right to opt out of the RAMSU (by way of written confirmation to the RAMSU President) without becoming unfairly disadvantaged in accordance with the 1994 Education Act and in line with the rights of students set out in the Code of Practice approved by the Governing Body.

4. Officers

- (a) The RAMSU Committee will comprise:
 - i) An elected sabbatical officer to act as President.
 - ii) Four elected non-sabbatical officers (Undergraduate Representative, Postgraduate Representative, International Representative, Events and Societies Representative).
- (b) The term of office of all officers will be from the first day of August and will last for one academic year.
- (c) The President and the officers of the RAMSU Committee must be students of the Academy. The President of RAMSU:
 - i) Will be paid an honorarium or salary. The President will represent the RAMSU on all official occasions and will convene the meetings of the RAMSU Committee and co-chair the Student Staff Liaison Committee. A sabbatical year may take place either as an interruption to the student's programme of study or immediately following their year of graduation.
 - ii) Will be responsible to the RAMSU Committee for the keeping of accounts and will exercise supervision over all the RAMSU finances, under direction of the RAMSU Committee and monitored by the Academy's Director of Finance.

- iii) A full job description for the President is available in Schedule Five (officers in Schedule Six).
- (d) The President may not hold office for more than two academic years.

5. General Meetings

- (a) RAMSU General Meetings will transact the following business each year:
 - i) To receive the President's report of the activities of the RAMSU since the last General Meeting and the previous year if it is the first of a new academic year.
 - ii) To decide on any resolution.
- (b) Notice of a General Meeting, and any proposed resolution which should be given in writing by the proposer and seconder to the President, will be notified to students electronically and on the RAMSU notice board not less than ten days before the meeting.
- (c) No business shall be transacted at a General Meeting unless a quorum is present. Ten members of the RAMSU shall in each case be a quorum. If such a quorum is not present within half an hour from the time appointed for the meeting, or if during a meeting such a quorum ceases to be present, the meeting may continue, though no business shall be transacted.
- (d) The RAMSU Constitution may be altered by resolution at a General Meeting. The resolution must be carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at the General Meeting and the alterations must thereafter be approved by the Academy's Governing Body. Alterations to the Constitution shall not come into effect until approved by the Governing Body.
- (e) Meetings are to occur at least once a term, other to occur depending on amount of upcoming student union activity.

6. Students' Union Committees

- (a) The RAMSU Committee will comprise:
 - i) The President of RAMSU.
 - ii) Four elected non-sabbatical officers (Undergraduate Representative, Postgraduate Representative, International Representative, Events and Societies Representative).
- (b) The President of the RAMSU will convene RAMSU Committee Meetings. If the President is absent or relinquishes this position, it will be taken by an Appointed Officer nominated by the President. Failing such nomination the Chair shall be elected by the meeting.
- (c) The RAMSU Committee will be responsible for the day to day administration of the RAMSU.
- (d) The RAMSU Committee will be concerned with all matters appertaining to RAMSU facilities and property and to the social, cultural, academic and personal welfare

of the students. It will also implement legitimate changes as expressed by resolution of the General Meeting. It may also advise students on Academy policy.

- (e) The RAMSU Committee will have the power to make and amend regulations, governing all matters under its control, subject to the approval of a General Meeting. Regulations will not contradict this Constitution or its Schedules. Such regulations and amendments to regulations can only be proposed to a General Meeting when supported by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a duly constituted RAMSU Committee meeting.
- (f) Ordinary RAMSU Committee meetings will be conducted in the following way:
 - i) At least ten days' notice shall be given of all Ordinary RAMSU Committee meetings on the public RAMSU notice board. Likewise the agenda for each meeting will be displayed two days before the meeting and also emailed to all RAMSU Committee members.
 - ii) The Chair of the RAMSU Committee meeting, who will normally be the President, will be responsible for organising the agenda. The President will be responsible for including any matters that have been brought to their attention by the student body and the Academy, as well as any matters passed on by other members of the RAMSU Committee.
 - iii) Any of the RAMSU Committee present at the meeting may raise further relevant business with the permission of the Chair.
- (g) At all meetings of the RAMSU Committee one-third of the total members of the RAMSU Committee shall form a quorum.
- (h) In the event of an RAMSU Committee member failing to attend three meetings during their year of office without giving apologies, they will be deemed to have resigned.
- (i) The RAMSU Committee will meet at least three times each term, these meetings being called Ordinary RAMSU Committee Meetings.

7. Affiliation to External Organisations

- (a) Affiliations to external organisations will be subject to annual approval by members of the RAMSU Committee.
- (b) The list of affiliations including details of subscriptions or similar fees paid, and donations, will be presented for approval annually to the Governing Body. In the event of any changes, an updated list of affiliations will be presented during the year for approval at an appropriate meeting of the Governing Body.

8. RAMSU Clubs and Societies

All RAMSU Clubs and Societies will be formed and administered in accordance with Schedule Three.

9. Elections

The procedures for all elections will be determined by a General Meeting.

10. Minutes

- (a) The Secretary will take minutes at all General and RAMSU Committee Meetings. In the event of the Secretary being unable to take minutes, the President will appoint another officer or member to do so.
- (b) A copy of the minutes of each meeting will, as soon as possible after the meeting, be sent to the appropriate members.
- (c) These minutes will be confirmed, with any necessary corrections, at the next appropriate and relevant meeting.
- (d) Confirmed minutes shall be displayed as soon as possible after confirmation.

11. Constitution

- (a) The provisions of this Constitution shall be subject to the approval of the Governing Body. This Constitution will also be subject to review by the Governing Body at intervals of not more than five years.
- (b) A General meeting will be the sole body competent to propose amendments to the Constitution to the Governing Body for approval.
- (c) All proposed amendments to the Constitution must be passed by such a majority of members present and voting at a General Meeting as is specified in Clause 5 (d).

12. Interpretation

In the event of a dispute as to the interpretation of any part of the Constitution, the ruling of the President will be sought. In the event of a challenge to the President's ruling, the decision of a General Meeting, where the President is not the Chair, will be final.

13. Indemnity

- (a) All members of the RAMSU and any appointee or member of staff acting on behalf of the RAMSU, will be indemnified out of the assets of the RAMSU against all losses or liabilities which they may sustain or incur from the execution of office or otherwise in relation thereto.
- (b) No member of the RAMSU, appointee or member of staff acting on behalf of the RAMSU will be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune which may happen to or be incurred by the RAMSU in the execution of the duties of the role or in relation thereto.
- (c) This clause will not affect their liability for the consequences of any wilful or negligent act on the member's part.

14. Discipline

- (a) If necessary, a Disciplinary Committee will be established by the RAMSU Committee and two other co-opted members. This Committee will have the power to exclude or suspend from active membership of the RAMSU, any member who

may be found guilty by the Disciplinary Committee of conduct prejudicial to the RAMSU, its interests or its members provided that such a member will be given an opportunity to state his/her case.

- (b) In the event of discipline required for the President, a ballot will take place among RAMSU members to decide whether to terminate or continue their term of office. A two-thirds majority is needed to decide on termination.

15. Complaints Procedure

Any student or students who are dissatisfied with their dealings with RAMSU, or claim to be disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right to withdraw from membership, are entitled to have their complaint considered by the President, who may convene a meeting of the RAMSU Committee. The complaints procedure includes the right of appeal to the Deputy Principal and Dean and the subsequent right of appeal to an independent person appointed by the Governing Body.

Schedule One - Elections

Section A - Election of the President

1. The Academic Registrar will act as the Returning Officer and will be responsible for the administration of the elections.
2. The elections shall take place no later than the second week of the summer term.
3. (a) Nomination forms, signed by the candidate, proposer and seconder, all of whom will be full members of the RAMSU, will be handed to the Returning Officer no later than seven days before the published date of campaigning commences.
(b) A list of candidates shall be displayed on the public RAMSU notice board within twenty-four hours of closure of nominations.
4. Voting shall take place between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm on Thursday and Friday of the campaigning week.
5. All full members of the RAMSU may vote.
6. The simple majority system will be employed to determine the results of the elections.

Section B - Election of non-sabbatical officer positions (Undergraduate Representative, Postgraduate Representative, International Representative, Events and Societies Representative)

1. The Academic Registrar will act as the Returning Officer and will be responsible for the administration of the elections.
2. The elections will take place after the elections for office of President, but no later than the end of the summer term.
3. (a) Nomination forms, signed by the candidate, proposer and seconder, all of whom will be full members of the RAMSU, will be handed to the Returning Officer no later than seven days before the published date of campaigning commenced.
(b) A list of candidates for each role shall be displayed on the public RAMSU noticeboard within twenty-four hours of closure of nominations.
4. All full members of the RAMSU may vote.
5. The simple majority system will be employed to determine the results of the elections.

Section C - Campaigning

1. Candidates may display posters throughout the Academy, distribute leaflets and publicise a manifesto only when campaigning begins (normally the Monday preceding the vote).
2. Posters and other publicity appearing before the campaigning period will be removed and the candidate may face disciplinary action.
3. No canvassing or other publicity will take place in the foyer of the Academy.

4. No candidate will incur expenditure above £50.00 for their campaign, Academy facilities excepted. The candidate will make such expenses available for inspection by the Returning Officer. If there is evidence that a limit has been exceeded, the candidate may face disciplinary action by the Returning Officer in consultation with the Deputy Principal and Dean.

All complaints regarding the election, or the conduct of candidates, must be received in writing by the Returning Officer by the close of voting.

Schedule Two - Standing Orders

1. Standing Orders will apply to all RAMSU Committee and General Meetings of the RAMSU.
2.
 - (a) Only full members of the RAMSU may speak and vote at RAMSU Committee Meetings.
 - (b) RAMSU members who are not members of the RAMSU Committee may observe such meetings, and may speak with the permission of the Chair.
3. The Secretary of the RAMSU is responsible for the production of minutes of General and RAMSU Committee meetings.

Calling General Meetings

4. General Meetings can be called by the RAMSU Committee or by any student with the signatures of thirty fellow students.

Agenda

5. The business of meetings will be taken in the following order:
 - Apologies for absence.
 - Minutes of the previous meeting.
 - Matters arising.
 - Reports, statements and motions submitted.
 - Any other business.

In the case of General Meetings, business must be submitted to the Chair five days before the date of the General Meeting.

The Chair

6. The president of the RAMSU will convene General Meetings. If they are absent or relinquish this position, another member of the RAMSU Committee nominated by the President will take the position. Failing such a nomination the Chair shall be elected by a simple majority vote at the meeting.
7. The Chair will be responsible for keeping order in the meeting.

Speaking

8. Members wishing to speak must indicate this to the Chair. The Chair shall indicate priority to speak.
9. No member may use offensive language or gestures. In the event of any member doing so, the Chair will ask them to withdraw their remark. Should a situation arise where said member fails to comply with this request, they may be asked to withdraw from the meeting at the discretion of the Chair.
10. Any full student of the Academy shall be entitled to attend but not vote at a General Meeting.

Schedule Three - Clubs and Societies

1. Any RAMSU club or society will be recognised by the RAMSU provided that:
 - (a) A petition for its formation, signed by at least two students is presented to the RAMSU.
 - (b) A proposal for the club will contain:
 - i) The name of the club/society.
 - ii) The aims and objects of the club/society (which will not be contrary to those of the RAMSU).
 - iii) Regulations relating to membership eligibility.
 - iv) The name/s of the student/s involved in the management of the club or society and an outline of their role.
 - v) Details of expected income and expenditure, where financial support is requested.
 - (c) The RAMSU Committee has approved all aspects of the proposal of the club or society. The RAMSU Committee may not approve a club or society which has similar aims or objects to those of an existing club or society or which it deems discriminatory.
2. The recognition of a club or society may only be withdrawn by a General Meeting of the RAMSU.
3. Grants to clubs and societies shall be determined by the RAMSU Committee according to the activities, membership and budget of the club/society concerned and will be monitored by the Academy's Director of Finance so as to ensure a fair allocation of funds.
4. The grant to a specific club or society may be withdrawn by the RAMSU Committee in the event of:
 - (a) Evidence of financial mismanagement.
 - (b) Evidence of contravention of the RAMSU Constitution.

Schedule Four - Finance

1. The RAMSU receives a grant from the funds of the Academy and must submit an annual budget to the Governing Body and Director of Finance for approval.
2. The RAMSU President will be responsible and accountable for the proper management of the income and expenditure of the RAMSU.
3. The President will be responsible for the keeping and safe custody of the accounts for all RAMSU financial transactions and must keep all supporting vouchers and receipts.
4. Once a term the President will submit a report of the RAMSU financial affairs to the RAMSU Committee for approval. A copy of this report will be made available to any RAMSU Members who wishes to view it.
5. Convenors of clubs and societies will be responsible for ensuring that no expenditure is incurred in excess of the total amounts authorised by the RAMSU Committee to be spent by such club and society.
6. The books and accounts of the RAMSU shall be subject to an annual audit by any member of the Academy's Finance Department at the end of the financial period.

Schedule Five - Student Union President Role

The role of President of the RAMSU will be a salaried sabbatical role, which may take place either as an interruption to the student's programme of study at the Academy or immediately following their year of graduation. The President may not hold office for more than two academic years.

The President of the RAMSU shall be the Chair of the RAMSU Committee and shall:

1. Represent the RAMSU in all external matters and shall be the principal channel of communication between the RAMSU and the Academy.
2. Be empowered to act on behalf of all RAMSU members between matters of a minor, non-contentious, or urgent nature, having taken into consideration the opinions of the RAMSU Committee, save that all objections must be reported to the appropriate body at the next opportunity.
3. Be responsible, subject to relevant committees, for the administration of the daily business of the RAMSU.
4. Be responsible for advising the RAMSU Committee on ways to meet the continuing and future needs of the RAMSU's membership in the most efficient and appropriate way.
5. Sign all contracts, agreements, and undertakings into which the RAMSU may enter.
6. Attend conferences and training events relevant to the post.
7. Attend all committees the President has membership of.
8. Be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its regulations.
9. Ensure that the RAMSU Committee works as a motivated team, and to encourage members to work to the best of their ability.
10. Draft the RAMSU budget and be responsible to the RAMSU Committee for the keeping of accounts, and shall exercise supervision over all the RAMSU finances, under direction of the RAMSU Committee and monitored by the Academy's Director of Finance.
11. Liaise with the relevant staff members on developing and maintaining a system for the election, training, and introduction of responsibilities for the role.

Schedule Six - Non-Sabbatical Officer Roles

(Undergraduate Representative, Postgraduate Representative, International Representative, Events and Societies Representative)

There shall be four elected student offices and each position shall receive an honorarium of £1,000 per year subject to satisfactory engagement with the responsibilities of the office.

Officers must be members of the RAMSU for the duration of the term of office, and may not hold office for more than two academic years. The Undergraduate Representative must be an undergraduate student for the duration of their term of office. The Postgraduate Representative must be a postgraduate student when they stand for election: a fourth year undergraduate may not stand for election as postgraduate representative.

Officers shall write a biannual report (normally to be submitted by the beginning of the spring term, and the second week of the summer term) referencing their engagement with the responsibilities of the role and highlighting targets for the upcoming periods. The RAMSU President shall review this with the Academic Registrar, and if appropriate, the honorarium will be paid (in two equal sums) to the Student Officer.

The **Undergraduate Representative** shall be a member of the RAMSU Committee and shall:

1. Be responsible for the co-ordination of the undergraduate programmes representation and advice services of the RAMSU.
2. Establish, maintain contact, and provide information from Undergraduate Head of Programmes.
 - (a) Supply information to students who have programme problems, respecting confidentiality at all times. When necessary, shall refer students to Tutors, Undergraduate Head of Programmes, or the Academy's Counselling and Wellbeing team.
 - (b) In conjunction with the President be responsible for representing the views of members relating to undergraduate programmes provision.
3. If required, attend conferences and training events relevant to the post.
 - (a) In the absence of the President, represent students to the relevant Academy committees
4. Be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its regulations.
5. Liaise with the relevant staff members on developing and maintaining a system for the election, training, and introduction of responsibilities for the role.

The **Postgraduate Representative** shall be a member of the RAMSU Committee and shall:

- i) Be responsible for the co-ordination of the postgraduate programmes representation and advice services of the RAMSU.
- ii) Establish, maintain contact, and provide information from Postgraduate Head of Programmes.

3. Supply information to students who have programme problems, respecting confidentiality at all times. When necessary, shall refer students to Tutors, Postgraduate Head of Programmes, or the Academy's Counselling and Wellbeing team.
4. In conjunction with the President be responsible for representing the views of members relating to postgraduate programme provision.
5. If required, attend conferences and training events relevant to the post.
6. In the absence of the President, represent students to the relevant Academy committees.
7. Be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its regulations.
8. Liaise with the relevant staff members on developing and maintaining a system for the election, training, and introduction of responsibilities for the role.

The **International Representative** shall be a member of the RAMSU Committee and shall:

1. Be responsible for the co-ordination of the welfare, rights, and advice services of the RAMSU to international students.
2. Supply information to, but shall not attempt to counsel, students who have welfare concerns respecting confidentiality at all times. When necessary, shall refer students to the Academy's Counselling and Wellbeing team or other relevant organisations.
3. In conjunction with the President, be responsible for representing the views of international students to the relevant Academy committees.
4. In conjunction with the Events and Societies Representative, organise and publicise a variety of social events throughout the year in office specifically targeting International Students, acknowledging that events during the vacation may be of especial interest to those students remaining in London over vacations.
5. If required, attend conferences and training events relevant to the post.
6. In the absence of the President, represent students to the relevant Academy committees.
7. Be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its regulations.
8. Liaise with the relevant staff members on developing and maintaining a system for the election, training, and introduction of responsibilities for the role.

The **Events and Societies Representative** shall be a member of the RAMSU Committee and shall:

1. Organise and publicise a variety of events to reflect the interests of all sections of the student body.
2. Be responsible for the sale and distribution of tickets and the collection of monies for activities.
3. Administer and support all RAMSU clubs and societies and other student lead activities.

4. In conjunction with the President be responsible for representing the views of members relating to RAMSU clubs and societies provision.
5. If required, attend conferences and training events relevant to the post.
6. In the absence of the President, represent students to the relevant Academy committees.
7. Be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its regulations.
8. Liaise with the relevant staff members on developing and maintaining a system for the election, training, and introduction of responsibilities for the role.

Annex: Freedom of Speech Policy

As stated in paragraph 17 of the Royal Academy of Music's Code of Practice for its Student Union, the Academy recognises its responsibility to provide safeguards to ensure freedom of speech within the law.

The 1986 Education Act states that: 'persons concerned in the government of any establishment...shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for members, students and employees of the establishment and for visiting speakers. The Academy will not, therefore, as far as is reasonably practicable, deny access to its premises to individuals or bodies on the basis of their beliefs, views or policies.'

The Academy expects students, staff and visiting speakers to ensure freedom of speech within the law is assured whilst on Academy premises. Whilst there is no legal prohibition on offending others, the Academy nevertheless believes that discussion that is open and honest can take place only if offensive or provocative action and language is avoided. Therefore, students, staff, governors and visiting speakers are required to demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of the Academy's community and to show others respect.

If students, staff or governors believe that an event being organised poses a risk under this Code, they are required to refer the matter to the Deputy Principal and Dean. No advertising of the event is permitted until a decision is reached on its compliance with the Code of Practice. The Deputy Principal and Dean will make an initial assessment. If they decide the event complies with the Academy's Code of Practice it can go ahead.

The Deputy Principal and Dean may, however, require the organisers to put in place safeguards, such as extra security or a strong and well-informed chair with the power to intervene or close the event down if there is a breach of the Code. The organisers of the event will be responsible for any extra expense incurred.

If the Deputy Principal and Dean decides the event poses too great a risk under the Code, they will consult with the Principal, and may consult other individuals/groups, as appropriate, and/or take legal advice. The decision will be final and will not be subject to appeal.

The expression of views that may be controversial, but do not breach the law, will not constitute reasonable grounds for refusal. Reasonable grounds for refusal will include: incitement to commit a criminal act; unlawful expression of views; support for an organisation whose aims are illegal; the creation of an environment likely to give rise to a breach of the peace.

If an event has been advertised, students and staff may still make representations to the Deputy Principal and Dean if they feel it breaches this Code. If the event is allowed to take place, they will be allowed the right to peaceful protest for one hour prior to the event taking place. They will not be permitted to interfere with the running of the event.

Wilful breach of this Code will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures and, if necessary, by recourse to law. The Academy will withhold the right to use its premises if it fears there is a likelihood of the Code being breached.

If you are proposing to run an event and are concerned that it may constitute a breach of the Code of Practice, please contact Mark Racz, the Deputy Principal and Dean, in the first instance.