

Regulation A10-2: Societies

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1. Society Governance

- 1.1 The President (Communication and Democracy) shall be responsible for the governance of societies and will work to support, promote and develop societies as well as to represent their views to the Executive Committee and Trustee Board. The President shall also oversee the distribution of any funds to societies and have oversight of the societies budget.
- 1.2 The Vice President (Societies) shall work alongside the President (Communication and Democracy) to support the governance of societies. They shall work to assist the societies, promote student involvement and represent the views of societies to the Executive Committee. They shall support the distribution of any funds to societies.
- 1.3 The Societies and Activities Team will work with both the societies and elected President and Vice President to agree and work on key projects for societies and action any decisions made by the Societies Forum. They shall be responsible for listening to the views of societies and working with Robert Gordon University Student Association (the “Union”) to promote extra-curricular activities.
- 1.4 The Societies Forum shall be the democratic body for affiliated societies and shall normally meet twice a semester with the President from each society in attendance. The Societies Forum shall be the primary mechanism to raise any feedback, ask questions of elected representatives, and discuss and vote on key matters relating to regulations and management of affiliated societies. In the instance a President of an affiliated society is unable to attend a meeting of the Societies Forum, a delegated society committee member from that affiliated student activity shall attend in their stead.
- 1.5 The Staff Team at the Union shall have responsibility, as delegated by the Sabbatical Presidents and Trustee Board, to support the running of societies. This support shall include, but is not limited to, management of the budgets and finances for societies, assistance with promotion of societies, training and development of societies, and overseeing the administration of societies.

2. Society Formation

- 2.1 All matriculated students shall be able to set up their own society whether around an academic subject or common interest. In order for societies to be set up, or to affiliate with the Union, they must complete an application process.
- 2.2 The Society Set-Up Process shall be:
 - 2.2.1 Meet with the Union to discuss ideas and the purpose of the society, as well as to get information about how to run a society;
 - 2.2.2 Recruit at least ten interested members and elect a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Communication & Engagement Lead along with any other committee positions to be introduced;
 - 2.2.3 Complete an application form, detailing the society name, objectives and purpose for the society and plans for the year;

- 2.2.4 Write a society constitution detailing the objectives of the society, the rules for the running of the society and the positions on the committee;
- 2.2.5 Some societies may need to complete additional paperwork such as risk assessments or insurance documents based on the nature of their proposed activities;
- 2.2.6 Society applications shall be reviewed and approved based on the information provided in the application, whether there is sufficient membership to sustain the society, similarities with other student activities, rules and policies of the Union. The President (Communication and Democracy), Vice President (Societies) and appropriate staff members will consider all applications;
- 2.2.7 If accepted, societies must pay in the fees their first ten members which must all be full matriculated RGU students;
- 2.2.8 Societies must engage with the Union processes during the year and submit required paperwork to maintain their affiliated status. Societies which fail to engage for one year, would have to reapply for membership in future years.

3. Society Documentation

- 3.1 The Constitution for societies shall be the governing document that provides an overview of how a society will be run and what the purpose of the society is. It will outline the committee positions, rules for the annual general meeting, elections, membership and other rules about the society. It shall be passed on each year to the new committee and can only be changed by a majority vote at a society general meeting.
- 3.2 The Application Form is for new societies to affiliate with the Union and includes the name, purpose and proposed activities for the society, as well as the proposed committee positions and interested members. This document would only be submitted once and reviewed by the Union to approve affiliation.
- 3.3 The Society Membership Form is required from each individual member and provides their personal details and emergency contact details. This information will be used to allow societies contact details for members, and by the Union in case of an emergency while participating in Union activities.
- 3.4 The Society Grant Request Form is produced annually to allow societies the opportunity to bid for funding and plan out how they plan on raising and spending funds, as well as outlining plans for the year. This will be reviewed by the Union as the basis for distributing funds to societies.
- 3.5 The Risk Assessment and External Activities paperwork is required from societies where their activities may need safety management or takes place out of the campus.
- 3.6 The Society Reporting Paperwork includes all other documents which societies may be asked to complete including an annual report, handover checklist, event booking forms, equipment inventory or otherwise that helps the Union oversee and manage these groups.
- 3.7 The Society Development Plan is for societies to outline their name, purpose and proposed activities for the year. The plan will outline how they will improve the society that year, engage new people, and participate in fundraising activities. Societies should work with the President (Communication and Democracy) and the Union's Student Development & Volunteering Co-ordinator to ensure plans are complete.

4. Society Membership

- 4.1 All societies must have at least ten fully-matriculated RGU students as paid members of the society at any time.
- 4.2 Societies are expected to charge a membership fee to aid the operations of their group. This fee shall be set by each society, and the minimum shall be set by the Societies Forum but be no less than £5.
- 4.3 Societies shall be able to accept members who are not RGU students, but 51% of members must be students of Robert Gordon University.
- 4.4 Membership shall run from August to July each year, and membership can be purchased at any point throughout the year.
- 4.5 Membership may be purchased online or in person by completing a Membership Form and paying the required fee. Societies may collect membership at events, or students may pay in membership at the Union reception at any time.
- 4.6 Societies may offer incentives or benefits to members such as discount cards, member IDs, and merchandise or otherwise, however the society committee shall be responsible for managing the distribution of such items, however the Union may assist.
- 4.7 All individuals shall be entitled to be a member of a society and must not be discriminated against based on gender, race, sexual orientation, disability or other characteristic.

5. Society Committees and Leadership

- 5.1 Each society shall be expected to elect a team of students to run the society which should include a President, Vice President, Treasurer and Communication & Engagement Lead as a minimum. They shall be responsible for the running of the society and shall be expected to work with the Union to ensure the proper running of the group.
- 5.2 The duties expected of the committee and delegated to particular members may include:
- 5.2.1 Organise regular society meetings with members;
 - 5.2.2 Oversee and implement the objectives and functions of the group;
 - 5.2.3 Submit all required paperwork to the Union;
 - 5.2.4 Attend Societies Forum, the Union's Annual General Meeting and other appropriate meetings;
 - 5.2.5 Manage the budget and finances of the society and authorise expenses;
 - 5.2.6 Attend society training and liaise with the Union;
 - 5.2.7 Organise events and activities for the benefit of society members;
 - 5.2.8 Ensure the sustainability of the society by recruiting members, hosting an AGM and handover.
- 5.3 The society may introduce new committee positions or make other key decisions if agreed by the committee at a meeting with more than 50% of committee members.
- 5.4 The decisions of a Society Committee may be subject to question by a quorum of 75% of the society's membership, or subject to external ruling through the Union Complaints Regulations.

- 5.5 In the situation where the decision is tied, the President of the society shall have the casting vote. Where conflict arises in the Committee, the Union shall be able to mediate to deal with the situation in an appropriate manner.

6. Society Elections

- 6.1 Society Committee positions shall be filled through an election from members of the society at the Annual General Meeting for the group. All members are eligible to stand for election as long as they will continue to be RGU students in the following year.
- 6.2 Elections may be decided either by an open vote or a secret ballot. During the elections any member of the society may ask for a secret ballot, where the ballot papers shall be counted by an impartial individual.
- 6.3 Societies may ask a representative from the Union to support and oversee their elections to ensure a fair and democratic process.
- 6.4 A candidate must achieve a majority of the vote to win the position.
- 6.5 Societies are expected to engage and vote for positions in the main Union elections, particularly in promoting the President (Communication and Democracy) and Vice President (Societies) Elected Officer positions.
- 6.6 Society and Activity Team members shall be appointed by the President (Communication and Democracy) after open applications with the aim of gaining even representation across a range of societies. The Societies Forum will vote to ratify the appointments at the first meeting.

7. Society Finances

- 7.1 The Union shall be responsible for the banking and management of all societies funding. No society is permitted to use or set up an external bank account.
- 7.2 The Staff of the Union shall be responsible for managing the accounts for societies. Each society must elect a Treasurer to keep records of the society income and expenditure. The Union will work with the President and Treasurer of each society to maintain records and process society payments.
- 7.3 Societies will be given two accounts with the Union.
- 7.3.1 The Budget Account is the society's primary spending account which is used for the general running of the society with funds such as membership and Union allocated budget and it must be spent by July every year.
- 7.3.2 The Client Account is the society's savings account which can be used to deposit sponsorship, donations or fundraising for future use as this account can be carried over from year to year.
- 7.4 Each society shall have designated members who shall be authorised to approve all financial transactions on behalf of the society. The Union must receive up-to-date contact information and sample signatures for each individual, and any changes must be agreed by the society committee.
- 7.5 Authorised committee members and Union staff will be responsible for completing all the required paperwork for financial transactions and ensuring no expenditure may be made without sufficient funds present in the society account.

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- 7.6 Societies must provide receipts or invoices for all expenditure, and can get an up-to-date account balance from the Union Finance Officer.
- 7.7 Societies shall receive funding usually through the following sources:
- 7.7.1 Membership Income: which may be collected by the society or the Union and must be paid into the Union with the necessary membership forms;
 - 7.7.2 Union Grant: which will be allocated to the societies by the Union after consideration of a Grant Request Form;
 - 7.7.3 Fundraising: which is expected from societies to cover their operations in addition to supporting charitable causes and must be undertaken following the Union's fundraising guidelines;
 - 7.7.4 Sponsorship: which must be ratified by Union Staff and Sabbatical Presidents before any contracts are signed with external individuals or companies. Any sponsorship agreements, whether financial or in kind, must not be a conflict of interest and must abide by charity laws.
- 7.8 Societies shall be able to spend their funds usually through the following methods:
- 7.8.1 Expenses Claims: where the authorised member of the society pays for the expense themselves, and then collates the receipts and completes an Expense Claim Form and returns this to the Union;
 - 7.8.2 Invoices: where the good or service is ordered and the supplier provides an invoice, which the Union shall then pay on behalf of the society.
 - 7.8.3 Purchases: where the society may work with Union staff to pay directly for items using the Union's banking methods.
- 7.9 Societies will be able to apply for a grant from the Union to support their activities during the year. The rules around the distribution of funds shall be that:
- 7.9.1 Societies will need to submit the required documents before a grant can be issued which shall include an inventory and an annual report with details of the previous year's activities, total membership and committee members.
 - 7.9.2 Societies must submit a Grant Request Form, detailing their planned activities for the year, their projected expenditure, projected income and request for funding.
 - 7.9.3 All Society Grant Requests shall be considered by the Society Finance Committee, which shall usually include:
 - 7.9.3.1 President (Communication and Democracy);
 - 7.9.3.2 Vice President (Societies);
 - 7.9.3.3 Chief Executive Officer;
 - 7.9.3.4 Student Development & Volunteering Coordinator.
 - 7.9.4 The Society Finance Committee shall consider the following criteria when assessing society funding requests:
 - 7.9.4.1 available Union funding;
 - 7.9.4.2 previous grant allocations;
 - 7.9.4.3 number of active student members;
 - 7.9.4.4 realistic projected figures;
 - 7.9.4.5 planned fundraising activity;
 - 7.9.4.6 training of committee members;
 - 7.9.4.7 date of submission of application;
 - 7.9.4.8 standard of annual report;
 - 7.9.4.9 evidence of good financial management;
 - 7.9.4.10 plan of activities for coming year;
 - 7.9.4.11 interaction with the Union and other groups;

- 7.9.4.12 attendance at Societies Forum and events;
- 7.9.4.13 charitable or community work undertaken by the society.

7.9.5 Funding for societies is not guaranteed and is issued on the assumption that the group and members abide by the regulations and policies of the Union. The Sabbatical Executive Committee have the power to withhold a budget or inflict a penalty to societies which breach stated rules. Societies may appeal this decision to the Executive Committee.

8. Society Activities

- 8.1 Societies will be required to hold an Annual General Meeting once a year to elect their new committee and review the year's activities.
- 8.1.1 The AGM usually takes place at the end of the academic year, and may be a stand-alone event or part of another social event.
 - 8.1.2 All members of the society must be invited to attend and given at least fourteen days' notice of the meeting. Only full, paid members may vote or speak during the meeting.
 - 8.1.3 The agenda for the meeting should be sent in advance to members and should normally contain the minutes from the previous AGM, summary of society activities, annual financial report, and election of new committee and approval of constitution.
 - 8.1.4 The minutes of the meeting must be taken as a record of all the items discussed and the votes cast. The minutes of a society AGM must be circulated to the President (Communication and Democracy) within 10 working days of the AGM.
 - 8.1.5 The AGM should be attended by more than 50% of the members of the society.
 - 8.1.6 The meeting will be chaired by the President of the society or another committee member, and the society may invite a representative of the Union to support the AGM.
- 8.2 If a quorum is not present at a society AGM within half an hour, or is not sustained throughout, then the meeting shall be adjourned and rescheduled within ten working days of the original notice.
- 8.3 If a quorum is not present at a rescheduled meeting, all matters on the agenda shall be delegated to the society committee and dealt with in consultation with the President (Communication and Democracy) and Vice President (Societies).
- 8.3.1 Any decisions of a society committee may be subject to question by a quorum of 50% plus one of the current members, or subject to external ruling through the Union's Complaints Regulation.
- 8.4 Societies shall be issued with an e-mail address and print code by the Union, which must be used appropriately. Societies will be expected to treat all Union and University facilities and equipment respectfully.
- 8.5 Societies may set up social media accounts for their group, but must be respectful of the Union and Universities social media policies. Societies using the 'RGU' and 'RGU:Union' brand must not make any statements or issue communications which are false or damage the reputation of the Union or University.
- 8.6 All society members must behave in a manner that positively reflects the society, Union and University. It is unacceptable to engage in any discrimination or anti-social behaviour. Students must be cautious while under the influence of alcohol during social activities so that they do not damage the reputation of the Union or

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University. The use of drugs, or the consumption of alcohol while using transport, is strictly prohibited.

- 8.7 Societies shall not be permitted to undertake or condone any initiation activities. All members must be treated equally and free to join and participation without any discrimination or harassment.
- 8.8 Societies which breach stated regulations or policies may be investigated by the Sabbatical Executive Committee. If misconduct takes place, the society may be referred to a Disciplinary Committee of the Union. Individuals may also make complaints about societies, which will be investigated under the Complaints Regulations.
- 8.9 In the event of an accident during a society event or meeting, members should follow the accident procedure, contact the Union and complete the required accident report form.