

**Minutes of the Student Members' General Meeting**  
 held on Wednesday, 30 January 2026, 12pm to 1pm,  
 Hybrid at Goldsmiths Students' Union, Dixon Road, London SE14 6NW,  
 and online via Google Meets

**STUDENT MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE:**

Total in Attendance	56
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**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND STAFF PRESENT:**

Sofian Kourkzi (SK)	Sabbatical Officer - SU President and Chair of Trustees
Shada Abdalqader (SA)	Sabbatical Officer - Welfare & Liberation Officer
Starr Thomas (ST)	Sabbatical Officer - Campaigns & Activities Officer
Tommy Mitchell (TM)	Student Trustee
Bethelhem Mihret (BM)	Student Trustee
Annabell Knapp (AK)	Union Chair
Mana Misaghi (MM)	Policy Adviser
Rhiannon Suchak (RS)	Head of Memberships
Azadeh Sarjoughian (AS)	Student Voice Coordinator
Ed Nedjari (EN)	Chief Executive
Victoria Chwa (VC)	Governance and Strategic Projects Coordinator

**VOTES:**

Total Votes Cast	50
Votes In Favour	41
Votes Against	6
Abstentions	3
Result	Passed

**1.0      Welcome, Introductions and Matters of Attendance**

1.1      The Union Chair opened the meeting and confirmed that attendees could hear proceedings both online and in person.

1.2      All attendees were instructed to register their attendance by scanning a QR code displayed on screen. It was noted that attendance registration was mandatory to confirm quorum and formally commence the meeting.

1.3      The Chair reiterated that attendance registration applied to all students present, including student trustees, sabbatical officers, part-time officers, department officers, and students attending online or in person.

1.4      The chair waited for 15 minutes to allow sufficient time for attendance registration and to achieve quorum.

1.5      An attendee joining by telephone without access to the QR code or chat was advised to submit their student number via email to the meeting organiser to ensure their attendance was recorded.

1.6      Once sufficient attendance registrations had been received and quorum was confirmed, the Chair formally opened the meeting.

1.7      **Agenda and Purpose of Meeting**  
The Chair outlined the agenda for the meeting, confirming that the primary purpose was to consider resolutions to amend the Students' Union Constitution.

1.8      The agenda was confirmed as:

- Presentation of proposed constitutional amendments
- Questions and discussion on the proposed amendments
- Debate for and against the resolutions
- Voting on the resolutions
- Any Other Business relating specifically to the constitutional changes

1.9      It was noted that the meeting was attended by students both online and in person. Students' Union staff were present. Sabbatical Officers were introduced, including the Campaigns and Activities Officer and the Students' Union President. Attendees were informed that questions could be directed to the officers during the discussion period.

**1.10     Meeting Procedure and Rules**

The Chair outlined the rules governing the meeting proceedings. MM was introduced as the staff member responsible for presenting and explaining the proposed constitutional amendments. It was explained that, following the presentation, time would be allocated for questions and discussion on the proposed amendments. A total of eight minutes was allocated for speeches for and against the resolutions, with each speaker limited to a maximum of two minutes. The maximum duration of the meeting was confirmed as 60 minutes.

1.11 All attendees were reminded to adhere to the Students' Union Safe Space Policy and to conduct themselves respectfully and without harassment or aggression during the meeting.

**2.0 Resolution to amend GSU's Constitution**

2.1 MM presented an overview of the proposed constitutional amendments, noting that all attendees had received the meeting papers, agenda, and resolutions in advance of the meeting.

2.2 It was confirmed that the Constitution is the Students' Union's primary governing document and is legally binding. The proposed amendments were intended to ensure legal accuracy, consistency with current practice, and regulatory compliance.

2.3 The following amendments were outlined:

- References to "Goldsmiths College" would be updated to "Goldsmiths University of London" to reflect the institution's university status.
- References to Students' Forum subcommittees would be added to ensure consistency with the bylaws and current governance structure, including liberation, activities, and education committees.
- The process for appointing student trustees would be changed from election to recruitment, in line with sector practice and to increase engagement with the role.
- References to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) electing trustees would be removed to reflect current practice.
- The term "political policy" would be replaced with "democratic policy" to distinguish student-led motions from organisational policies.
- The requirement for Students' Forum to submit reports to the Trustee Board would be amended from four to three per academic year, reflecting the actual number of forums held.
- The Constitution would be updated to allow trustees to communicate their details to the Chief Executive Officer via phone and email, replacing outdated methods.
- A procedure would be added for appointing a President from the remaining sabbatical officers should the President resign or be removed after the start of the academic year.

**2.4 Rationale for Proposed Amendments**

MM explained that the proposed change from electing to recruiting student trustees was informed by guidance from the Charity Commission and sector practice.

2.5 It was noted that:

- The Charity Commission expects Trustee Boards to consider skills, knowledge, and experience when appointing trustees.
- Fewer than 20 students' unions nationally continue to elect student

trustees.

- Recruitment would allow the Union to better manage skills, knowledge, diversity, and representation on the Trustee Board.
- Recruitment may increase accessibility for marginalised and non-traditional students who may find elections intimidating.

2.6 It was further noted that student trustee roles had historically been difficult to fill and retain, with multiple vacancies existing and low engagement following elections.

2.7 Regarding the proposed amendment relating to the President role, it was explained that:

- If the President role became vacant, the Students' Union would currently lose representation on Goldsmiths Council and other key university committees.
- Goldsmiths' Terms of Reference restrict council membership to the Students' Union President.
- Introducing a procedure to appoint a replacement President would ensure continued student representation.

2.8 The amendment replacing “political policy” with “democratic policy” was justified on the basis that student motions are not exclusively political and may relate to a wide range of student issues, including accessibility and welfare.

2.9 Other amendments were described as minor or technical updates required to reflect current governance arrangements and operational practice.

2.10 **Matters of Approval and Next Steps**

It was confirmed that the proposed constitutional amendments had already been approved by the Trustee Board and Goldsmiths Council.

2.11 The amendments were now presented to the General Meeting for student approval.

2.12 It was noted that, subject to approval by a majority vote, the amended Constitution would be:

- Filed with the Charity Commission
- Published on the Students' Union website
- Implemented alongside any necessary bye-law amendments

**3.0 Questions on the Proposed Amendments**

3.1 The Chair invited questions from attendees in person before taking questions from online participants.

3.2 No questions were raised initially by attendees in person.

3.3 One question was subsequently raised in person regarding the recruitment

process for student trustees, specifically asking who would be responsible for recruitment.

3.4 It was clarified that:

- All students would be eligible to apply for student trustee roles.
- Recruitment details would be determined if the resolution passed.
- A selection panel would be convened, including existing trustees and student representatives.
- The panel would review applications and conduct interviews.
- The process would replace elections with recruitment, while remaining open and accessible to all students.

3.5 A further question was raised regarding the appointment of a President if the role became vacant mid-academic year.

3.6 It was explained that:

- If the President role became vacant before the start of the academic year, a by-election would be held.
- If the vacancy occurred after the academic year had begun, the Trustee Board would be empowered to appoint a President from the remaining elected sabbatical officers.
- This approach was intended to ensure continued student representation on Goldsmiths Council and other key university committees.

3.7 Clarification was provided that if a sabbatical officer moved into the President role, any resulting vacancy within the sabbatical officer team could remain unfilled, as is current practice, but the President role must not remain vacant due to its statutory importance.

#### **4.0 Discussion Against the Resolution**

4.1 The Chair opened the floor to students wishing to speak against the resolution, in line with the agreed debate rules.

4.2 One student raised concerns regarding:

- A perception that the Students' Union prioritises certain viewpoints while marginalising or dismissing others that do not align with what was described as a prevailing political consensus within the Union.
- A view that engagement within the Students' Union is limited to a small proportion of the student body, resulting in democratic decisions being made by a minority of students.
- Concerns that replacing elections with recruitment could reduce accountability and increase the risk of bias if trustees are selected by the existing governance structures.
- Concerns that trustee recruitment could allow selective appointment of individuals aligned with existing priorities, with insufficient checks on

accountability.

- Criticism of the Union's representativeness, including concerns that not all marginalised groups are consistently prioritised or supported.
- Reference to past experiences in which the student felt their engagement with the Students' Union and sabbatical officers had not been adequately acknowledged or responded to.
- Concern that the proposed changes could further distance the Union from students who do not feel aligned with current Union positions.

**4.3** In response, it was clarified that:

- It was confirmed that decisions regarding the recruitment of student trustees would be made by the Trustee Board, which includes elected sabbatical officers, and not by Students' Union staff acting independently.
- It was emphasised that sabbatical officers are themselves elected by the student body and therefore provide a democratic mandate within the Trustee Board.
- It was stated that the recruitment process would be conducted transparently, with processes and decisions made publicly available to students.
- It was noted that the Students' Union is subject to oversight and scrutiny by Goldsmiths University, providing an additional layer of accountability.
- It was clarified that the intention of the recruitment model is to widen access to the student trustee role by reducing barriers associated with elections, which can be intimidating or inaccessible to some students.
- It was explained that recruitment is intended to increase diversity of skills, experience, and perspectives on the Trustee Board, rather than narrow representation.
- Officers reiterated that all students would retain the opportunity to express their views through voting, democratic processes, and participation in Union activities.

**4.4** No further students wished to speak against the resolution.

**5.0 Discussion in Favour of the Resolution**

**5.1** The Chair invited students wishing to speak in favour of the resolution.

**5.2** Students raised the following points in favour:

- The importance of ensuring the President role is always filled to maintain effective representation with the University.
- Recognition that the sabbatical officer team works collectively and that loss of roles can place strain on remaining officers.
- Support for updating the institution's name to "Goldsmiths University of London".
- Support for recruitment of student trustees as a means to widen participation and reduce barriers associated with elections.
- Support for distinguishing "democratic policy" from organisational policies

for clarity and accuracy.

- 5.3 It was noted that recruitment could broaden participation by enabling students who may not wish to stand in elections to contribute to governance.
- 5.4 No further students wished to speak in favour of the resolution.

## **6.0 Voting on the Resolution**

- 6.1 The Chair moved the meeting to a vote on the proposed constitutional amendments.
- 6.2 Attendees were instructed to vote via a QR code or online link.
- 6.3 Voting was anonymous, with student name and ID collected solely to verify eligibility.
- 6.4 Voting options were confirmed as:
  - In favour
  - Against
  - Abstain
- 6.5 Voting remained open until 12:45. Once voting closed, it was confirmed that results would be communicated to attendees following the meeting.

## **7.0 Any Other Business**

- 7.1 The Chair invited any other business.
- 7.2 No other items of business were raised.

## **End of Meeting**

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