

Associate Membership

Policy Details

Policy Owner:	Head of Membership Services
Approved by:	Organisational Development Subcommittee
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Reviewed by:	Head of Membership Services
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1. Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out Kingston Students' Union's approach to Associate Membership, including eligibility, application processes, rights, limitations and governance arrangements.

1.2 It is aligned with the Union's Articles of Associations and Byelaws and ensures Associate Membership is applied consistently and transparently.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- Individuals applying for or holding Associate Membership
- Union staff involved in processing or approving Associate Membership
- Trustees responsible for oversight of membership categories and fees

2.2 This policy does not apply to Standard Members of KSU.

3. Definitions

3.1 Associate Member – An individual who has been granted Associate Membership by the Union in accordance with this policy, the Byelaws, and the Articles of Association. Associate Members may access certain Union activities and services as set out in section 6.3 of this policy.

3.2 Standard Member – Every registered student (as defined by the University Registry) is considered a standard member and is automatically a member of the Union.

3.3 Validated Partner Institution – A validated arrangement is when the University approves a course, or module, to be delivered by another organisation (the partner) located in the UK or overseas and awarded by the University. The partner has full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of educational services. The student applies to, registers and pays their tuition fees (whether through the SLC, ESFA or directly) to the Partner. These students are not standard members of KSU.

3.4 Franchised Partner Institution - A franchised arrangement is when the University allows another organisation (the partner) located in the UK to deliver all or part of a higher education course on its behalf. The University has full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of educational services. The student applies to, registers and pays their tuition fees (whether through the SLC, ESFA or directly) to the University. These students are considered standard members of KSU.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 KSU may award Associate Membership to individuals who are not eligible for standard membership, where this supports the Union's activities, values and charitable objectives.

4.2 Associate membership does not confer student status and does not grant governance or democratic rights within the Union.

4.3 The Board of Trustees determines the categories, conditions, and fees associated with Associate Membership.

4.4 Associate Membership may be refused, limited, or withdrawn where granting or continuing membership would not be appropriate or would conflict with the Union's policies, values, or charitable objectives.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Trustees – responsible for determining the eligibility categories and fees for Associate Membership and exercises ultimate authority over the awarding and removal of Associate Membership.

5.2 Chief Executive Officer – responsible for reviewing and approving applications from members of the public and for decisions relating to the suspension or termination of Associate Membership.

5.3 Head of Membership Services – responsible for implementing this policy.

5.4 Reception & Operations Coordinator – responsible for the administration of handling associate membership requests.

6. Procedures

6.1 Eligibility Categories

6.1.1 Associate membership is available to:

- Kingston University staff
- Kingston University alumni
- Students from validated partner institutions
- Members of the public

6.1.2 Students from franchised partner institutions do not need to apply for associate membership as they are considered Standard Members.

6.2 Application Process

6.2.1 Those wanting to become an Associate Member will need to create a guest account on the KSU Website and submit an application form, using the email used to create their account.

6.2.1 KU staff, alumni and students from validated partner institutions must provide appropriate evidence of eligibility via an online form, available on the KSU website. On receipt of evidence, the Reception & Operations Coordinator will grant approved associate member status and instruct the applicant to purchase the membership fee.

6.2.2 Members of the public must explain their connection to Kingston University or the Union; outline the student group(s) or activities they wish to participate in and demonstrate that their involvement is appropriate. Their application will be reviewed by the CEO. As part of this process, consideration will be given to any safeguarding risks associated with the proposed activity, including whether the individual will be engaging with groups that include members under the age of 18. Where a safeguarding risk is identified, additional checks may be required, including a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check where appropriate. If approval is granted, the Reception & Operations Coordinator will grant approved member status and instruct the applicant to purchase the membership fee.

6.2.3 The associate membership fee is determined by the Board of Trustees and published on the KSU website.

6.2.4 Membership is granted until the end of the academic year (31 July) and will need to be renewed each academic year via re-application in line with the procedures outlined in 6.2.1–6.2.2. Renewal is not automatic.

6.2.5 All records will be maintained by the Reception & Operations Coordinator.

6.3 Rights and Limitations

6.3.1 Associate members may access:

- Associate membership of student groups
- Events delivered by KSU
- Commercial services provided by KSU

6.3.2 Associate members cannot:

- Be Standard Members
- Hold voting rights
- Stand or vote in elections, including student group elections
- Compete in BUCS competitions and they may also be ineligible to compete in other competitions where eligibility is restricted to standard members or current students.

6.4 Opt-Out and Termination

6.4.1 Associate Members may opt out by notifying the Chief Executive Officer in writing.

6.4.2 KSU may suspend or terminate Associate Membership where:

- Membership conditions are breached
- Conduct is incompatible with Union policies or values
- There is safeguarding, operational, or reputational risk

7. Related Policies and Documents

7.1 This policy should be read alongside the following policies and documents:

- KSU Articles of Association
- KSU Byelaws
- Safeguarding Policy

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner where required due to changes in legislation, governance documents or operational practice.