



## Membership of the Academic Registrars Council

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document explains the criteria and process for institutional membership of the Academic Registrars Council (“ARC”) and for associate participation in ARC activities.
- 1.2. ARC is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (“CIO”). This document must be read alongside ARC’s current constitution. In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the constitution, the constitution shall prevail.
- 1.3. ARC’s charitable object is the advancement of education for the public benefit, in particular by supporting and promoting excellence in academic and student administration in higher education and by enhancing the student experience.
- 1.4. ARC is the national forum for senior managers responsible for the academic administration of student matters in higher education. ARC promotes and shares good practice, supports professional networking and development, contributes to national debate and policy, and works with relevant sector bodies.
- 1.5. Membership of ARC is institutional. Each Member Institution participates through an authorised representative, in accordance with ARC’s constitution.

### 2. Categories of membership and participation

- 2.1. ARC recognises the following categories:
  - a) **Member Institution:** an institution admitted as a formal member of the CIO in accordance with Section 9 of the ARC constitution.
  - b) **Associate Participant:** an institution or organisation that is not admitted as a formal member of the CIO but is permitted by ARC to participate in specified ARC activities.
- 2.2. A Member Institution has the rights attaching to membership under the constitution, including any voting rights set out in the constitution.
- 2.3. Each Member Institution must identify an authorised representative to act on its behalf in relation to ARC membership. The authorised representative should normally be the Academic Registrar, Registrar, Chief Student Officer, Director of Student



Administration, Director of Academic Services, or another senior officer with equivalent responsibility for academic or student administration.

- 2.4. Associate Participants are not members of the CIO for constitutional or charity law purposes. Unless the charity trustees determine otherwise, Associate Participants may participate in relevant ARC activities but do not have voting rights, do not count towards quorum at general meetings, and may not hold trustee or other elected constitutional roles.
- 2.5. The use of the term “member” in ARC’s constitution has its formal legal meaning. Any wider references to participation, affiliation or association with ARC must be interpreted consistently with the constitution.
- 2.6. This document is intended to provide operational guidance only. It does not amend, override or replace Section 9 of the ARC constitution, and no provision in this document shall be interpreted as creating a category of CIO membership not provided for in the constitution.

### **3. Criteria for admission as a Member Institution**

- 3.1. Admission as a Member Institution is open to eligible higher education institutions whose purposes, activities and senior administrative responsibilities are consistent with ARC’s charitable object.
- 3.2. In considering whether an institution should be admitted as a Member Institution, the charity trustees will normally consider whether the institution:
  - a) is based in the United Kingdom;
  - b) delivers higher education at Level 4 or above, or equivalent;
  - c) has recognised degree awarding powers, university title, college of higher education status, or another recognised basis for substantial higher education delivery;
  - d) has a senior officer who can act as the institution’s authorised representative and whose responsibilities are equivalent or substantially similar to those commonly associated with an Academic Registrar or equivalent senior academic/student administration role;
  - e) supports ARC’s charitable object, aims and values;
  - f) is able to contribute constructively to ARC’s work, including the sharing of practice and professional knowledge; and



- g) is not subject to circumstances that would make admission contrary to ARC's interests, charitable purposes, reputation or legal obligations.
- 3.3. ARC recognises that degree awarding powers and higher education status are not determined solely by the Office for Students. For institutions in England, relevant evidence may include registration with the Office for Students and authorisation to grant degree awards. For institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and for institutions operating under other relevant UK statutory or constitutional arrangements, ARC will take account of the applicable domestic legal, regulatory and governance framework.
- 3.4. Evidence of degree awarding powers or equivalent status may include, but is not limited to:
  - a) statutory powers;
  - b) powers granted by Royal Charter, Act of Parliament, Order in Council or other recognised legal instrument;
  - c) authorisation by a relevant higher education regulator or public authority;
  - d) validation or awarding arrangements with a recognised degree-awarding body;
  - e) university title or recognised higher education institution status; or
  - f) equivalent domestic recognition in the relevant jurisdiction.
- 3.5. The absence of degree awarding powers will not automatically prevent an institution from engaging with ARC, but it may affect whether the institution is eligible for formal CIO membership or whether associate participation is more appropriate.

#### **4. Criteria for associate participation**

- 4.1. The charity trustees may permit associate participation where an institution or organisation is not eligible, or has not been admitted, as a Member Institution but has a significant and relevant connection to higher education, academic administration or student administration.
- 4.2. Associate participation may be appropriate where an organisation:
  - a) delivers a substantial volume of higher education but does not meet the criteria for admission as a Member Institution;
  - b) validates, supports, regulates, funds or otherwise works materially with higher education providers;



- c) has a demonstrable role in academic or student administration;
  - d) contributes to policy, professional practice, sector development or student administration in higher education; or
  - e) would otherwise contribute to ARC's charitable object and activities.
- 4.3. Organisations from outside the United Kingdom, including organisations operating under non-UK legal, regulatory or governance frameworks, may apply for associate status where they meet the relevant requirements.
- 4.4. In considering applications from organisations outside the United Kingdom, ARC may make reasonable adjustments to the assessment of eligibility to reflect the applicant's domestic legislation, regulatory arrangements, institutional terminology, governance structures and higher education qualifications framework.
- 4.5. Such adjustments must be consistent with ARC's constitution, charitable object, legal obligations, reputation and the proper administration of ARC as a CIO.

## **5. Application process**

- 5.1. An institution seeking admission as a Member Institution, or recognition as an Associate Participant, should submit an application to ARC using the process published by ARC from time to time.
- 5.2. Unless ARC specifies another process, applications should be submitted to the Business and Communications Secretary via ARC's administrative contact address.
- 5.3. The application should be concise and should normally include:
- a) the institution's legal name and any trading or operating names;
  - b) the name, job title and contact details of the proposed authorised representative or principal ARC contact;
  - c) the institution's constitutional or legal status, for example chartered body, higher education corporation, company, charity, statutory body, public body or other legal form;
  - d) details of the institution's higher education provision, including student numbers at Level 4 and above, or equivalent;
  - e) the levels and types of programmes offered, for example undergraduate certificates and diplomas, foundation degrees, bachelor's degrees, postgraduate taught awards



and postgraduate research degrees, or equivalent qualifications in the relevant jurisdiction;

- f) details of any degree awarding powers or equivalent domestic authorisation held by the institution;
- g) where the institution does not hold its own degree awarding powers, details of validating, franchising, partnership or awarding-body arrangements;
- h) evidence of the institution's role in higher education and academic or student administration;
- i) details of membership of relevant sector bodies, where applicable;
- j) a statement explaining how the institution expects to benefit from participation in ARC;
- k) a statement explaining how ARC and its members would benefit from the institution's participation;
- l) confirmation that the institution supports ARC's charitable object, aims and values; and
- m) any additional information reasonably requested by ARC to support consideration of the application.

5.4. ARC may request further information where this is necessary to assess the application properly.

## **6. Consideration and decision-making**

- 6.1. Applications will be reviewed in the first instance by the Business and Communications Secretary or another person authorised by the charity trustees.
- 6.2. The Business and Communications Secretary may make enquiries, request further evidence, consult relevant ARC officers, or seek advice before making a recommendation.
- 6.3. Decisions on admission to CIO membership are made by the charity trustees, or under authority delegated by the charity trustees, in accordance with ARC's constitution.
- 6.4. The charity trustees may:
  - a) admit the institution as a Member Institution;
  - b) decline admission as a Member Institution but offer associate participation;
  - c) recognise the organisation as an Associate Participant;



- d) defer a decision pending further information;
  - e) decline the application; or
  - f) approve membership or participation subject to conditions.
- 6.5. Where an application for CIO membership is refused, ARC will inform the applicant of the decision and the reasons for refusal within 21 days, in accordance with the constitution.
- 6.6. Where the constitution provides an opportunity for the applicant to make representations following refusal, ARC will follow the process and timeframe set out in the constitution.
- 6.7. ARC will normally notify applicants in writing of the outcome of their application. Where an application is declined, ARC will normally provide brief reasons unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, for example legal, confidentiality, regulatory, safeguarding or reputational considerations.
- 6.8. All membership and associate participation decisions will be reported to the next meeting of the ARC Executive for information.

## **7. Authorised representatives**

- 7.1. Each Member Institution must nominate an authorised representative to act on its behalf in ARC matters.
- 7.2. The authorised representative should normally be the institution's Academic Registrar or equivalent senior officer responsible for academic administration, student administration, governance of the student academic lifecycle, or related institutional functions.
- 7.3. A Member Institution may change its authorised representative by notifying ARC in writing.
- 7.4. ARC may request confirmation that an individual has authority to act as the institution's authorised representative.
- 7.5. The authorised representative may participate in ARC meetings, communications, consultations and votes in accordance with the constitution and any applicable ARC procedures.



- 7.6. Where an authorised representative is unavailable, the Member Institution may nominate an appropriate substitute, subject to any requirements in the constitution or any procedures approved by ARC.

## **8. Rights and expectations of Member Institutions**

### **8.1. Member Institutions are expected to:**

- a) support ARC's charitable object and aims;
- b) participate constructively in ARC's work;
- c) share knowledge and practice in a spirit of mutual professional support;
- d) act in a way that protects ARC's reputation, independence and charitable status;
- e) comply with ARC's constitution, policies and reasonable procedural requirements;
- f) maintain accurate contact details with ARC;
- g) ensure that ARC is notified of the institution's authorised representative;
- h) ensure that the authorised representative is sufficiently senior and appropriately briefed to participate in ARC business; and
- i) pay any applicable subscription or fee by the due date.

- 8.2. ARC membership fees are set by ARC and may vary by institutional size or other criteria determined by ARC. ARC's current public membership information states that fees are dependent on institutional size as supplied by HESA and that membership runs from 1 August to 31 July.

## **9. Rights and expectations of Associate Participants**

- 9.1. Associate Participants are expected to comply with the same general standards of conduct as Member Institutions.
- 9.2. Associate Participants may be invited to attend meetings, events, networks or practitioner groups, but participation is subject to any limitations set by ARC.
- 9.3. Associate Participants do not have the constitutional rights of Member Institutions unless the ARC constitution or the charity trustees expressly provide otherwise.



- 9.4. Associate Participants may be asked to nominate a principal contact for ARC purposes. This person is not an authorised representative for CIO membership purposes unless the organisation is admitted as a Member Institution.
- 9.5. ARC may withdraw or vary associate participation where it considers this appropriate and consistent with ARC's charitable interests.

## **10. Refusal, suspension or termination**

- 10.1. ARC may refuse admission, suspend participation, terminate associate participation, or recommend termination of CIO membership where one or more of the following applies:
- a) the institution or organisation does not meet the relevant eligibility criteria;
  - b) the information provided in support of the application is materially inaccurate, incomplete or misleading;
  - c) the institution or organisation no longer has a substantial connection with higher education, academic administration or student administration;
  - d) the institution or organisation fails to pay the applicable subscription or fee;
  - e) the institution or organisation acts in a way that is inconsistent with ARC's charitable object, aims or values;
  - f) the institution or organisation's continued membership or participation would be likely to bring ARC into disrepute;
  - g) membership or participation would create an unmanaged conflict of interest or legal, regulatory, financial or reputational risk for ARC; or
  - h) the charity trustees otherwise reasonably consider that refusal, suspension or termination is in the best interests of ARC.
- 10.2. Before terminating CIO membership, ARC will follow the procedure required by the constitution.
- 10.3. Where a decision may adversely affect an institution's membership or participation, ARC will normally:
- a) notify the institution or organisation of the concern;
  - b) give it a reasonable opportunity to respond;
  - c) consider any representations made; and



d) notify it of the outcome.

10.4. ARC may take interim action, including temporary suspension of access to meetings, events, mailing lists, networks or member resources, where this is necessary to protect ARC, its charitable purposes, its members, its staff, its volunteers, its authorised representatives or its reputation.

10.5. Any decision to refuse, suspend or terminate membership or participation will be reported to the next meeting of the ARC Executive for information, subject to any necessary confidentiality restrictions.

## **11. Changes in institutional circumstances**

11.1. Member Institutions and Associate Participants should notify ARC promptly of significant changes that may affect eligibility or participation, including:

- a) merger, dissolution, closure or transfer of activities;
- b) change of legal status;
- c) loss, acquisition, variation or suspension of degree awarding powers or equivalent domestic authorisation;
- d) material change in higher education provision;
- e) change of authorised representative or principal contact;
- f) material change in governance, ownership or control; or
- g) regulatory, legal or reputational developments that may be relevant to ARC membership or participation.

11.2. Following notification of a change, ARC may review the institution's membership or participation status.

## **12. Subscriptions and renewal**

12.1. Membership and participation may be subject to an annual subscription or fee.

12.2. Payment of a subscription does not in itself create a right to CIO membership where the institution has not been admitted in accordance with the ARC constitution.

12.3. Failure to pay the relevant subscription or fee may result in suspension or termination of membership or participation, subject to the ARC constitution and any applicable ARC policy.



- 12.4. ARC may publish subscription rates and renewal arrangements from time to time.

**13. Review of this document**

- 13.1. This document will be reviewed periodically by the charity trustees or their nominee to ensure that it remains consistent with ARC's constitution, charitable purposes, operational requirements and legal obligations.
- 13.2. Any amended version of this document must be approved under ARC's usual governance arrangements.
- 13.3. The Business and Communications Secretary will ensure that the current approved version is made available through the appropriate ARC communication channels.

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