

CONSTITUTION

I. Preamble

There shall be a representative and advisory association of professional bodies, known as TRS UK (referred to in this document as “the Association”).

II. Purposes

The purposes of the Association shall be:

1. To promote and support the academic study of religion¹ in the UK and worldwide;
2. To advocate for the academic study of religion with government, universities, and other relevant institutions and persons;
3. To promote co-operation, on matters of common interest and concern, between institutions and learned societies engaged in the academic study of religion in the UK;
4. To raise public awareness of the academic study of religion;
5. To promote and publicise high quality research in religious studies, theology and related disciplines;
6. To promote high standards in the teaching of religious studies, theology and related disciplines in the UK, particularly in higher education.

III. Membership

1. Membership of the Association shall be open to the following bodies in the following categories:

Affiliate Membership shall be open to any learned society or professional body based in the UK whose primary focus is some aspect of the academic study of religion.

Institutional Membership shall be open to any academic group, within a higher education institution² in the UK, with research and teaching specialisms in the study of religion.

Associate Membership shall be open to any academic group, with research and teaching specialisms in the study of religion, within another institution in the UK that offers degrees in some aspect of the study of religion validated by a UK higher education institution. Associate Membership shall not confer voting rights.

2. Bodies not meeting any of these criteria may be admitted to associate membership if the Committee is satisfied that their inclusion would further the purposes of the association.

IV. Meetings

¹ For the purposes of this constitution, “academic study of religion” shall include all academic disciplines concerned with the significance and meaning of religion and religions, incorporating fields of study such as theology, divinity and religious studies, in addition to sub-fields applying different theories and methods to the study of religions, such as the sociology or psychology of religion.

² For the purposes of this constitution, the definition of a “higher education institution” shall be that used by the national funding councils for the relevant part of the UK.

1. The Association shall meet at least once a year (Annual General Meeting). At least fourteen days' notice shall be given of the date of the Annual General Meeting.
2. Each member body shall be entitled to send one representative to meetings. Member bodies shall ensure that their representatives are qualified to represent the academic study of religion and to contribute to furthering the purposes of the association. An Affiliate Member or Institutional Member body providing the President shall be allowed to send a voting representative in addition to the President, since the President does not normally vote (see 6, below).
3. The Association shall have the power to co-opt up to four additional non-voting persons for any particular meeting.
4. The Committee shall call further meetings as required.
5. A meeting shall be deemed properly constituted when it is called by one of the Officers acting on behalf of the Committee and has the attendance of representatives from a minimum of twelve member bodies.
6. Except for amendments to the Constitution, voting issues shall be settled by a simple majority vote at a meeting. Each Affiliate Member and Institutional Member body shall be entitled to one vote. The President shall vote only in the case of a tie.

V. Officers

1. The Association shall have four officers: a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Officers of the Association must be members in good standing of an Affiliate Member body, and/or members of staff in an Institutional Member or Associate Member body.
2. Officers shall be elected by simple majority vote of the Annual General Meeting.
3. Officers shall normally serve for four years, with the option of re-appointment for one year only. Officers may be re-elected only in exceptional circumstances.
4. The Officers shall be the signatories on bank accounts held by the association.
5. Reasonable expenses incurred by the Officers in the performance of their duties shall be reimbursed by the association.
6. **The President** shall chair the Annual General Meeting and the Committee, and shall present to the Annual General Meeting an annual report of the association's activities.
7. **The Vice President** shall assist and deputise for the President as required, including as a representative of the Association to external bodies.
8. **The Secretary** shall maintain records of the Annual General Meeting and of all Committee meetings.
9. **The Treasurer** shall maintain accounts and present a financial report to the Annual General Meeting.
10. In the event of a casual vacancy in an Officer post between Annual General

11. Officers may be removed from post by a simple majority vote of the Annual General Meeting.

VI. The Committee

1. The Committee shall be empowered to conduct the business of the Association between general meetings, including representing the Association and issuing statements on its behalf.
2. The Committee shall consist of the Officers and of additional committee members, (each of whom must fulfil the membership criteria specified above for Officers) as follows:
 - a. A maximum of one representative of each Affiliate Member body – each Affiliate Member shall be invited to appoint one representative to the committee;
 - b. Up to five other persons co-opted by the Committee.
3. In exercising the right to co-opt, the Committee shall give due consideration to geographical spread and to the representation of all aspects of the academic study of religion in the UK.
4. Committee members shall normally serve for three years, with the option of re-appointment for one year only.
5. The Committee shall meet as often as is required, and may appoint sub-committees. A Committee meeting shall be quorate if at least five Committee members are in attendance.
6. The President and Committee members shall normally serve their terms by calendar years, taking up the appointment in January after election.
7. The Association, and the Committee acting on its behalf, shall have the power to appoint further sub-committees or individuals for specific projects.

VII. Dues

There shall be an annual subscription which shall be determined by the Association from time to time, and which may vary with membership category.

VIII. Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of an Association meeting, provided that four weeks' notice has been given about proposed changes.

NOTES ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The key proposed changes to the Constitution are as follows:

Preamble

- Change of name from AUDTRS to TRS UK
- Change of description from “representative and advisory professional body” to “representative and advisory association of professional bodies”, to clarify relationship of TRS UK to the learned societies (see Membership)

Purposes

- Substantially rewritten to broaden the range of possible activities (especially through the addition of the first purpose); retains original focus on advocacy and co-operation

Membership

Various changes to (a) expand the types of bodies that can be members; (b) relax the criteria for institutional membership, recognizing that the current criteria exclude many relevant academic groups

- Introduction of “affiliate membership” for learned societies
- Introduction of “associate membership” (non-voting) for non-HE institutions offering TRS degrees validated by HE institutions

Meetings, Officers

Mostly “tidying up” changes, including clarification of various issues not covered in the original document (e.g. how the AGM is called and how officers are dismissed), and simplification of various processes.

Committee

- Introduction of representatives of affiliate members (*ie* learned societies)

Final section on Review omitted for flexibility – this of course does not preclude future reviews of the association’s role!