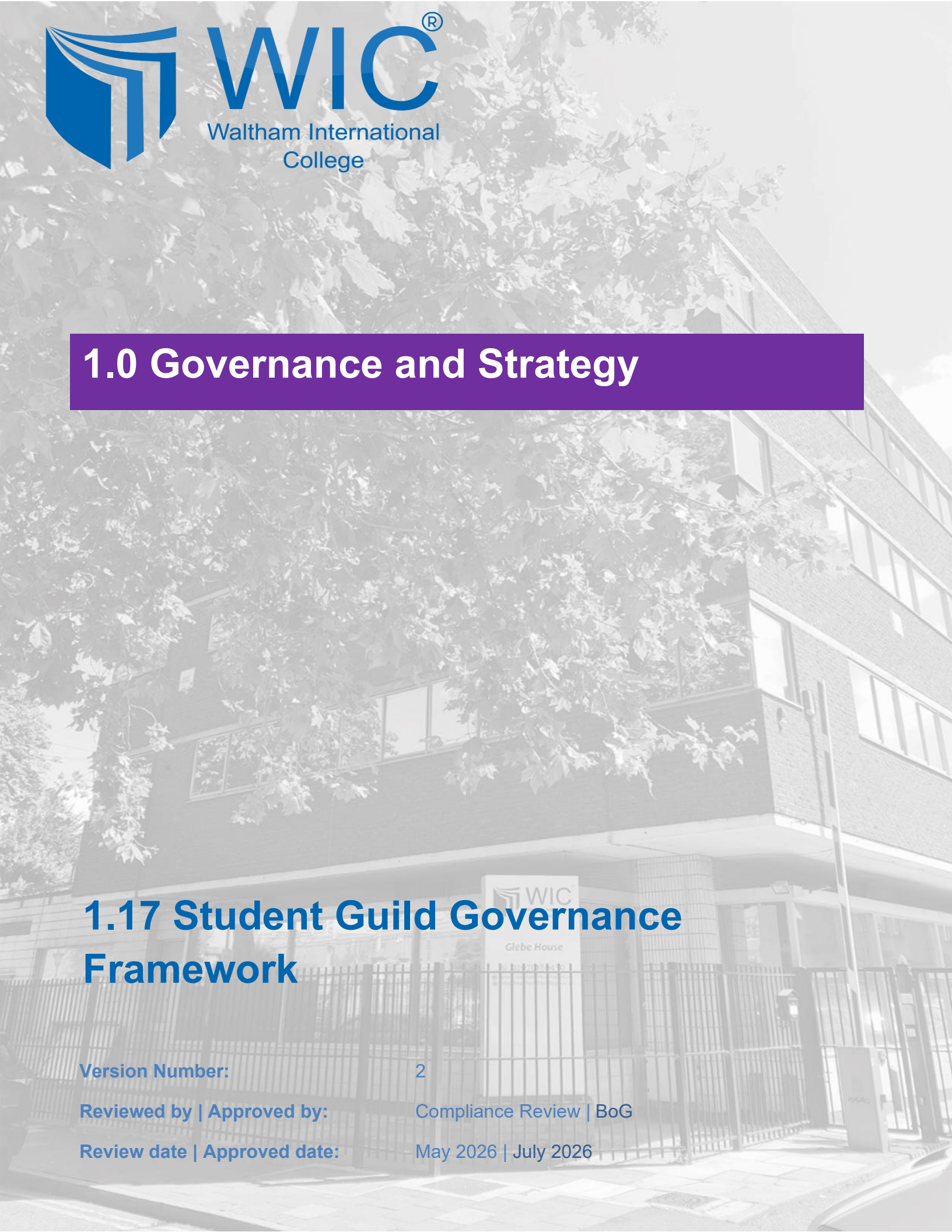
Waltham International College

1.0 Governance and Strategy



1.17 Student Guild Governance Framework

Version Number:	2
Reviewed by | Approved by:	Compliance Review | BoG
Review date | Approved date:	May 2026 | July 2026

Compliance Alignment Statement

This version of the Student Guild Framework has been aligned to current UK and Office for Students requirements as of May 2026. The substantive changes are listed below.

Version Control Statement

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next Review
1	13/02/2026	New Document	Document to provide guidelines on WIC Student Guild Governance arrangements.	Quality and Compliance	Aug 2026
2	June 2026	- Full structural redesign. - Academic Officer added to GMC composition. - Annual s.22 notification mechanism added. - Charity law disclosure added. - Freedom of Speech Act 2024 provisions expanded. - Electoral registration (OfS E5) added. - Added sections 4.14 Transitional arrangements and 4.15 DAP alignment - Appendix numbering corrected. Cross-references to 1.10 and 1.17.1 added.	Compliance Alignment 2026 (OfS)	QA Compliance Review	August 2027

External Reference Points

- Education Act 1994 (Section 22 - Students' Unions) - primary legislative basis
- Education Act (No.2) 1986 (Section 43 - Freedom of Speech)
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2024
- Higher Education and Research Act 2017
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Legislation (see WIC Safeguarding: Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy)
- OfS Condition B2: Resources, Support and Student Engagement
- OfS Condition E5: Facilitation of Electoral Registration

Related Policies and Documents

Affects all other policy documents. This document should however be read together with the following documents:

- 1.01 Governance and Management Framework
- 1.10 Student Engagement Policy
- 1.11 Safeguarding: Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- 1.12 Prevent Policy
- 1.13 Equality and Diversity Policy
- 1.16 Freedom of Expression, Academic Freedom and External Speakers Policy
- 1.17.1 Student Guild Constitution and Code of Practice
- 1.17.2 Student Partnership Agreement
- 2.01 Health and Safety Policy
- 2.05 Data Protection and Retention Policy
- 2.11.1 Conflict of Interest Policy
- 4.06 Complaints Policy
- 4.14 Student Code of Conduct

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Governance Framework is to define how the WIC Student Guild is structured, governed and held accountable. It ensures the Guild operates lawfully, transparently and in alignment with WIC policies, the Education Act 1994 (Section 22), and all other applicable legislation, while effectively representing students and supporting their engagement in academic, disciplinary and institutional governance matters.

2. Scope

This Framework applies to all Guild officers, all enrolled students (who are members of the Guild), and all Guild activities including governance, elections, finances, representation, events, and the Guild's relationship with WIC. All Guild activities must operate within WIC policies and applicable legal requirements.

3. Introduction

The WIC Student Guild is the formally constituted representative body for all students enrolled at WIC. Its establishment and operation are governed by Section 22 of the Education Act 1994, which requires the WIC Governing Body to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that the Guild operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances.

The Guild is not a separate legal entity or registered charity. It operates under the authority of the WIC Governing Body and in accordance with this Framework and the Student Guild Constitution and Code of Practice (Policy 1.17.1). The Guild works in partnership with WIC through the Student Partnership Agreement and is integral to WIC's student engagement framework (Policy 1.10).

4. Governance Framework

4.1 Governance and Accountability

The WIC Governing Body retains ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with Section 22 of the Education Act 1994 and all other legislation applicable to the Guild. Oversight is exercised through the Academic Board (or an equivalent designated committee), which receives regular reports from the Guild on:

- Governance and elections
- Finance and budget monitoring
- External affiliations and associated costs
- Complaints and compliance matters
- Annual engagement statistics

4.1.1 Formal Escalation Route

Where matters require escalation beyond the Institutional Lead or the Student Experience Board, the following escalation route applies:

a) Guild officers raise the matter with the Institutional Lead in writing, setting out the issue and the outcome sought;

b) The Institutional Lead brings the matter to the Operational Management Committee (OMC) at its next scheduled meeting, or sooner if the matter is urgent;

c) Where the matter engages academic standards, student outcomes or course related concerns, the Institutional Lead refers it to the Academic Board;

d) Where the matter is of strategic significance, constitutional importance, or cannot be resolved at OMC or Academic Board level, it is escalated to the Full Board of Governors.

The Institutional Lead is responsible for ensuring that escalations are handled promptly, that the Guild is kept informed of progress, and that a record of all escalations and their outcomes is maintained.

4.1.2 Institutional Lead

The Institutional Lead for the Guild (appointed by WIC) will:

- provide institutional oversight and administrative support;
- line manage any WIC staff assigned to support the Guild;
- ensure compliance with institutional policies and statutory duties;
- and refrain from interfering with the lawful democratic decisions of elected student officers, except where intervention is required to ensure legal or regulatory compliance.

4.2 Guild Management Committee (GMC)

4.2.1 Composition

The Guild is governed by a Guild Management Committee (GMC) comprising four elected officers:

- President
- Academic Officer
- Events and Activities Officer
- Communications Officer

Full role profiles for each officer are set out in the Appendices to this Framework. All four officers are elected representatives of the student body and form the full decision making body of the Guild.

4.2.2 Officer Status

Officers are elected student representatives. They may receive a stipend or hourly remuneration processed through WIC payroll systems. Officers are not trustees, company directors or independent financial signatories of WIC. Officers shall operate within the delegated authority defined by WIC and set out in their individual role profiles. Employment status is clarified in contracts issued by WIC HR. Officers may not line manage WIC staff unless formally delegated to do so in writing by an appropriate WIC officer.

4.3 GMC Meetings

The GMC shall meet at least once per month during term time. The President (or a nominated deputy) chairs each meeting. Minutes shall be recorded and published on the student portal, subject to any lawful redactions required for data protection or third party confidentiality purposes.

4.3.1 Decision-making

Decisions shall be made by simple majority of those present and voting, with quorum requiring at least three of the four GMC officers to be present. The Chair shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

4.3.2 Reporting

A termly report shall be submitted to the WIC Institutional Lead and presented to the Student Experience Board at its next scheduled meeting. The Student Experience Board is the designated committee for the formal receipt of termly Guild reports on its behalf of the Governing Body.

An annual report shall be submitted to the Governing Body summarising:

- Guild activities;
- elections and officer changes;
- external affiliations;
- complaints received and resolved;
- compliance matters;
- and financial performance.

4.4 General Meetings (GM)

The Guild shall hold at least one General Meeting (GM) per academic year. Additional General Meetings may be called by the GMC or by petition of at least 5% of enrolled students.

General Meetings may be held in person, online or in a hybrid format, provided all enrolled students have a reasonable opportunity to participate. Notice of at least 14 days shall be given, with the agenda published on the student portal.

Quorum is achieved when the greater of:

(a) 5% of enrolled students, or

(b) 30 students, are in attendance.

For votes on constitutional amendments, a higher threshold of 10% of enrolled students (or 50 students, whichever is greater) shall apply, ensuring that significant constitutional changes reflect a meaningful democratic mandate.

General Meetings may:

- receive reports from officers;
- debate and pass motions by simple majority;
- make recommendations to the GMC;
- and propose constitutional amendments (subject to approval by the Governing Body). Decisions of a General Meeting shall not override the statutory or regulatory obligations of WIC.

4.5 Transparency and Publication

In accordance with Section 22 of the Education Act 1994, the Guild shall publish the following on the student portal, keeping information current at all times:

- This Governance Framework and the Constitution and Code of Practice (Policy 1.17.1)
- Election regulations and results
- Summary financial statements
- External affiliations, their purpose and associated costs
- The complaints procedure and how to access it
- Annual statistics on complaints received and governance matters

All documents will be reviewed and republished at least annually or following any material changes.

4.6 Annual Notification to Students

In accordance with Section 22(3) of the Education Act 1994, the WIC Governing Body shall ensure that all enrolled students are informed, at least once per academic year, of:

- The Code of Practice currently in force (Policy 1.17.1), including how to access it
- Any restrictions imposed on the Guild's activities by the law relating to charities (see Section 4.7 below)
- The provisions of Section 43 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986 and the WIC Freedom of Expression Policy, as they are relevant to the activities and conduct of the Guild

This notification shall be delivered through the annual student induction process, supplemented by a written communication to all enrolled students at the start of each academic year. The Institutional Lead is responsible for ensuring this obligation is met and for recording evidence of compliance.

4.7 Guild Legal Status and Charity Law

The WIC Student Guild is not a registered charity and is not a separate legal entity. It operates as an internal representative body of WIC, with all assets and funds held by WIC and administered through WIC financial systems. As such, the Guild is not directly subject to charity law as a charity. However, in accordance with Section 22(4)(b) of the Education Act 1994, all students must be informed of any restrictions imposed on Guild activities by the law relating to charities.

Because the Guild is not a registered charity, it is not bound by the duties imposed on charity trustees. However, Guild officers must not cause WIC to act in a manner that is inconsistent with WIC's own charitable or public interest purposes where applicable, and must not use Guild resources for purposes that are purely political, commercial, or outside the scope of the Guild's stated purpose. Guild officers should seek guidance from the Institutional Lead if uncertain about the boundaries of permissible activities.

4.8 External Affiliations and Campaigning

The GMC may propose affiliation to external organisations. Any proposed affiliation must:

- Be publicly notified to all students in advance, with clear information on the purpose and cost of the affiliation
- Be approved by the GMC in an open meeting, with the decision recorded in published minutes
- Be reported annually in the Guild's annual report to the Governing Body

Students may request a review of any existing affiliation by petition of at least 5% of enrolled students. The Guild shall conduct a transparent review process and communicate the outcome to all students.

The Guild shall remain non party political and shall not endorse political parties or candidates. The Guild may engage in issue based advocacy relevant to the interests and welfare of students and the wider public benefit, provided such advocacy is lawful and consistent with WIC's obligations under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2024.

4.9 Freedom of Speech and External Speakers

The Guild is committed to upholding freedom of speech within the law, in accordance with: Section 43 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986; the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2024; and WIC's Freedom of Expression, Academic Freedom and External Speakers Policy (1.16).

Under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2024, WIC is required to take reasonably practicable steps to promote free speech within the law. The Guild, as a constituent part of WIC's activities, must also operate in a manner consistent with this duty. In practice, this means:

- Guild events and activities must affirmatively support and protect the right of speakers and attendees to express lawful views, even where those views are controversial or contrary to the Guild's own position
- External speaker events must follow WIC's institutional risk assessment procedure. Requests to host external speakers must be submitted in advance to the Institutional Lead
- External speakers may be declined only on lawful and proportionate grounds — for example, where there is clear evidence of risk of unlawful speech (as defined by law, not by discomfort or disagreement with the views expressed)
- Guild campaigns and motions must be consistent with the law on free speech and must not seek to prevent lawful expression by others

The Guild President is responsible for ensuring that all GMC members understand and comply with the Guild's obligations under the Freedom of Speech Act. Any concerns about potential breaches should be raised promptly with the Institutional Lead.

4.10 Finance and Audit

4.10.1 Budgeting

The Guild budget forms part of WIC's annual financial planning cycle. The GMC may propose budget priorities and present a written submission to WIC Finance ahead of each planning cycle. Final budget approval rests with WIC Finance and the Governing Body.

4.10.2 Financial Controls

All Guild income and expenditure shall be processed through WIC finance systems in accordance with WIC procurement policies. No independent Guild bank account shall be established. Officers shall operate within approved delegated spending limits. A minimum two stage approval process shall apply to all payments: the relevant Guild officer approves, and the Institutional Lead or WIC Finance confirms.

4.10.3 Audit

Guild finances shall be included in WIC's internal audit cycle. A summary of annual financial performance shall be published to students on the student portal within three months of the end of each financial year.

The WIC Student Guild shall be incorporated into WIC's institutional Risk Register once the Guild is operational. The Institutional Lead is responsible for ensuring that Guild related risks (including governance, financial, reputational and student engagement risks) are identified, assessed and included in the Register at the next scheduled Risk Register review following the Guild's formation. The Risk Register entry shall be reviewed at least annually and reported to the Board's Audit and Risk function as part of the standard institutional risk reporting cycle.

Guild governance and expenditure shall be incorporated into the internal audit scope and internal audit planning cycle once the Guild is operational, with the first audit expected no later than the end of the 2026 - 27 academic year.

4.11 Data Protection, Safeguarding and Equality

All Guild activities shall comply with: UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018; WIC's safeguarding legislation and policies; the Equality Act 2010 and WIC's Equality and Diversity Policy; and WIC's Prevent Policy.

Third-party platforms used for Guild elections, surveys or events must:

- have appropriate data processing agreements in place with WIC;
- meet WIC's institutional security standards;
- and be approved by the Institutional Lead in advance. The Guild may not collect or process personal data of students outside WIC's approved systems without written permission from the WIC Data Protection Officer.

4.12 Conflicts of Interest

All GMC officers must declare in writing any actual or potential conflict of interest, whether financial or personal, at the earliest opportunity. A conflicted officer shall withdraw from the relevant discussion and decision making process and shall not seek to influence the decision in any way. A Register of Interests shall be maintained by the Institutional Lead, reviewed annually and published to students on the student portal.

4.13 Electoral Registrations

In accordance with OfS Condition E5, WIC is required to facilitate the electoral registration of students. The Guild is encouraged to support this obligation by promoting awareness of civic electoral registration rights at Guild elections, induction events and through Guild communications channels.

The Institutional Lead will liaise with the relevant Electoral Registration Officer and the Guild President to co-ordinate this activity at the start of each academic year.

4.14 Transitional Arrangements

4.14.1 First Election Cycle

As the Student Guild was newly constituted in February 2026, the following transitional arrangements apply to the first full election cycle:

a) There are no interim officer appointments. Student representatives involved in setting up the Guild will support the process of establishing the Guild's initial structures on an informal advisory basis, without holding officer status or exercising officer powers.

b) The first formal democratic elections for all four GMC officer posts shall be held by October 2026. The OMC is responsible for confirming the election timetable and ensuring all necessary arrangements (Returning Officer appointment, voting platform, candidate briefing) are in place by September 2026.

c) The Returning Officer for the first election shall be appointed by the Board of Governors or, if delegated, by the OMC, and must be independent of all candidates.

d) Elections shall be conducted via a secure online voting platform approved by the Institutional Lead.

4.14.2 Guild Handbook

A Guild Handbook shall be produced by October 2026, covering:

- officer handover and induction procedures;
- key performance indicators for Guild effectiveness;
- training requirements for incoming officers;
- and administrative guidance on GMC meetings and record keeping.

The Institutional Lead is responsible for coordinating production of the Handbook in consultation with the inaugural student representatives. The Guild Handbook does not form part of this policy but will be made available on the student portal and reviewed annually.

4.15 Student Engagement and Degree Awarding Powers (DAP)

The Student Guild plays a central role in WIC's student engagement framework and contributes directly to the evidence base required to support WIC's application for Degree Awarding Powers (DAP).

In particular, the Guild's structures, activities and reporting are designed to demonstrate:

a) Meaningful student representation in academic governance, through the Academic Officer's participation in academic committees and reporting structures;

b) Student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes, through Guild representation in programme boards, student surveys and the Student Partnership Agreement;

c) Accountability and transparency in student engagement, through published minutes, annual reports to the Governing Body, and the termly reporting cycle to the Student Experience Board;

d) A democratic and lawful governance structure, evidenced by the Constitution, election provisions and compliance with Section 22 of the Education Act 1994.

The Institutional Lead, working with the Academic Officer and the Head of Quality and Compliance, shall ensure that Guild activities, records and outcomes are captured and evidenced in a manner that supports WIC's DAP submission. The Guild annual report to the Governing Body shall include a specific section summarising the Guild's contribution to student engagement evidence for DAP purposes.

5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Student Guild Job Descriptions

The Job Descriptions are Available on the College's Website. Job Descriptions Available:

- Student Guild President
- Student Guild Academic Officer
- Student Guild Events and Activities Officer
- Student Guild Communications Officer