

PRAXIS: THE ARTISTS' UNION OF IRELAND
UNION RULEBOOK

RULE 1. TITLE AND REGISTERED OFFICE

1.1 The Union formed under these rules (hereinafter called the Union) shall be known by the title of "Praxis: The Artists' Union of Ireland".

1.2 This Rule Book applies to all members of the Union, and represents the entirety of the rules applicable to members of the Union.

1.3 The Registered Office of the Union shall be A4 Sounds, St Josephs Parade, off Dorset Street, Dublin 1

RULE 2. OBJECTS

The objects of the union are:

- 2.1 To build a united, active, and growing membership.
- 2.2 To give members a strong voice in their workplaces.
- 2.3 To support members to resolve workplace grievances and disputes.
- 2.4 To improve the living and working conditions of members.
- 2.5 To provide educational and vocational opportunities for members.
- 2.6 To build an arts community based on solidarity.
- 2.7 To campaign and advocate on behalf of members.
- 2.8 To fight for a progressive and just society.
- 2.9 To lead a public dialogue on the value of art.
- 2.10 To establish the union as a permanent, effective and influential organisation.

RULE 3. MEMBERSHIP

MEMBER REGISTRATION

3.1 Any person living or working on the island of Ireland who identifies as an artist, having a regular practice that they either earn, or intend to earn, an income from, shall be eligible for membership. Artists from all artistic disciplines, including but not limited to visual art, music, media, comedy, performing art, literature, craft, circus, community art, public art, and spectacle; and from all artistic traditions, including but not limited to fine art, applied art, and traditional art, are eligible for membership.

3.2 Levels of contribution for membership will be set at a sliding scale. The Council will determine the minimum and maximum value of the contributions.

3.3 Any eligible person may apply for membership by completing the appropriate application form agreeing to be bound by the rules of the Union and submitting it to the Union.

3.4 An applicant shall become a member when their application has been approved and they have been entered into the register of members.

3.5 Each member must notify the Union's membership department of any subsequent changes of address and contact details.

MEMBER OBLIGATIONS

3.6 It is the responsibility of each member to maintain monthly contributions to the Union. A member whose contributions are more than three months in arrears will be contacted by the Treasurer to arrange a repayment plan, save where a member establishes to the satisfaction of the Treasurer that the arrears arose through no fault of that member. Members that fail to meet their repayment plan may be excluded from membership.

3.7 When acting as a representative of the Union at a meeting of an organisation or body outside the Union a member shall speak and vote in accordance with the policy of the Union.

3.8 All members shall be expected at all times to treat fellow members and Union staff with respect and courtesy and not to engage in conduct which is contrary to this Rule Book. A failure to do so may result in regulatory action.

RULE 4. STRUCTURE

UNION COUNCIL

4.1 The Union Council shall constitute the core structure of the organisation.

4.2 The purpose of the Union Council is to carry out Union policy, as decided by membership at the Annual General Meetings, on a day-to-day basis. The function of the Council is to serve the membership, being accountable to them.

4.3 The Union Council must at all times act in the best interests of the members and in accordance with the objects and principles of the Union and in no case shall it alter or breach the Rules of the Union.

4.2 The Union Council shall be elected every two years from the general membership. The Council shall be made of individual Offices which may include, but are not limited to:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Auditor
- Recruitment Officer
- Communications Officer
- Education Officer
- Equality & Accessibility Officer
- Outreach Officer

- Welfare Officer
- Legal Officer

4.3 The terms of Officers shall be limited to two years. Retiring Officers shall be available to incoming Officers for a three month shadow period following their term.

4.4 All members are eligible to nominate themselves for election to the Council.

4.5 Retiring Officers cannot be nominated to Council elections for one year following the end of their term.

4.6 Each member of the Union, excluding members of the Council, shall be eligible to have one vote in an election.

4.7 A list of candidates prepared as a voting paper shall be issued to members who are eligible to vote four weeks before the election. On such list each member shall vote by recording their preference of candidate for each particular Office in numerical order, eg. 1, 2, 3.

4.8 Each candidate for election to the Council shall be given the opportunity of submitting an election address of no more than 200 words. Such election addresses shall be distributed to eligible voting members with the voting paper.

4.9 When available, the result of the election shall be announced to the Council and candidates and as soon as practicable thereafter to the members.

4.10 Recall of Officers may be issued through a 66% majority vote of the membership at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

4.11 The Council shall have the right to appoint staff as it considers necessary, within a salary structure determined by the Council, including, but not limited to:

- Organisers
- Graphic Designers
- Web Developers
- Communications assistants
- Videographers
- Photographers
- Accountants
- Solicitors

WORKING GROUPS

4.12 Members of the union shall have the right to establish Working Groups. A Working Group is a voluntary collective of members who come together to research, educate, or advocate upon a particular issue, to connect members with a common interest, or to plan a particular project, campaign or event.

4.13 The objects and activities of a working group must comply with the Union's objects, principles, and vision, and with the rules and procedures governing the Union.

4.14 A minimum of five members is required to establish a working group, of which a Chair and Treasurer shall be appointed.

4.15 A working group may be established by completing a Working Group application form and submitting it to Council. The Council shall approve applications that comply with the Union's objects, principles, and vision and that do not overlap with the remit of an already established Working Group.

4.16 Working groups may have access to limited funds from the Union to support their activities. To seek funds, the Treasurer of the working group shall complete a Working Group Fund application form and submit it to Council. The Treasurer of the Council shall have the discretion to approve or disprove funds on the basis of the ongoing financial position of the Union and the potential of the application to further the objects of the Union.

4.17 The Treasurer of the Working Group shall be responsible for the handling of group funds, the maintenance of financial records, and the submission of an annual financial report to Council.

4.18 The Chair of a Working Group is obliged to report on the activities of the Working Group at review meetings and Annual General Meetings.

4.19 Each member of a Working Group shall have one vote within the group. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Working Group to ensure that the group operates democratically.

4.20 A Working Group shall have the rights to represent the Union and use its identity.

4.21 In the event that a Working Group is:

- Inactive for more than six months
- Breaching Union rules and procedures
- Not carrying out its activities in accordance with the Union's objects, principles, and vision
- Misusing Union funds
- Not operating democratically; or
- Acting under the influence of external bodies

The Council may intervene to:

- Issue a formal verbal warning
- Issue a formal written warning
- Issue a final written warning
- Suspend the Chair or Treasurer of the Working Group
- Dissolve the Working Group

4.22 A Working Group may dissolve voluntarily by notifying the Council.

RULE 5. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

5.1 Supreme governance of the organisation will be vested in the membership via the Annual General Meeting subject to any exceptions stated in these Bylaws or the Articles.

5.2 The Annual General Meeting shall meet annually (and no later than fifteen months after the previous Annual General Meeting) at such time and place as the Council determines.

5.3 The purpose of the Annual General Meeting is to:

- Report upon the primary activities of the Union in the time passed since the last Annual General Meeting.
- Produce policy or position statements outlining the general activities that the Union intends to undertake in order to carry out its mission and fulfil its objectives.
- Produce a list of goals for the upcoming year.
- Carry out a range of administrative functions in relation to the organisation.

5.4 An Annual General Meeting shall be called with at least 30 days' notice to members.

5.5 All members are entitled to attend, speak at, and vote at an Annual General Meeting.

5.6 Elected Officers may attend and speak, but not vote at an Annual General Meeting.

5.7 The Chair of the Union shall preside as Chair at the Annual General Meeting.

5.8 The Agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall be circulated to members by the Secretary with notice of the meeting. All members are entitled to submit a maximum of five motions and amendments total to this agenda in advance of a date to be specified by the Secretary. The Secretary retains the right to make final amendments at their discretion.

5.9 At an Annual General Meeting the Chair has the power to conduct a vote on any question, proposal, resolution or motion whenever the Chair deems it necessary.

5.10 A vote shall be decided by a 66% majority of the votes cast for and against and the result thereof shall be binding in accordance with its terms.

5.11 In addition to the Annual General Meetings, the Union shall convene a Review Meeting at least every three months, and no later than every five months. The purpose of the Review Meeting is for the Council and Working Groups to provide progress updates and answer questions from general membership.

5.12 Amendments to Union rules, policies, procedures, goals, and position statements may only be made at Annual General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings.

RULE 6 REGULATORY PROCEDURES

6.1 The Union shall endeavour to carry out its regulatory procedures in accordance with the principles of transformative justice, seeking to achieve accountability, restitution, transformation, and healing for members involved in regulatory breaches and for the wider Union community.

6.2 Any member(s) of the Union, whether in their capacity as member, Officer, or employee of the Union, is entitled to lodge a charge against a member(s) of the Union in their capacity as member, Officer, or employee of the Union.

6.3 The member(s) making the charge shall be referred to in this document as the “Complainant(s)”.

6.4 The member(s) being charged shall be referred to in this document as the “respondent(s)”.

6.5 Charges may be lodged on the grounds that a member(s) has:

- Acted in any way contrary to these rules.
- Intimidated, assaulted, or otherwise harmed another member.
- Incited, espoused or practised discrimination or intolerance amongst members on grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Been a party to any fraud on the Union or any misappropriation or misuse of its funds or property.
- Knowingly, recklessly or in bad faith provided the Union with false or misleading information relating to a member or any other aspect of the Union’s activities.
- Obtained membership of the Union by false statement material to their admission into the Union.
- Engaged in activities that would bring the Union into disrepute.

6.6 Charges may be lodged by notifying the Union Secretary. Charges of a sensitive, personal nature may be lodged with the Welfare Officer.

6.7 Charges may be classified by the Secretary or Welfare Officer as a minor charge or a serious charge, on the grounds of precedent.

6.8 In the case of a minor charge, the Secretary or Welfare Officer will work with the complainant and the respondent to resolve the charge informally through voluntary dialogue, education, and restitution. Trained Facilitators and Officers with responsibilities that relate to the charge may be called upon to assist this process.

6.9 In the case of a serious charge, the Secretary or Welfare Officer shall establish a formal regulatory committee of five to investigate and resolve the charge. The selection shall include the Secretary or Welfare Officer that established the committee, any Officers whose responsibilities relate to the charge, and individuals from the general membership that have previously completed Union regulatory procedure training. The selection shall avoid potential conflicts of interest between members of the committee and the Respondent or Complainants.

6.10 It is the responsibility of the regulatory committee to conduct an investigation into the charge, gathering evidence and testimony where necessary. Upon completion of its investigation, it is the responsibility of the committee to issue a summary of its findings and recommended actions of resolution to the Council, the complainant(s), and the respondent(s).

6.11 In all of its activities, the regulatory committee shall consider the roles and responsibilities of both the individual respondent(s) and the collective Union community in the charge.

6.12 The decisions of the regulatory committee shall be made by consensus.

6.13 In the case of alleged harm, intimidation, or assault of a member by another member, the particular activities of the committee shall be carried out with the alleged victim's consent.

6.14 Where the regulatory committee finds that harm, intimidation, or assault has been carried out upon a member by another member, the recommended actions of resolution issued by the Committee shall be drawn with the victim's consent and shall include actions to repair harm caused to the victim, within the capacity of the Union.

6.15 The actions of resolution recommended by the regulatory committee shall be implemented by the Council and may include, but are not limited to:

- The mediation of a voluntary resolution between complainant(s) and respondent(s) by a trained facilitator
- The provision of transformative educational tools to the respondent(s) and/or general membership
- The solicitation of restitution from the respondent, financial or otherwise
- The solicitation of compensation from the respondent, financial or otherwise
- The solicitation of a letter of disclosure from the respondent to the Union's general membership
- The removal of voting rights from the respondent
- The prohibition of the respondent from carrying out activities on behalf of the Union
- The removal of the respondent from Office
- The prohibition of the respondent from holding Office
- A ballot to general membership to amend Union structures or policies that have enabled the regulatory breach
- Activities to repair harm caused to members by the regulatory breach

6.16 The respondent(s) is entitled to appeal any decision made by the Committee. They shall do so by writing to the Secretary within 30 days of the date the decision is communicated regarding the outcome of a complaint. The appeal must include the grounds for appeal within the appeal as well as any supporting statement/evidence that they may wish to provide.

6.17 The appeal will be investigated and resolved by an alternative regulatory committee, selected by the Secretary. The decisions of this committee will be final.

6.18 The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining records of all charges lodged with the Union and their outcomes.

RULE 7 FUNDS

7.1 The Treasurer and employees of the Union authorised by them shall have authority to open and operate such bank accounts on behalf of the Union as they may consider appropriate.

7.2 The Treasurer is responsible for keeping proper accounting records with respect to the Union's transactions, assets and liabilities and establishing and maintaining a satisfactory system of control of its accounting records, its cash holdings and all receipts and payments.

7.3 The Treasurer shall publish an annual financial report providing details of the Union's income and expenditure in the previous year. This shall include an account of all staff remuneration, including the pay, benefits and expenses, as well as details of day to day spending, campaign costs and any other significant union expenditure.

RULE 8 ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Administration is defined as a situation wherein the usual rights of the Union Council to direct policies, affairs and activities of the Union are temporarily suspended and given to an administrator.

8.2 In order to uphold democracy, accountability, and the organisational sustainability of the Union, administration shall be established in situations of crisis wherein:

There is widespread corruption in the Union;

- The is widespread financial malpractice in the Union;
- There is widespread democratic malpractice in the Union
- The structure of the Union, as outlined in these rules, is not functioning effectively such that the Union is no longer organisationally sustainable; or
- The Union is under the undue influence of an external organisation that would use the Union for its own purposes.

8.3 In extreme situations whereby one or more of the above conditions are met, the Board has a right to establish administration through consensus. The Union Membership also has a right to establish administration by a 66% majority vote at an Extraordinary General Meeting with a quorum of 60% of members.

8.4 The Administrator shall be appointed by the body that established administration, being either the Board or the general membership.

8.5 The function of the Administrator shall be to re-organise Union activities such that Union rules, policies, procedures and governing documents are followed and the Union is once again operating sustainably, effectively, and democratically.

8.6 The administrator shall have full administration powers except that s/he may only dictate arrangements that would tend to preserve the Union: i.e., the administration shall be disallowed from taking steps which would permanently dissolve the Union.

8.7 Under administration the Union membership, Council, and staff shall lose all access to Union rights and properties, except as shall be granted to them by the Administrator.

8.8 Administration shall be ended when the Union has successfully been re-organised as a self-sufficient, functional organisation.

RULE 9 AMENDMENT OF RULES

9. Members may amend these rules or create new rules by way of a majority vote taken at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting.

RULE 10 DIRECTORSHIP

10.1 The Union as a whole shall be governed by a Board of Directors.

10.2. The number of the Board of Directors shall be three.

10.3 Meetings of the Board must be held at least once every three months.

10.4 Votes of the Board shall be carried through consensus.

10.5 All cheques drawn to the value of 20% or more of the total funds held by the Union must be authorised by the Board, save for purchases covered by a budget previously approved by the Board.

RULE 11 TRANSPARENCY

11.1 All members of the Union shall have the right to attend any meetings of the Council and of the Board of Directors in the capacity of an observer, save for meetings pertaining to a regulatory matter. Members may register their attendance by making a request to the Secretary.

11.2 All members of the Union shall have the right to obtain copies of the minutes of any meeting held by the Council and the Board of Directors by making a request to the Secretary. The Secretary shall redact personal information from the documents before making them available.

11.3 No member, whether in their capacity as a member, an Officer of the Union or an employee of the Union, is permitted to distribute Union minutes outside of the Union.