

WEA Council Terms of Reference

Last Updated: N/A

Date of approval by Board of Trustees: 10 January 2024

Purpose of the Committee

WEA is an association of members¹. The WEA Council is the Association's chief stakeholder body, and as such is responsible for channelling the voice of Association Members to the Board of Trustees. It shall promote the democratic involvement of all Association Members – including learners, volunteers, and staff – in the life of the Association.

Membership

The membership of the WEA Council shall include up to 28 members, comprised as follows:

- 3 Trustees (President, one other Association Officer, and one other Trustee)
- Up to 5 Branch/Local Association volunteers (to be elected by the Association Membership)
- Up to 5 LAP representatives (to be elected by the Association Membership)
- Up to 5 learners (to be nominated by Heads of Region/Scotland Education Team)
- Up to 3 teaching staff (to be elected by WEA staff)
- Up to 3 non-teaching staff (to be elected by WEA staff)
- Up to 4 co-opted members representative of the wider charity and/or education sector, appointed on the recommendation of Nominations Committee

The Chair of WEA Council shall be *ex officio* the President, as elected by the Association Membership and appointed as Trustee by the Board of Trustees.

The Chief Executive/General Secretary or their delegated representative will be required to attend meetings of the WEA Council. Other members of WEA's Leadership Team may be invited to attend meetings of the Council from time to time, as appropriate.

Secretariat shall be provided by the Head of Corporate Governance or their nominated representative.

Quorum

A quorum shall be half of the membership of Council plus one and including at least two Trustees.

¹ Articles 9-10 of WEA's Articles of Association define Association Members as individuals who are admitted to the Association in accordance with Regulations. Regulation 2.1 defines Association Membership as open to all learners on WEA courses and programmes, and supporters of the Association and its object and activities. This definition of Association Membership is followed throughout this paper.

The WEA

4 Luke Street, London, EC2A 4XW

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Frequency of Meetings and Notice

The Council will meet on a minimum of a termly basis (i.e., three times per year), though will consider, in agreement with the Chair, the necessity of meeting more often when required. The Council also meets on a termly basis jointly with the Board of Trustees for the purposes of training and development, and in the interest of progressing discussion on matters of shared interest (e.g., the impact of regulatory change). These meetings will be coordinated with the Board and Committee calendar so that the Council's work can dovetail with that of the other Trustee Committees and the Board of Trustees.

Written notice of each meeting, an agenda and supporting papers shall normally be circulated no later than seven working days before the date of the meeting.

Reporting

The Board of Trustees will receive minutes of Council meetings and will be notified of any key issues and recommendations through summary update reports to be delivered by the Chair of the WEA Council at meetings of the Board of Trustees from time to time.

Responsibilities

Association Membership

1. To promote the democratic involvement of all Association Members in accordance with the Articles.
2. To ensure the integrity of the Association Member register and the effective support and promotion of WEA Member rights and benefits.

Learner voice

3. To support and oversee the delivery of periodic Learner Voice events in each geographic region (as determined by the Board of Trustees from time to time)
4. To receive and debate the consolidated outcomes from the Learner Voice events, making appropriate recommendations to the Board based on findings.
5. To receive and consider regular reports from Local Advisory Panels on WEA's response to learner need (as determined by funders), the quality of the learner experience, and opportunities for extending WEA's charitable reach.
6. To advocate with Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees protection for access to all aspects of lifelong learning (e.g., skills, ESOL, community learning, "leisure" learning, etc.) whether publicly funded or otherwise.

General views and interests of stakeholder groups

7. To receive the Annual Impact Report and oversee any campaigns or action planning arising from it.
8. To input to and support WEA campaigning around general elections and/or proposed changes to public funding regimes and/or legislation affecting adult education or access to lifelong learning generally.
9. To support interests of and effective communication within and between stakeholder groups across the Association (e.g., learners, staff, volunteers, etc.) to ensure their views on matters within the Council's remit are collected and understood.
10. To receive and consider reports from the Executive on feedback derived from multiple channels of communication with the Association Membership (e.g., from social media, satisfaction surveys, etc.).

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11. To make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on matters arising from impact research, and/or feedback or communications with the Association Membership.

WEA Conference

12. To oversee the delivery of the Association Conference, on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Council shall also have responsibility for the oversight of any Extraordinary Conferences which may be called by the Board of Trustees from time to time.
13. To consider any Motions to be put to any Association Conference for discussion and/or debate in accordance with the Standing Orders of Conference as updated from time to time.
14. To convene and oversee the work of a Standing Orders Committee who shall have responsibility for ensuring clear and fair procedures for any formal business to be conducted as part of any Conference.

Elections for Council Members and Association Officers

15. To ensure the timely and transparent election of members of Council, and for Association Officers.
16. To ensure the clarity of election procedures and eligibility requirements for all elected roles, including promotion of the requirement that elected roles are subject to safer recruitment procedures.
17. To oversee the appointment of external scrutineers to carry out elections, and to approve the election timetable, which should allow sufficient time for ballots to be received and returned, electronically or by post.
18. To ensure the integrity of voter rolls to be used in any election.
19. To have due regard for the diversity profile of WEA stakeholders and, recognising the benefits of diversity across all areas of the Association and the Association's commitment to diversity generally, to recommend strategies to address any under-representation in the elected membership of the Council.

Other

20. To undertake any other tasks or functions as may be determined by the Board of Trustees.

Review of the Terms of Reference

The committee shall, at least once a year, and normally at the start of each cycle of business, review its own performance and Terms of Reference to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate.

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