

Governance Framework of the UK Young Academy

December 2023

1. Introduction

1.1. Preamble

The UK Young Academy brings together innovative early career professionals across all sectors to work collaboratively for the benefit of society across the UK and globally.

By sharing our knowledge and practical expertise, we investigate pressing social issues, inform public debate, amplify marginalised voices, and drive transformational change. We do this through a wide range of interdisciplinary projects, led by our members. In our work, we always seek to be creative, collaborative, and evidence-based, and our members grow rapidly as leaders as well as citizens during their time with us. Furthermore, we seek out opportunities where our early career perspective will be uniquely beneficial.

The UK Young Academy was established in June 2022, as part of a growing movement of national young academies worldwide. It is currently operating under the auspices of the Royal Society, in partnership with the six senior national academies of UK and Ireland (the '**Senior Academies**'). Our activities are coordinated by a member-led Executive Group, together with a staff team which is employed by the Royal Society.

1.2. Purpose of this document

This document comprises the Governance Framework of the UK Young Academy (the Governance Framework), setting out the rules and practices by which the organisation has agreed to manage itself and its business. It is intended as a public document to ensure that the UK Young Academy operates in a transparent manner but will primarily be of interest to members and UK Young Academy office bearers in respect of decision making and organisational processes.

1.3. Definitions

- 1.3.1. The Members – All active members of the UK Young Academy who are admitted in accordance with Article 5.
- 1.3.2. The Executive Group – The elected set of members whose responsibilities are described in Article 7.
- 1.3.3. Early career professionals – Typically early career professionals will be those with 3-12 years of experience post-qualification or through working in their profession.

2. Name

- 2.1. The Young Academy shall be known as the UK Young Academy, which can be abbreviated to UKYA.
- 2.2. The UK Young Academy is a not-for-profit group, established under the auspices of the Royal Society, a registered charity in the United Kingdom with charity number 207043 and with a Common Seal. It is established in partnership with the seven Senior Academies operating across the UK and Ireland: The Academy of Medical Sciences, The British Academy, The Learned Society of Wales, The Royal Academy of Engineering, The Royal Irish Academy, The Royal Society and The Royal Society of Edinburgh.

- 2.3. The UK Young Academy is currently operating under the auspices of the Royal Society. As such, the staff offices shall be located at the Royal Society Building (6–9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG). However, this may change if the UK Young Academy changes the Senior Academy under which it operates, in which case, the Governance Framework will need revision.
- 2.4. The UK Young Academy may in future decide to operate under the auspices of any of the seven Senior Academies, with agreement from said Senior Academy, or become independent. In this case the Governance Framework will need revision.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the UK Young Academy is to bring together early-career professionals from across the arts, business and industry, government, the public sector, research and academia, the third sector and beyond to work together on projects and work programmes that benefit the United Kingdom and the world. The UK Young Academy is not a campaigning organisation, but is evidence-based and utilises the expertise of its members.

3.1. Objectives

The objective of the UK Young Academy is to provide public benefit through the application of the knowledge and talents of its members, in pursuit of the advancement and promotion of its strategic priorities, as set out in the UK Young Academy Strategy [insert link].

In pursuit of its objectives, the UK Young Academy will:

- 3.1.1. bring together early career professionals as its members, to discuss common interests and pursue innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to problems of national and international significance;
- 3.1.2. encourage and facilitate its members to interact with and influence the media and policy makers;
- 3.1.3. interact with and encourage other like-minded groups pursuing similar or overlapping objectives, including providing representation to such bodies from the membership;
- 3.1.4. promote international links and work to broaden its benefit and build beneficial collaborations with similar groups from around the world;
- 3.1.5. develop the skills of its members to pursue its objectives more effectively, both individually and collectively; and broker mentorships to enhance the leadership, influence, and effectiveness of its members;
- 3.1.6. collaborate with other young academies nationally and internationally to work towards common goals;
- 3.1.7. work with the Senior Academies to provide an early career perspective on matters of national and international importance; and
- 3.1.8. where appropriate, publish reports, papers and establish public discourse in order to generate its outcomes. The UK Young Academy will work with the seven Senior Academies to maximise communication and impact.

3.2. Values and principles

In line with the values and principles of the Royal Society, the Guiding Principles of the Young Academies [insert link] and the UK Young Academy's Strategy [insert link], the UK Young Academy will seek to ensure that its composition and operations abide by the principles of balance, equality, diversity, and inclusivity and that its policies extend to citizens and non-citizens of the UK alike. This includes, but is not limited to:

- 3.2.1. promoting equal opportunities for all our members, regardless of personal characteristics, including but not limited to age, gender reassignment, being married or

in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, race (including colour, nationality and ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or disability;

3.2.2. striving for a membership that is truly representative of all sections of society, with diversity in demographics, personal characteristics, thought, perceptions, and beliefs among our members, and

3.2.3. creating an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all, and where differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.

4. Organisation and form

The UK Young Academy was established by, and is an activity of, the Royal Society (Charity No. 207043) but works independently of the Royal Society. The UK Young Academy's outputs are issued under their own name, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Royal Society. The objectives of The UK Young Academy are and must remain consistent with the charitable objectives of the Royal Society, unless the UK Young Academy decides to operate under the auspice of another of the seven Senior Academies, with agreement from said Senior Academy, or become independent.

5. Terms of Membership

5.1. Membership is not limited by nationality but candidates should be ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom. All members should exemplify excellence in their area of expertise and demonstrate a passion for tackling issues of national and global importance.

5.2. New members can join the UK Young Academy following application and a subsequent invitation to join. Applications will be reviewed by a diverse panel of reviewers who are esteemed in their respective areas. Decisions will be made by the Membership Selection Committee which shall comprise select members of the UK Young Academy and Fellows or representatives of the Senior Academies.

5.3. Membership is free.

5.4. Members of the UK Young Academy may refer to themselves as Member of the UK Young Academy.

5.5. Code of Conduct

5.5.1. All members are required to accept the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct upon acceptance of their membership.

5.5.2. Under exceptional circumstances (e.g. membership predating the establishment of the code of conduct, or substantive changes to the code of conduct within a review period) members may decline the code of conduct, and become 'non-active' members of the UK Young Academy.

5.5.3. Members who become non-active by triggering Article **5.5.2** forfeit all voting rights, and additionally can no longer present affiliation to the UK Young Academy. A non-active member who has become non-active by triggering Article **5.5.2** can be reinstated upon acceptance of the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct, however they will not be eligible to extend their period of membership under Article **5.6**.

5.6. Membership is for a period of five years, unless an extension is approved by the Executive Group. The reasons for this may be due to a period of absence in accordance with Article **5.7** or in the initial set-up of the UK Young Academy to help establish consistency across cohorts of members.

5.7. Period of absence

5.7.1. A member may choose to take a period of absence from their membership in accordance with the terms expressed in the UK Young Academy's Leave Policy [insert

link]. At this time they would become 'non-active members' and forfeit their voting rights unless an exception is granted by a majority vote of the Executive Group.

5.7.2. Members who take a period of absence in accordance with Article **5.7** are required to continue to uphold the Code of Conduct of the UK Young Academy and may be subject to the disciplinary process on their return if they fail in this responsibility.

5.7.3. Members who take a period of absence can request an extension to their membership term in accordance with the process defined in the UK Young Academy's Leave Policy [insert link].

5.8. Termination of Membership

5.8.1. In instances where a thorough investigation, conducted in accordance with procedures prescribed by the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct for addressing substantial complaints or allegations directed towards members, concludes with a definitive determination that a member's actions have substantially jeopardised the character, interests, or standing of the UK Young Academy to an extent that their continuation as a member is untenable, the Executive Group shall execute this determination by formally revoking the individual's membership status. A registered letter shall be dispatched to the person's usual place of residence or email, outlining this decision. In accordance with the expulsion, the individual's name shall be expunged from the membership roster, and all rights or entitlements in connection to the UK Young Academy shall be relinquished.

5.8.2. In instances where a member wishes to terminate their membership voluntarily, this will be achieved by formal notification in writing to the Executive Group.

6. Alumni

6.1. All former members who have reached the end of their membership term or voluntarily terminated their membership early in accordance with Article **5.8.2**, other than any members whose membership is terminated in accordance with Article **5.8.1**, will be invited to become Alumni of the UK Young Academy.

6.2. Alumni of the UK Young Academy may refer to themselves as 'Alumnus, Alumna or Alum of the UK Young Academy'.

6.3. Former members who become Alumni must continue to comply with the guiding principles and responsibilities outlined in the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct.

6.4. The Executive Group reserves the right not to invite any Alumni who it considers do not comply with the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct to participate in any of the UK Young Academy's alumni activities.

7. Leadership and Governance

7.1. The UK Young Academy's governance shall comprise the following bodies:

7.1.1. Seven Executive Group representatives elected by the UK Young Academy's members in accordance with Article **10**.

7.1.2. Two Co-Chairs, who shall be elected from within and by the UK Young Academy's Executive Group.

7.1.3. A Governance Committee which will include representatives from the seven Senior Academies and will report to the Royal Society's Council.

8. Membership Duties and Responsibilities

8.1. The duties of the membership are laid out in the Code of Conduct [insert link].

8.2. It is the responsibility of the membership to:

- 8.2.1. pursue the objectives of the UK Young Academy as set out in the Strategy [insert link] through active participation in its work;
- 8.2.2. uphold the Values and Principles of the UK Young Academy as set out in the Strategy [link];
- 8.2.3. not hold themselves out to speak on behalf of, or represent the UK Young Academy or any of its groups unless expressly authorised to do so (in line with the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct [insert link]);
- 8.2.4. adhere to relevant UK Young Academy and Royal Society policies (such as unconscious bias and conflict of interest); and
- 8.2.5. not bring the name of the UK Young Academy, Royal Society or any of the other Senior Academies into disrepute.

9. Executive Group Duties and Responsibilities

- 9.1. The Executive Group is a democratically elected governing body of the UK Young Academy, the main function of which is to oversee the running of the UK Young Academy and its programmes. The duties of the Executive Group are set out in the Executive Group's Terms of Reference [insert link].
- 9.2. The Executive Group set the overall policy and strategy of the UK Young Academy, having regard to the recommendations and views of the members, the Royal Society and/or the Governance Committee.
- 9.3. The Executive Group may establish working groups to organise events and activities and other committees they consider relevant to support the UK Young Academy's administrative and other work.
- 9.4. The Executive Group has the ability to decide on workshops, symposia, and colloquia.
- 9.5. All members of the Executive Group have the power to act as a signatory on a statement, communication, declaration or similar, on behalf of the UK Young Academy, provided that the provisions of the Code of Conduct [insert link] have been followed in full.
- 9.6. A quorum for a meeting of the Executive Group shall be at least 5 representatives of the Executive Group.

10. Election of Executive Group representatives

- 10.1. With no less than six months remaining before the conclusion of the Executive Group representatives' term of office, the Executive Group shall invite members to nominate themselves for those positions becoming vacant.
- 10.2. All candidates duly nominated shall be placed on the official ballot. The electoral process shall be conducted via electronic ballot on a ranked-choice basis, involving all active members, no later than three months prior to the commencement of the incoming Executive Group's tenure. The selection of candidates will adhere to the principle that the top seven individuals with the highest ranked vote score shall be deemed duly elected.
- 10.3. When voting, members shall be encouraged to consider diversity of the Executive Group.
- 10.4. The list of individuals successfully elected to the Executive Group shall be announced within one month of the close of the ballot.
- 10.5. If an Executive Group representative resigns, or takes a leave of absence from the UK Young Academy, an interim Executive Group representative will be appointed by the Executive Group until the elected Executive Group representative returns or the next election is held, whichever comes first.
- 10.6. At present, the UK Young Academy has an interim Executive Group and, as such, the Governance Framework shall be updated to reflect the duration of Executive Group

membership and the process for handover when the running of the Executive Group has been fully established.

11. Co-Chair Duties and Responsibilities

- 11.1.** The duties of the Co-Chairs are set out in the Executive Group's Terms of Reference [insert link].
- 11.2.** The Co-Chairs should sign an annual summary of activities prepared by the Executive Group and circulate it to the UK Young Academy general Members.
- 11.3.** The Co-Chairs may, if they consider appropriate, delegate any of the responsibilities that are assigned to them—
 - 11.3.1.** to any Executive Group representative;
 - 11.3.2.** by any means (including by power of attorney);
 - 11.3.3.** to any extent and without territorial limit;
 - 11.3.4.** in relation to any matter; and
 - 11.3.5.** on any terms and conditions.
- 11.4.** If the Co-Chairs so specify, the delegation may authorise further delegation of the Co-Chairs' powers by any person to whom they are delegated. The Co-Chairs may—
 - 11.4.1.** revoke the delegation wholly or in part; or
 - 11.4.2.** revoke or alter its terms and conditions.
- 11.5.** In the event of the Co-Chairs disagreeing about an action, the decision will fall back to a quorum vote of the Executive Group.

12. Election of the Co-Chairs

- 12.1.** Co-Chairs must be existing members of the UK Young Academy's Executive Group.
- 12.2.** The staff team will announce a call for applications for Co-Chair positions in writing to the Executive Group.
- 12.3.** Applications to be considered as a Co-Chair are submitted in writing to the UK Young Academy's staff team.
- 12.4.** Hustings will be held between all applicants before voting is opened.
- 12.5.** Selection of Co-Chairs will be made on a ranked-choice basis, and announced to the Executive Group by the staff team once the election has been processed.
- 12.6.** If a Co-Chair resigns as Co-Chair, it is the responsibility of the Executive Group to appoint a replacement Co-Chair.
- 12.7.** If the Co-Chair additionally resigns from the Executive Group, then the new Co-Chair will be voted in before the new Executive Group member is installed, with a tie-breaking vote lying with the remaining Co-Chair, if required.
- 12.8.** The Co-Chairs cannot be affiliated to the same academic or professional institutions. If the second ranked applicant is affiliated to the same academic or professional institution as the first ranked applicant, the third ranked applicant shall be deemed to be elected in place of the second ranked applicant.
- 12.9.** At present, the UK Young Academy has an interim Executive Group and Co-Chairs. As such, the Governance Framework shall be updated to reflect the duration of the Co-Chairs tenure and the process for handover when the permanent Executive Group has been fully established.

13. Governance Committee Duties and Responsibilities

- 13.1.** The UK Young Academy's Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing the funding and the activities of the UK Young Academy and the application of funds received in relation to the UK Young Academy. The Governance Committee:
 - 13.1.1.** ensures that the UK Young Academy meets the terms of the funding received from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and any future funders;
 - 13.1.2.** oversees the membership and governance arrangements of the UK Young Academy to ensure that it is constituted properly;
 - 13.1.3.** ensures that the UK Young Academy delivers activities to meet the agreed mission; and
 - 13.1.4.** will safeguard the reputation of the UK Young Academy and the seven Senior Academies.
- 13.2.** The Governance Committee manages the approval of the annual budget, Governance Framework of the UK Young Academy, election of the Executive Group and responses to unfavourable press or media coverage, depending on the severity of coverage, as determined by the Executive Group and staff team.
- 13.3.** The Governance Committee will be composed of five members who will hold office for up to three years, and one staff lead from the Royal Society whose term is determined by the Royal Society. The Royal Society may decide to extend a member of the Committee's term of office for an additional term of up to three years.
- 13.4.** The Governance Committee is comprised of at least one member of the Royal Society's Council, one Fellow from each of the Learned Society of Wales, the Royal Irish Academy and the Royal Society of Edinburgh (the Celtic Academies Alliance) and one from the Academy of Medical Sciences, the British Academy and the Royal Academy of Engineering (the UK-wide National Academies) and the Royal Society staff lead for the UK Young Academy. A Royal Society Fellow chairs the Committee.
- 13.5.** Governance Committee members will be nominated and selected by the Royal Society in collaboration with the Senior Academies
- 13.6.** The UK Young Academy Co-Chairs will be ex-officio members of the Governance Committee.
- 13.7.** The staff team, employed by the Royal Society, will provide the secretariat for the Governance Committee.
- 13.8.** The Governance Committee will meet quarterly at a time decided by the Governance Committee Chair and its members.
- 13.9.** The Governance Committee may act as an advisory group to the Executive Group and wider membership. However, there is no limit to seeking advice beyond this committee.
- 13.10.** The Governance oversight, risk and rapid response process document [insert link] outlines the circumstances under which the Executive Group must seek approval, inform or request other support from the Governance Committee.

14. Establishment of Committees and Working Groups

- 14.1.** The Executive Group shall have the authority to establish Committees and Working Groups as deemed necessary to address specific matters, further the UK Young Academy's objectives, and facilitate collaborative endeavours.
- 14.2.** The establishment of Committees and Working Groups shall be based on the identification of pertinent areas of interest, expertise, or tasks requiring dedicated attention and expertise.

- 14.3. Each Committee or Working Group shall be established through a formal resolution passed by the Executive Group, communicated to the membership and documented in the official records of the UK Young Academy.
- 14.4. The composition of Committees and Working Groups will be open for any UK Young Academy member to join and will be decided in function of the objectives, scope, and expertise required for each specific group.
- 14.5. Each Committee and Working Group shall be led by a designated Chairperson or Coordinator, appointed by the Executive Group.
- 14.6. The Chairperson or Coordinator shall oversee the activities, coordination, and reporting of the Committee or Working Group.
- 14.7. The Executive Group shall define the mandate, scope, and specific responsibilities of each Committee and Working Group upon its establishment.
- 14.8. Committees and Working Groups shall operate within the framework of their designated mandate and shall carry out tasks assigned to them by the Executive Group.
- 14.9. Committees and Working Groups shall provide regular progress reports to the Executive Group. Upon completion of the body of work, a final report shall be provided to the Executive Group.
- 14.10. The Chairperson or Coordinator of each Committee or Working Group shall attend Executive Group meetings, as necessary, to present updates and address queries. If the Chairperson or Coordinator of the Committee or Working Group is not a member of the Executive Group, they will be invited to attend in a non-voting capacity.
- 14.11. Committees or Working Groups may be dissolved by a formal decision of the Executive Group when their objectives have been achieved, their mandate has expired, or as required due to changing circumstances.
- 14.12. The work, deliberations, and outcomes of Committees and Working Groups shall be transparent and inclusive, fostering collaboration and engagement among all relevant stakeholders.

15. Ordinary Members' Meeting

- 15.1. The Executive Group shall convene an ordinary meeting of the members of the UK Young Academy three times annually (typically one in person and two hybrid). Members who become non-active by triggering Article 5.5.2 do not have the right to attend or vote at members' meetings.
- 15.2. Any decisions to be taken at a members' meeting shall be taken by a majority vote of those present and voting.

16. Special Members' Meetings

- 16.1. The Executive Group may at any time at its own discretion convene an additional meeting of the members of the UK Young Academy, known as a special members' meeting.
- 16.2. Additionally, any group comprising 10% or more of the total number of UK Young Academy members may come together and request an additional members' meeting. The process by which this is achieved requires at least one of these members (along with the names of the other members) to first request an audience with the Executive Group. The decision of whether an additional meeting is permitted lies with the Executive Group who reserve the right to determine whether the meeting would be remote or in person depending on the circumstances.
- 16.3. The group of members initiating the request have the right to appeal to the Governance Committee regarding any decision made by the Executive Group under **Article 16.2**.

17. Staff

- 17.1.** The UK Young Academy shall not be an employer. Staff will be engaged by other entities, such as the Royal Society, to provide support to the UK Young Academy.
- 17.2.** The staff team employed by the Royal Society will support the Membership, Governance Committee and Executive Group in achieving their aims and objectives, and, where relevant, act as a conduit for the stakeholders and parties involved or interested in the UK Young Academy initiative, its Members and its wider programme of activities.
- 17.3.** The terms and conditions including expectations of behaviour and the employment of any staff member engaged in relation to the UK Young Academy shall be a matter for their employer.

18. Children & Vulnerable Groups

- 18.1.** Any and all activity involving children and vulnerable groups must be undertaken in accordance with the UK Young Academy's Safeguarding Principles and Royal Society's Policy.

19. Disciplinary Regulations

- 19.1.** UK Young Academy members are expected to adhere to the UK Young Academy's Code of Conduct [insert link]. Any Member that does not adhere to the Code may be subject to the UK Young Academy's Disciplinary Regulations.

20. Amending the Governance Framework

- 20.1.** This document will normally be reviewed by the Executive Group and staff team every two years.
- 20.2.** All review periods will be expressly communicated to the Membership by the Executive Group.
- 20.3.** The Executive Group will consult with members on changes to the Governance Framework and will consider proposals for amendments from members.
- 20.4.** The amended document will be passed to the Governance Committee for final approval.
- 20.5.** Upon approval, all decisions will be communicated to the Membership, with explanations where the Executive Group deem appropriate.

Approval and Review Log

Version	V1
Policy / Document Owner	UKYA Staff Office

Approved by	Version	Date
Membership (call for comments)	V1_Draft	24 October 2023
Executive Group	V1	06 November 2023
Wither (legal)	V1	15 November 2023
Governance Committee	V1	7 December 2023

Date of next review	December 2025
----------------------------	---------------

Version	Page(s) modified	Type of modification	Date