

**Companies Acts 1985 to 2006**

**Company limited by guarantee**

**ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION OF**

**AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group**

**(as amended by special resolution dated 7 March 2024)**

**Company No: 05038056**

**1. Objects**

The **Objects** of the **Charity** are the advancement of the education of the public in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) by promoting lifelong learning, increasing social inclusion through educational advancement and widening participation in education and training, particularly by those persons who have previously been excluded from or had limited access to educational opportunities;
- (b) by improving the quality and flexibility of education provision for the public benefit;
- (c) by improving access to learning opportunities and facilitating progression to further learning, employment and higher education particularly through the award of credits and credit-based qualifications;
- (d) by operating as an Access Validating Agency for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education or the appropriate agency acting on behalf of the Department for Education or its successor;
- (e) by operating as an Ofqual-approved awarding organisation and complying with all or any regulatory requirements considered by the Trustees to be necessary or desirable for the development, delivery and assessment of national qualifications;
- (f) by operating as a Qualifications Wales-approved awarding organisation and complying with all or any regulatory requirements considered by the Trustees to be necessary or desirable for the development, delivery and assessment of national qualifications;
- (g) by operating as a CCEA-approved awarding organisation and complying with all or any regulatory requirements considered by the Trustees to be necessary or desirable for the development, delivery and assessment of national qualifications;

- (h) by operating as an End Point Assessment Organisation and complying with all regulatory requirements considered by the Trustees to be necessary for the development, delivery and assessment of end-point assessments
- (i) by operating with full commitment to the distinctive mission of Access to Higher Education by widening participation and recognising the achievements of young people and adults through high quality, responsive and flexible accreditation;
- (j) by encouraging and assisting organisations to provide a wider range of accredited and quality assured learning opportunities;
- (k) by operating as a proactive, innovative and responsive organisation with respect to curriculum development;
- (l) by supporting public policy agendas for raising educational standards, improving levels of achievement, widening participation and promoting new opportunities for community involvement;
- (m) by providing a personalised quality assured service to users that is cost efficient and takes account of competition from other awarding organisations;
- (n) by providing a network with expertise and intelligence of the external environment within which the Charity operates in order to provide staff development, information, guidance and networking to stakeholder organisations in all sectors; and
- (o) by operating a high quality, efficient organisation with a commitment to continuous improvement offering all aspects of the service within a quality assured and transparent framework.

## 2. Powers

The Charity has the following powers, which may be exercised only in promoting the Objects:

- 2.1 to provide facilities, advice and/or information;
- 2.2 to carry out research;
- 2.3 to co-operate with other bodies;
- 2.4 to support, administer or set up other charities;
- 2.5 to accept gifts and to raise funds (but not by means of **taxable trading**);
- 2.6 to borrow money;
- 2.7 to give security for loans or other obligations (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the **Charities Act**);
- 2.8 to acquire or hire property of any kind;

- 2.9 to let or dispose of property of any kind (but only in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Charities Act);
- 2.10 to set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure;
- 2.11 to deposit or invest its funds in any manner (but to invest only after obtaining such advice from a **financial expert** as the **Trustees** consider necessary and having regard to the suitability of investments and the need for diversification);
- 2.12 to insure the property of the Charity against any foreseeable risk and take out other insurance policies to protect the Charity when required;
- 2.13 subject to **Article** 6.3, to employ paid or unpaid agents, staff or advisers;
- 2.14 to enter into contracts to provide services to or on behalf of other bodies;
- 2.15 to establish or acquire subsidiary companies;
- 2.16 to do anything else within the law which promotes or helps to promote the Objects.

### 3. The Trustees

- 3.1 The Trustees as **charity trustees** have control of the Charity and its property and funds.
- 3.2 There shall be at least 3 Trustees but (unless otherwise determined by ordinary resolution) the number of Trustees shall not be subject to any maximum. All of the Trustees must be individuals rather than corporate bodies and all Trustees must be over the age of 18.
- 3.3 A Trustee may not act as a Trustee unless they have signed a written declaration of willingness to act as a charity trustee of the Charity.
- 3.4 One third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees must retire every year, those longest in office retiring first and the choice between any of equal service being made by drawing lots.
- 3.5 The Members may at any time by ordinary resolution appoint as a Trustee a person who is eligible under Article 3.2 and is willing to act as a Trustee. A retiring Trustee may be reappointed twice for a total period of 9 years.
- 3.6 A Trustee's term of office automatically terminates if:
  - (1) they are disqualified under the Charities Act from acting as a charity trustee;
  - (2) they are incapable, whether mentally or physically, of managing their own affairs;
  - (3) they are absent without good reason from 3 consecutive meetings of the Trustees and is asked by a majority of the other Trustees to resign;
  - (4) they resign by written notice to the Trustees (but only if at least 3 Trustees will remain in office); or
  - (5) they are removed by the Members in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act; or
  - (6) two-thirds of the Trustees vote to remove themselves from office on any ground or grounds PROVIDED THAT they have first been given an opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the Trustees.

3.7 The Trustees may at any time co-opt any individual who is eligible under Article 3.2 as a Trustee to fill a vacancy in their number, but a co-opted Trustee shall hold office only for one year (and after the year has elapsed they shall automatically cease to be a Trustee although they may be re-elected in accordance with the terms of these Articles).

3.8 A technical defect in the appointment of a Trustee of which the Trustees are unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken at a meeting.

#### 4. Trustees' proceedings

4.1 The Trustees must hold at least 4 meetings each year.

4.2 A quorum at a meeting of the Trustees is the greater of (a) 3 Trustees or (b) one-third of the Trustees.

4.3 A meeting of the Trustees may be held either in person or by suitable **electronic means** agreed by the Trustees in which all participants may communicate with all the other participants [but at least one meeting in each year must be held in person].

4.4 The **Chairperson** or (if the Chairperson is unable or unwilling to do so) some other Trustee chosen by the Trustees present presides at each meeting.

4.5 Any issue may be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast at a meeting, but a resolution **in writing** agreed by all the Trustees (other than any Conflicted Trustee who has not been authorised to vote) is as valid as a resolution passed at a meeting. For this purpose, the resolution may be contained in more than one document.

4.6 Every Trustee has one vote on each issue. In the case of an equality of votes, the chairperson of the meeting shall not have a second or casting vote.

4.7 A procedural defect of which the Trustees are unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken at a meeting.

#### 5. Trustees' powers

The Trustees have the following powers in the administration of the Charity in their capacity as Trustees:

5.1 To appoint and remove any person to act as company secretary in accordance with the **Companies Act**.

5.2 To appoint and remove any person to act as a Chairperson and (if so desired) to appoint and remove any person to act as a Treasurer and/or to appoint and to remove from office any other honorary officers from among their number.

5.3 To delegate any of their functions to committees consisting of two or more individuals appointed by them. At least two members of every committee must be a Trustee and all proceedings of committees must be reported promptly to the Trustees.

5.4 To make standing orders consistent with the Articles and the Companies Act to govern proceedings at general meetings.

- 5.5 To make rules consistent with the Articles and the Companies Act to govern their proceedings and proceedings of committees.
- 5.6 To make regulations consistent with the Articles and the Companies Act to govern the administration of the Charity, including the criteria for Membership.
- 5.7 To establish procedures to assist the resolution of disputes or differences within the Charity.
- 5.8 To exercise any powers of the Charity which are not reserved to the Members.

## 6. Benefits and Conflicts

- 6.1 The property and funds of the Charity must be used only for promoting the Objects and do not belong to the Members but:
  - (1) Members who are not Trustees or **Connected Persons** may enter into contracts with the Charity and receive reasonable payment for goods or services supplied;  
and subject to compliance with Article 6.4:
  - (2) Members, Trustees and Connected Persons may be paid interest at a reasonable rate on money lent to the Charity;
  - (3) Members, Trustees and Connected Persons may be paid a reasonable rent or hiring fee for property let or hired to the Charity.
- 6.2 A Trustee must not receive any payment of money or other **material benefit** (whether directly or indirectly) from the Charity except:
  - (1) as mentioned in Article 6.1 or Article 6.3;
  - (2) reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (including hotel and travel costs) actually incurred in running the Charity;
  - (3) the benefit of **indemnity insurance** as permitted by the Charities Act;
  - (4) an indemnity in respect of any liabilities properly incurred in running the Charity (including the costs of a successful defence to criminal proceedings);
  - (5) in exceptional cases, other payments or benefits (but only with the written consent of the Commission in advance and where required by the Companies Act the approval or affirmation of the Members).
- 6.3 No Trustee or Connected Person may be employed by the Charity except in accordance with Article 6.2(5), but any Trustee or Connected Person may enter into a written contract with the Charity, as permitted by the Charities Act, to supply services or services and associated goods in return for a payment or other material benefit but only if:
  - (1) the services or services and associated goods are actually required by the Charity, and the Trustees decide that it is in the best interests of the Charity to enter into such a contract;
  - (2) the nature and level of the remuneration is no more than is reasonable in relation to the value of the goods or services and is set in accordance with the procedure in Article 6.4; and
  - (3) fewer than half of the Trustees are subject to such a contract in any financial year.

- 6.4 Subject to Clause 6.5, any Trustee who becomes a **Conflicted Trustee** in relation to any matter must:
- (1) declare the nature and extent of their interest before discussion begins on the matter;
  - (2) withdraw from the meeting for that item after providing any information requested by the Trustees;
  - (3) not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting; and
  - (4) be absent during the vote and have no vote on the matter.
- 6.5 When any Trustee is a Conflicted Trustee, the Trustees who are not Conflicted Trustees, if they form a quorum without counting the Conflicted Trustee and are satisfied that it is in the best interests of the Charity to do so, may by resolution passed in the absence of the Conflicted Trustee authorise the Conflicted Trustee, notwithstanding any conflict of interest or duty which has arisen or may arise for the Conflicted Trustee, to:
- (1) continue to participate in discussions leading to the making of a decision and/or to vote, or
  - (2) disclose to a third party information confidential to the Charity, or
  - (3) take any other action not otherwise authorised which does not involve the receipt by the Conflicted Trustee or a Connected Person of any payment or material benefit from the Charity or
  - (4) refrain from taking any step required to remove the conflict.
- 6.6 This provision may be amended by special resolution but, where the result would be to permit any material benefit to a Trustee or Connected Person, only with the prior written consent of the Commission.

## 7. Records and Accounts

- 7.1 The Trustees must comply with the requirements of the Companies Act and of the Charities Act as to keeping records, the audit or independent examination of accounts and the preparation and transmission to the Registrar of Companies and to the Commission of information required by law including:
- (1) annual returns;
  - (2) annual reports; and
  - (3) annual statements of account.
- 7.2 The Trustees must also keep records of:
- (1) all proceedings at meetings of the Trustees;
  - (2) all resolutions in writing;
  - (3) all reports of committees; and
  - (4) all professional advice obtained.
- 7.3 Accounting records relating to the Charity must be made available for inspection by any Trustee at any time during normal office hours.
- 7.4 A copy of the **Articles** and latest available statement of account must be supplied on request to any Trustee. Copies of the latest accounts must also be supplied in accordance with the Charities Act to any other person who makes a written request and pays the Charity's reasonable costs.

## 8. Membership

- 8.1 The Charity must maintain a register of Members.
- 8.2 The Members shall be the Trustees for the time being, and the Trustees shall be the only persons eligible to be Members.
- 8.3 Any Trustee who ceases to be a Trustee automatically also ceases to be a Member, and any Member who ceases to be a Member automatically also ceases to be a Trustee.
- 8.4 Membership is not transferable.
- 8.5 The Trustees may establish different classes of membership and may recognise one or more classes of supporters who are not Members (and who may be termed 'associate members' or 'non-voting members') and set out their respective rights and obligations.

## 9. General Meetings

- 9.1 Members are entitled to attend general meetings in person or by proxy (but only if the appointment of a proxy is in writing and notified to the Charity before the commencement of the meeting).
- 9.2 General meetings are called on at least 14 and not more than 28 **clear days'** written notice indicating the business to be discussed and (if a special resolution is to be proposed) setting out the terms of the proposed special resolution.
- 9.3 There is a quorum at a general meeting if the number of Members present in person or by proxy is not less than the greater of (a) 3 Members or (b) one-third of the Members.
- 9.4 General meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson or (if the Chairperson is unable or unwilling to do so) by some other Trustee chosen by the other Trustees at or prior to the relevant general meeting.
- 9.5 Except where otherwise provided by the Articles or the Companies Act, every issue is decided by **ordinary resolution**.
- 9.6 Every Member present in person or by proxy has one vote on each issue.
- 9.7 Except where otherwise provided by the Articles or the Companies Act, a written resolution (whether an ordinary or a special resolution) is as valid as an equivalent resolution passed at a general meeting. For this purpose the written resolution may be set out in more than one document.
- 9.8 The Charity may (but need not) call for an AGM in any year.
- 9.9 Members must annually:
  - (1) receive the accounts of the Charity for the previous **financial year**;
  - (2) receive a written report on the Charity's activities;
  - (3) be informed of the retirement of those Trustees who wish to retire or who are retiring by rotation;
  - (4) elect Trustees to fill the vacancies arising;
  - (5) appoint reporting accountants or auditors for the Charity;
- 9.10 A general meeting may be called by the Trustees at any time and must be called within 21 days of a written request from one or more Trustees, at least

- 10% of the Membership or (where no general meeting has been held within the last year) at least 5% of the Membership.
- 9.11 A technical defect in the appointment of a Member of which the Members are unaware at the time does not invalidate a decision taken at a general meeting or a Written Resolution.
10. Limited Liability  
The liability of Members is limited.
11. Guarantee  
  
Every Member promises, if the Charity is dissolved while they remain a Member or within one year after they cease to be a member, to pay up to £10 towards:
- 11.1 payment of those debts and liabilities of the Charity incurred before they ceased to be a Member;
  - 11.2 payment of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up; and
  - 11.3 the adjustment of rights of contributors among themselves.
12. Communications
- 12.1 Notices and other documents to be served on Members or Trustees under the Articles or the Companies Act may be served:
- (1) by hand;
  - (2) by post;
  - (3) by suitable electronic means; or
- through publication in the Charity's newsletter, or on the Charity's website.
- 12.2 The only address at which a Member is entitled to receive notices sent by post is its address shown in the register of Members but the Charity may elect to send notices instead to an email address supplied by that Member.
- 12.3 Any notice given in accordance with these Articles is to be treated for all purposes as having been received:
- (1) 24 hours after being sent by electronic means, posted on the Charity's website or delivered by hand to the relevant address;
  - (2) two clear days after being sent by first class post to that address;
  - (3) three clear days after being sent by second class or overseas post to that address;
  - (4) immediately on being handed to the recipient personally; or, if earlier,
  - (5) as soon as the recipient acknowledges actual receipt.
- 12.4 A technical defect in service of which the Trustees are unaware at the time does not invalidate decisions taken at a meeting.
13. Dissolution



- 13.1 If the Charity is dissolved, the assets (if any) remaining after providing for all its liabilities must be applied in one or more of the following ways:
  - (1) by transfer to one or more other bodies established for exclusively charitable purposes within, the same as or similar to the Objects;
  - (2) directly for the Objects or for charitable purposes which are within or similar to the Objects;
  - (3) in such other manner consistent with charitable status as the Commission approves in writing in advance.
- 13.2 A final report and statement of account must be sent to the Commission.
- 13.3 This provision may be amended by special resolution but only with the prior written consent of the Commission.

#### 14. Previous Memorandum of Association

For the avoidance of doubt, these amended Articles replace both the form of memorandum of association and the form of articles of association which previously prescribed regulations for the Charity.

#### 15. Interpretation

- 15.1 The Articles are to be interpreted without reference to the model articles under the Companies Act, which do not apply to the Charity.
- 15.2 In the Articles, unless the context indicates another meaning:
  - 'the Articles'** means the Charity's Articles of Association and **'Article'** refers to a particular Article;
  - 'Chairperson'** means the chairperson of the Trustees;
  - 'the Charity'** means the company governed by the Articles;
  - 'the Charities Act'** means the Charities Acts 1992 to 2011;
  - 'charity trustee'** has the meaning prescribed by the Charities Act;
  - 'clear day'** does not include the day on which notice is given or the day of the meeting or other event;
  - 'the Commission'** means the Charity Commission for England and Wales or any body which replaces it;
  - 'the Companies Act'** means the Companies Acts 1985 to 2006;
  - 'Conflicted Trustee'** means a Trustee in respect of whom a conflict of interest arises or may reasonably arise because the Conflicted Trustee or a Connected Person is receiving or stands to receive a benefit (other than payment of a premium for indemnity insurance) from the Charity, or has some separate interest or duty in a matter to be decided, or in relation to information which is confidential to the Charity;
  - 'Connected Person'** means, in relation to a Trustee, a person with whom the Trustee shares a common interest such that they may reasonably be regarded as benefiting directly or indirectly from any material benefit received by that person, being either a member of the Trustee's family or household or a person or body who is a business associate of the Trustee, and (for the avoidance of doubt)

does not include a company with which the Trustee's only connection is an interest consisting of no more than 1% of the voting rights;

**'electronic means'** refers to communications addressed to specified individuals by telephone, fax or email or, in relation to meetings, by telephone conference call or video conference;

**'financial expert'** means an individual, company or **firm** who is authorised to give investment advice under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000;

**'financial year'** means the Charity's financial year;

**'firm'** includes a limited liability partnership;

**'indemnity insurance'** means insurance against personal liability incurred by any Trustee for an act or omission which is or is alleged to be a breach of trust or breach of duty, unless the act or omission amounts to a criminal offence or the Trustee concerned knew that, or was reckless whether, the act or omission was a breach of trust or breach of duty;

**'material benefit'** means a benefit, direct or indirect, which may not be financial but has a monetary value;

**'Member'** and **'Membership'** refer to company Membership of the Charity;

**'ordinary resolution'** means a resolution agreed by a simple majority of the Members present and voting at a general meeting or in the case of a written resolution by Members who together hold a simple majority of the voting power;

**'the Objects'** means the Objects of the Charity as defined in Article 1;

**'Resolution in writing'** means a written resolution of the Trustees;

**'special resolution'** means a resolution of which at least 14 days' notice has been given agreed by a 75% majority of the Members present and voting at a general meeting or in the case of a written resolution by Members who together hold 75% of the voting power;

**'taxable trading'** means carrying on a trade or business in such manner or on such a scale that some or all of the profits are subject to corporation tax;

**'Trustee'** means a director of the Charity and **'Trustees'** means the directors;

**'written'** or **'in writing'** refers to a legible document on paper or a document sent by electronic means which is capable of being printed out on paper;

**'written resolution'** refers to an ordinary or a special resolution which is in writing;

**'year'** means calendar year.

15.3 Expressions not otherwise defined which are defined in the Companies Act have the same meaning.

15.4 References to an Act of Parliament are to that Act as amended or re-enacted from time to time and to any subordinate legislation made under it.