



Monday 22nd February 2021

## UGM Agenda

<b>Time</b>	15:00 - 17:00
<b>Date</b>	22nd February 2021
<b>Location</b>	Zoom
<b>Chair</b>	TBC
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction &amp; Ground Rules</li><li>2. <b>Motion 1:</b> SOAS SU Incorporation</li><li>3. <b>Motion 2:</b> Declaration of a SOAS Housing Emergency</li><li>4. <b>Motion 3:</b> Solidarity with the Uyghur People: Stop the Genocide</li><li>5. <b>Motion 4:</b> Introduce a Student Parents Officer to SOAS SU</li><li>6. <b>Motion 5:</b> Introduce a Part-Time Students Officer to SOAS SU</li><li>7. Executive Committee Reports</li><li>8. Ratifying the Minutes of the Previous UGM</li><li>9. AOB</li></ol>



## UGM Motions

### Motion 1

<b>Title</b>	SOAS SU Incorporation
<b>Proposer</b>	Sabrina Shah
<b>This Union Notes</b>	
<p><b>1.1.</b> SOAS Students' Union is an organisation, we are a separate organisation from SOAS, and we are a registered Charity. Every charity has to have a legal structure set out in its governing document - which for SOAS SU is our Constitution.</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> SOAS SU was set up as an Unincorporated Association. This means that there is no legal corporate body of the organisation, and the Trustees of the charity are individually legally liable for the decisions and finances of the organisation. SOAS SU's Trustees are all elected students who may not have any experience in being a Trustee before.</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> SOAS SU is an organisation that normally has annual income &amp; expenditure of over £1m, employs up to 40 people. We enter many contracts and have legal liability for the health and safety of our members using our spaces and undertaking activities with us.</p> <p><b>1.4.</b> Incorporation is a legal process that gives organisations a corporate legal body, and removes the personal liability from the Trustees</p> <p><b>1.5.</b> In order to incorporate SOAS SU would have to make changes to our Constitution so that it complies with the legal requirements of our chosen corporate structure.</p>	
<b>This Union Believes</b>	
<p><b>2.1.</b> Our Trustees are volunteers who put themselves forward to take a role in representing students and stewarding the Union on behalf of our members (the students of SOAS). It is not reasonable for them to undertake this level of personal risk and responsibility. SOAS SU has a duty of care to ensure that elected officers are not personally financially responsible for claims of personal injury against the Union or for its financial solvency.</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Incorporation would reinforce the independence of SOAS SU from SOAS as an organisation that exists as a legal 'person' in its own right (distinct from its members and trustees). As such SOAS SU could hold property, employ staff and deliver services in its own name rather than in the name of trustees.</p> <p><b>2.3.</b> Very few students' unions remain as unincorporated associations, and it is not an appropriate structure for an organisation of the size and complexity of SOAS SU.</p> <p><b>2.4.</b> SOAS SU should incorporate as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which is a</p>	



legal structure better suited to the needs of the organisation.

**This Union Resolves**

- 3.1.** In accordance with our clause 10 of the current Constitution, the Union resolves to authorise the Trustees to:  
Transfer the assets and liability of the Union to a Charitable Incorporated Association of the same name established for exclusively charitable purposes with the same objects as the Union; and  
Dissolve the Union following the transfer
- 3.2.** To incorporate the new CIO with the Constitution (attached) with the relevant changes to enable us to function as a CIO.



## Motion 2

<b>Title</b>	Declaration of a SOAS Housing Emergency
<b>Proposer</b>	Oscar Ward
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> That SOAS Students are disproportionately affected by the unequal housing market in London and are often subject to exploitation at the hands of housing providers, both private landlords and halls of residence providers, due to the extremely unaffordable nature of the London housing market and the exploitation of international students who are sometimes unaware of the nuances of the London housing market and therefore are subject to misinformation and misleading housing recommendations.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> That the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this exploitation due to travel restrictions and many providers including SOAS recommended providers are currently trapping students in exploitative contracts and forcing students to pay thousands of pounds for rooms that they are not occupying, and has hit students who work in sectors affected by the pandemic especially hard, e.g. hospitality &amp; retail, due to an often 100% loss in income.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> That the Students' Union has historically supported policies and initiatives in favour of rental justice and has called for urgent action to be done to improve the housing conditions of the SOAS community</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> That poor standards of housing affect a multiplicity of factors that affect student outcomes including mental health, access to suitable study areas, access to nutrition, social life, and friendships. All of which are likely to affect a student's academic performance and likelihood of withdrawal from study.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> That SOAS' current accommodation partners, especially Sanctuary Students, are in the view of many students failing in their approach to supporting students and this must be regarded as a failure not only by the accommodation providers but also a failure of the University and its duty of care.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> That the COVID-19 pandemic has forced hundreds of students into living in unsafe accommodation, has forced students to self-isolate without proper support and has left students in exploitative contracts making them to be liable to pay thousands of pounds for rooms that either they do not feel safe returning to, cannot return to due to financial issues, cannot return due to travel restrictions, cannot return due to health issues or a variety of other related factors.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> That students are wholly justified in taking action against their exploitative providers, specifically the action of rent strike and the current campaign that is being led by SOAS</p>	



Students against Sanctuary Students, as they should not have to pay for rooms they do not occupy, or rooms they have no choice in occupying.

**2.5** That intimidatory tactics used by landlords and housing providers are abhorrent and the the Union stands in full solidarity with those who are suffering targeted harassment such as threats of debt collectors, constant communications and unnecessary visits to people's accommodation to convince people to pay money that should not be owed.

### **This Union Resolves**

**3.1** To declare a SOAS Housing Emergency, calling for an end to the appalling conditions that SOAS students are currently having to deal with.

**3.2** To demand greater transparency from the school regarding arrangements with providers

**3.3** To call on the school to take responsibility for their actions in recommending exploitative providers, taking responsibility materially which could resemble paying off the illegitimate debt that students are incurring for unoccupied rooms, taking a loud public stance in support of the rent striking students and in condemnation of the exploitative providers and joining with other institutions to ensure national governmental policy change regarding release from contract and payment obligations in COVID circumstances.

**3.4** To call on the school to recognise access to good quality and affordable housing as defined by students not the university, as a core part of mental health care strategy and student retention strategy.

**3.5** For the Union to continue to provide material and logistical support for the Rent Strikers and all those suffering under the exploitation of landlords and corporate housing greed in our community.



## Motion 3

<b>Title</b>	Solidarity with the Uyghur People: Stop the Genocide
<b>Proposer</b>	Maxine Mallon
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> In East Turkestan, a region occupied and ruled by China as “Xinjiang”, the Uyghurs and other majority-Muslim indigenous peoples face genocidal persecution at the hands of the Chinese state.</p> <p><b>1.2</b> These people face intense state surveillance; harsh repression of cultural, linguistic and religious freedoms; mass internment (at least one million have been detained in concentration camps where brainwashing, torture and sexual assault have been reported); family separation; and forced contraception and sterilisation.</p> <p><b>1.3</b> They are also subject to forced labour in farms and factories supplying global corporate brands such as Nike, Apple, Coca-Cola and Zara.</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Rising sinophobia in the UK, particularly since the Covid pandemic, leading to bullying and harassment at London Universities</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> We cannot stand silent in the face of genocide. We must stand up and campaign to end the persecution and genocide and to free the victims.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> The Uyghur people and other indigenous people of occupied East Turkestan must have the right to democratically determine their own future</p> <p><b>2.3</b> As workers and citizens around the world, we must challenge the global corporations profiting from forced labour and surveillance in China. As a university community in particular, we can challenge investments and other links that our university may have.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> The Chinese state is responsible for these crimes, not the Chinese people. We stand in solidarity with hyper-exploited workers, oppressed peoples and repressed dissidents across China.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Resolves</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> To condemn the government of China for its treatment of the Uyghurs and other indigenous people of East Turkestan, and to campaign for their freedom.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> To investigate the university’s holdings, funds and financial instruments in companies</p>	



that are complicit in this surveillance, repression and forced labour, and demand the university either divest or use its shares to demand the companies respect human rights and workers rights.

**3.3** To work with the SOAS Uyghur Society and the UK-wide Uyghur Solidarity Campaign, including spreading awareness on and off campus about the genocide and promoting their protests and events to SOAS students and staff.

**3.4** To call on the SOAS China Institute to raise the profile of frontier studies incorporating East Turkestan, Tibet, Hong Kong into the academic framework

**3.5** Send a copy of this motion to the local chinese consulate

**3.6** To call upon vice chancellor/director to make a public statement in support of this motion

**3.7** To fight against the hijacking of this humanitarian crisis by racists, nationalists and cold-war-hawks to encourage international conflict and whip up sinophobic prejudice against either individuals of Chinese heritage or the people of China.

**3.8** To raise the profile of narratives that counter the attempts of the Chinese state to deny the abuses that are taking place

**3.9** To demand and create safe spaces and support for students and staff impacted by state surveillance, both on campus and in programs promoted by SOAS.



## Motion 4

<b>Title</b>	Introduce a Students Parents Officer to SOAS SU
<b>Proposer</b>	Sara Lloyd-Knibbs
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.1 Some SOAS Students are also parents;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.2 Student Parents are a distinct demographic with distinct concerns and needs as a result of their personal circumstances;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.3 SOAS Student Union has has a responsibility to represent and support its members (SOAS Students), which include Student Parents;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.4 Presently, there is no dedicated Elected SU Officer to represent Student Parents within SOAS SU;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.5 There is a precedent within several other U.K. Student Unions to have either a 'Student Parents Officer' or a 'Students with Caring Responsibilities Officer' (the latter who is usually responsible for both Student Parents and Student Carers);</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.6 SOAS Student Union already makes provision for Student Carers under the role of 'Disabled Students and Carers Officer';</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.7 Due to current events (school closures and homeschooling due to the pandemic), many Student Parents have reported facing extreme and urgent challenges and barriers in accessing education, highlighting the unique nature of their dual status as both students and parents.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.1 Student Parents will always face additional and distinct challenges as a result of balancing parental responsibilities with their studies at SOAS;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.2 SOAS SU has a responsibility to facilitate their wellbeing and access to learning;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.3 The people best placed to represent and advocate for Student Parents are Student Parents, so they should be represented by a person/people who self-identify as such;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.4 The Executive Committee is central to SOAS SU's governance and decision-making, and therefore should be as representative of the SOAS student body as is reasonably possible;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.5 Having a Student Parent Officer role on our Executive Committee would represent a</p>	



commitment by SOAS Student Union to ensure that Student Parents' perspectives and needs are considered in SU decisions and policy-making;

**This Union Resolves**

- 3.1** To add 'Student Parents Officer' to the list of part-time student officer roles in the Executive Committee, subject to the same terms as other liberation officers;
- 3.2** To hold an election for this position at the earliest reasonable opportunity (if not in the Spring 2021 Elections, then in the Autumn 2021 By-Elections);
- 3.3** To actively promote this position, and make all reasonable efforts to ensure it is filled by democratically-elected, self-identified Student Parent/s;
- 3.4** To consult with Student Parents about how to make the role as accessible as possible to them.



## Motion 5

<b>Title</b>	Introduce a Part-Time Students' Officer to SOAS SU
<b>Proposer</b>	Sara Lloyd-Knibbs
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Notes</b></p> <p><b>1.1</b> Some SOAS Students are part-time rather than full-time; Part-Time Students have a distinct status and different needs and concerns than full-time students;</p> <p><b>1.2</b> SOAS Student Union has a responsibility to represent and support its members (SOAS Students), which include Part-Time Students;</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Presently, there is no dedicated Elected SU Officer to represent Part-Time Students within SOAS SU;</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Part-Time Students have reported feeling “forgotten about” and “neglected” by SOAS, with their circumstances often not considered in decision-making;</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Believes</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b> Part-time Students will always face additional and distinct challenges as a result of their status as part-time students;</p> <p><b>2.2</b> SOAS SU has a responsibility to facilitate their wellbeing and access to learning;</p> <p><b>2.3</b> The people best placed to represent and advocate for Part-Time Students are Part-Time Students, so they should be represented by a person/people who self-identify as such;</p> <p><b>2.4</b> The Executive Committee is central to SOAS SU's governance and decision-making, and therefore should be as representative of the SOAS student body as is reasonably possible;</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Having a Part-Time Students Officer role on our Executive Committee would represent a commitment by SOAS Student Union to ensure that Part-Time Students' perspectives and needs are considered in SU decisions and policy-making;</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>This Union Resolves</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b> To add 'Part-Time Students Officer' to the list of part-time student officer roles in the Executive Committee, subject to the same terms as other liberation officers;</p>	



- 3.2** To hold an election for this position at the earliest reasonable opportunity (if not in the Spring 2021 Elections, then in the Autumn 2021 By-Elections);
- 3.3** To actively promote this position, and make all reasonable efforts to ensure it is filled by a democratically-elected, self-identified Part-Time Student/s;
- 3.4** To consult with the elected officer/s about how to make the role as accessible as possible to them.