

Statutes: The Bylaws of our Association

The Statutes are the official governance document of Cumulus. This document is reviewed on an annual basis by the Executive Board, and amendments are voted in by members in the General Assembly periodically to keep the document accurate and reflective of the strategic and operational function of our association as it evolves.

The Cumulus Statutes were first approved in Rotterdam on Thursday 22 March 2001 in the Inaugural Meeting of the Cumulus Association. The document undergoes amendments on a periodic basis as the association evolves. The Statutes were amended in the General Assembly in Nantes, France in June 2006 when Cumulus became global; in the General Assembly in London, the UK in May 2009; in the General Assembly in Nottingham, the UK in April 2016, and in the Virtual General Assembly in May 2020.

Preamble

The Founding of Cumulus

Cumulus was founded in 1990 when six prominent art and design institutions, at the invitation of the University of Art and Design Helsinki (UIAH, known in Finnish as TaiK), came together, sharing a common desire to enhance the quality of education through cooperation and student and teacher exchanges within the European Union Erasmus program.

The six institutions were:

- University of Art and Design Helsinki (UIAH/TaiK), now Aalto University
- The Royal College of Art in London, UK
- The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Design (Danmarks Designskole) in Copenhagen, Denmark
- The Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Folkwang Hochschule, Gesamthochschule Universität, now The Folkwang University of the Arts (FUDK) in Essen, Germany
- The University of Applied Arts (Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst) in Vienna, Austria

Since its origins, Cumulus has evolved and grown, maintaining its focus to serve its institutional members and their stakeholders—a group of colleges and universities that meet high standards of education and research.

Cumulus has pioneered many initiatives, developing jointly organized master’s programs, workshops, conferences, competitions, and other activities. It has published “working papers,” other publications and conference proceedings that have documented the contributions and activities of its members. It also serves as an effective center to promote international mobility best practices for students and professors and partnerships with other networks of art and design.

A Growing Network

During the past ten years, Cumulus has grown in scale and scope. Membership has increased from 6 universities in 1990 to 360 in 2021. While the membership of the Association was chiefly from European countries in the early years of the association, Cumulus has rapidly expanded beyond Europe, becoming international in 2006. In the past decade, organizations and institutions in Africa, Australia/Oceania, Asia, and Latin and North America have grown interested in establishing cooperation with Cumulus. The nature of Cumulus has changed from an informal “club” to a professional academic society.

The New Demands

Education and research in art, design, and media are becoming more important globally due to cultural, social, economic, and technological development in our modern society. These changes are leading to new and increasing demand for access to these fields of education. Additionally, the requirements for the quality and nature of educational programs in these disciplines, as well as the necessity to develop research in these fields, continue to shift. Due to globalization and the complexity and plural models for developing education and research in art, design, and media, our understanding of the higher education landscape for these disciplines at a national level is no longer sufficient. The opportunity to address these shifts within an international context is paramount. Cumulus aims to help its members, academic institutions in art, design, and media, develop innovative education and research that can meet the new demands presented by the rapid changes developing in our global economy and socio-cultural context around the world.

Cumulus Secretariat is Hosted by Aalto University

Since its founding, the Cumulus Secretariat has been hosted at Aalto University, Cumulus’s administrative partner. Aalto University has successfully bid to continue hosting the Secretariat with a service agreement to be finalized for the 2021-2025 period.

Statutes

01 An Association to Serve the Needs of its Members

To assist universities and colleges in the field of art and design in meeting the new and rapidly changing opportunities and challenges, major educational institutions have decided to establish this Association. The aim is to build an Academic Forum which will bring together top-level educational institutions from all parts of the world, building a dynamic and flexible organization with activities that respond to the needs of its member institutions.

Through its activities, the Association will support and influence the aims and activities of any funding programs serving art, design, and media.

02 Name

The Association's name is 'CUMULUS, THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF ART, DESIGN, AND MEDIA,' also referred to as 'CUMULUS,' or 'CUMULUS ASSOCIATION.'

03 Official Language

The official language of the Association is English.

04 Legal Framework

The Association is managed according to Finnish law.

05 Aims and Tasks

Aims

Strive for Excellence and Innovations

To strive for excellence and innovations in art, design, and media.

Safeguard the Values and Autonomy of Academic Institutions

To promote and safeguard the fundamental values and autonomy of universities, colleges, academies, and schools of art, design, and media.

To promote a diversity of approaches to education and research issues.

Create an Academic Forum

To create an Academic Forum for the advancement of higher education and research in art, design, and media.

Influence Policy Making

To represent higher education in art, design, and media and influence policymaking at the regional, national, and international levels.

To work for the quality standards and full recognition of art, design, and media professions.

To promote cooperation to the mutual benefit of difference.

Tasks

Assist its Members

To assist academic institutions of art, design, and media in their development.

To assist academic institutions of art, design, and media in enhancing their contribution to society.

Promote Dialogues

To promote a dialogue between CUMULUS and other international professional organizations such as WDO/ICSID, IFI, Ico-D (former ICOGRADA), BEDA, etc.

To promote a dialogue between CUMULUS and national and international academic institutions and associations.

Support Exchange and Mobility

To support the exchange and mobility of academic staff and students between members of the Association.

To use mobility more efficiently to support academic aims.

Encourage the Development of Networks

To encourage cooperation between higher education networks in art, design, and media and develop effective networks.

Encourage Cooperation with Businesses

To promote cooperation between academic institutions of higher education in art, design, and media, and the world of business.

Promote the Value of Design in Basic Education

To promote design education in primary and secondary schools.

Provide and Initiate

To provide information to members of the Association about the educational, research, and cultural policies of different countries and EU and similar stakeholders.

To initiate joint projects such as competitions, exhibitions, and awards to promote innovative work in art, design, and media.

Through publications, maintain a high profile of the Association and its members.

Audit and Provision Facts of Cumulus Members

To collect and distribute basic information for and about the members: i.e., economic turnover, funding, numbers of students and faculty.

06 Membership

6.1 Membership Categories

There shall be both Full Members and Associate Members. Membership is open to institutions of higher education in art, design, and media.

A university, college or academy in art, design, or media shall be eligible, if recommended by two existing members of Cumulus, to apply for Full Membership.

Faculties or Schools of higher education, institutions of art, design, and media shall be eligible to apply for Full Membership by recommendation as described above.

Companies, institutions, or associations related to art, design, or media shall be eligible to apply for Associate Membership.

6.2 Full Members

On March 21, 2001, the existing members of the Cumulus network all became the Founding Full Members of the Association by formally accepting the original Statutes.

The General Assembly shall decide on the admission of new Full Members on receipt of recommendations from the Executive Board.

6.3 Associate Members

Associate Members shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of Full Members, except the right to vote or hold elective office.

The General Assembly shall decide on the admission of new Associate Members on receipt of recommendations from the Executive Board.

6.4 Representation

An individual member institution (university, college or academy) shall be presented by its Rector/President/Vice-Chancellor or by the Rector's nominated representative.

A faculty or school shall be presented by its Director, Dean or Head or by a representative nominated by the Director/Dean/Head.

6.5 Observers

The Executive Board, upon the proposal of the Sole Executive Director, may, at its discretion, grant Observer status at meetings of the General Assembly and at other meetings to companies, institutions, or associations related to art, design, and media.

6.6 Affiliates

The Executive Board may, at its discretion, grant the status of Affiliate to appropriate regional and international associations and networks, under such terms as it may prescribe. The Executive Board will offer its rationale for the decisions.

07 Resources

7.1 Subscription

All categories of Members are required to pay annual subscription fees. All Members shall be entitled to vote only if all due subscriptions have been paid. In cases where payment is overdue, membership will be suspended or withdrawn by the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Sole Executive Director.

7.2 Other resources

The association will actively investigate and pursue all possibilities for creating financial resources for its activities. The association may receive grants, gifts, endowments, bequests, or other forms of donations from public or private sources, whether or not they are allocated to specific purposes covered by its aims. The Association may also charge a fee for the services it provides to private or public persons or organizations, whether members or non-members.

08 Structure

The organs of the Association are:

- The General Assembly
- The Executive Board
- The Presidency
- The Sole Executive Director
- The Secretary-General and the Secretariat.

09 The General Assembly

As amended on 28 May 2009 at the London General Assembly

9.1 Composition

The General Assembly shall consist of all the members of the Association; provided that only the Full members shall have voting rights and that the Associate members shall attend without voting rights. Each Full member shall have one vote.

The General Assembly is the highest authority in the Association. Subject to the powers conferred upon the Executive Board, the Presidency, the Sole Executive Director and the Secretary General and the Secretariat by these statutes, it shall have all the powers required to realize the Association's purpose.

9.2 Operations

The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year.

The agenda is to be sent to the participants 10 days before the General Assembly.

An Extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly may be convened either by the President, by the Executive Board or by a formal notice from at least one tenth of the full membership.

Where the nature of the matter to be decided is deemed appropriate, an extraordinary meeting may be substituted with a postal or online ballot, by the decision of the Executive Board.

Proxies

Full Members may also be represented by another Full Member's representative, subject to a respective proxy authorization having been submitted in writing or via electronic mail to the Secretariat prior to the close of the registration for the General Assembly. The proxy is to be shown at the registration for the General Assembly.

A Full Members' representative shall not represent more than two (2) other Full Members. The members of the Executive Board shall have the right to attend the General Assembly; they shall have no voting rights in their capacity as members of the Executive Board.

Chair of the General Assembly

The President, and in his/her absence the longest-serving Vice-President present at the General Assembly, or, should the latter be absent, the Sole Executive Director, shall preside at the General Assembly. If neither the President nor either of the Vice-Presidents or the Sole Executive Director is present, the meeting shall be presided by a member of the Executive Board, as designated by the General Assembly.

Quorum

The General Assembly shall be validly constituted if one half of the Full members are present or represented. Decisions shall be made by a simple majority of those present. In case of a tied vote, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

9.3 Functions

The General Assembly is the Supreme Governing Body of the Association. The General Assembly is responsible for:

- deciding the number of members in the Executive Board;
- electing and appointing the President and the Executive Board;
- deciding on the member that will host the Secretariat pursuant this By-Laws;
- determining the size and the overall responsibilities of the Secretariat for the relevant period of appointment, upon proposal of the Executive Board;
- deciding the appointment and removal of the Sole Executive Director;
- where it deems fit, deciding on the revocation of the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Secretariat and/or the other members of the Executive Board;
- reviewing and amending the Statutes of the Association, according to the provision of Article 15;
- deciding on appeals to decisions of the Executive Board;
- approving the annual accounts, approving the budget for the forthcoming year, receiving the budget report of the Sole Executive Director and the report on the past year and the plans for the future of the President, and approving subscriptions;
- appointing the auditors on the recommendation of the Executive Board;
- deciding on the admission or exclusion of Full and Associate members of the Association on the recommendation of the Executive Board;
- deciding on matters recommended to the agenda by a formal notification from one tenth of the Full Members;
- deciding on the dissolution of the Association according to the provision of article 16.

10 Executive Board

10.1 Composition

The Board shall comprise the President and a minimum of eight (8) to a maximum of ten (10) members. The members shall be elected by Full Members of the Association on proposals made in advance in writing by the Full Members.

With the exception of the Sole Executive Director as provided below, the members shall be present or former Rectors, Heads, Directors, Deans, Professors, or other individuals in leading academic positions of a Full Member, who shall hold office for a term of three (3) years and are eligible for consecutive re-election for one further term.

A Board member who has completed his/her six-year term can only run again for a Board seat after two new full cycles, i.e. being away six years from their original service in the Board. They may stand up for election in this case, as long as the one third rule for new Board members is respected.

A person can be elected as the President after being a member of the Executive Board; in which case 11.2. applies to the number of terms as President.

There shall be no more than one member from any country, excluding the nationality of the President and the Sole Executive Director.

One third of the members of the Board are to be changed every third year in the election of the next Executive Board, with the exception of the Sole Executive Director who shall remain in office pursuant to the term set forth in his/her appointment.

The Executive Board shall appoint, on the nomination of the President, two Vice-Presidents and a Treasurer, from among the members of the Executive Board.

10.2 Operation

The Executive Board holds at least three meetings per year.

The quorum shall be the President or one of the Vice-President's plus other members of the group representing more than half of the total number of members of the Executive Board.

Simple majority of those present shall make decisions. The President/Vice-President has the casting vote.

10.3 Functions of the Executive Board

The Executive Board is the main advisory body of the Association, responsible for the strategic and academic guidance of the Association. It is the principal forum for discussion of the Associations policy positions on higher education and research, and makes statements on behalf of the Association after consultations with the Members.

Furthermore, the Executive Board has the following powers:

- define the strategic direction and academic guidance of the association; identifying the future plans, the future activities and propose them to the General Assembly;
- oversees the developments and the activities of the Association;
- monitors the budget;
- recommend the appointment of auditors to the General Assembly;
- propose to the General Assembly the size and the overall responsibilities of the Secretariat for the relevant period of appointment.

The Executive Board may set up Working Groups and 'Task Forces' for special and *ad hoc* initiatives.

10.4 The Sole Executive Director

The General Assembly shall appoint as the Sole Executive Director the General Secretary identified by the hosting institution of the Secretariat regulated under Article 14 below.

The resolution of appointment shall determine all the powers – including, by way of example, the applicable limits or threshold amounts and joint competences – granted to the Sole Executive Director, in order for the latter to run the day-to-day activities of the Association and to represent the Association *vis-à-vis* third parties.

Notwithstanding the above, the Sole Executive Director shall have the following powers and duties:

- be responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly and of the policy of the Association, for the planning of its activities, and for the management of the affairs of the Association
- be responsible for the implementation of the strategic guidelines to be outlined by the Executive Board within the framework of the development goals set by the General Assembly;
- prepare the proposal of the annual budget, the annual accounts, the activity plan and the annual report for submission to the Executive Board and to the General Assembly;
- be responsible and accountable for implementation of the budget;
- recommend, together with the Executive Board, admission of new Full or Associate Members for the General Assembly;
- prepare agendas for meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board;
- propose the appointment of auditors to the General Assembly;
- propose to the Executive Board and to the General Assembly, association membership in other organisations, partnerships and projects with other institutions;
- submit all the necessary documentation to the internal and external auditors;
- arrange programmes, including meetings, seminars or conferences, for the exchange of information and experience on matters of common interest to individual or collective members and partners, and to identify and disseminate good practice in higher education institutions and others.

11 Presidency

11.1 Composition

The Presidency shall comprise the President, two Vice-Presidents and a Treasurer.

11.2 The President

The Full Members of the Association shall elect the President.

The President shall be present or former Rector, Head, Director, Dean, Professor or having another leading academic position and be of a Full Member institution, shall hold office for a

term of three (3) years and shall be eligible for consecutive re-election as the President for one further term. The President can be elected to be a member of the Executive Board after the Presidency. In this case 10.1 applies to the number of terms s/he may serve as member of the Executive Board. Any Executive Board member, who has held a position in the Board for two full terms, can be proposed as a candidate for Presidency.

The President has a general representative power of the Association, without any management or signing power to be exercised in the name and of behalf of the Association, with the exception of those potentially granted with specific resolution of the General Assembly, including the execution of cooperation agreements not involving any payment commitment for the Association.

In light of the above, the President shall:

- Lead, and act as the Representative of, the Association
- Convene meetings of the Executive Board and the General Assembly
- Chair meetings of these bodies

11.3 Vice-Presidents

The Vice-Presidents shall deputise for the President in his or her absence.

11.4 Treasurer

The duties of the Treasurer are to support the Secretariat, President and Executive Board in financial monitoring and strategic financial planning for the association.

12 The Financial Year

The financial year of the Association shall run from 1 January to 31 December.

13 Auditors

The auditor shall submit their report on the annual accounts first to the Executive Board and afterwards to the General Assembly.

14 Secretariat

The Secretariat consists of:

- a Secretary General, who acts as the Sole Executive Director pursuant to article 4
- and other staff

The Executive Board shall propose to the General Assembly the resolution on the size and the overall responsibilities of the Secretariat, to be approved by the General Assembly.

Furthermore, the President, or in his/her absence the Vice-President, shall determine and amend the detailed operating duties of the Secretariat for the relevant period. The Secretariat is hosted by one of the Cumulus member institutions for a period of five years. The General Assembly shall make a decision on the appointment of the Secretariat for the subsequent period.

15 Amendment of the Statutes

These Statutes may be amended by a decision of a meeting of the General Assembly at which at least one-half of all Full Members are present, or, if the General Assembly should so decide, by a postal ballot in which at least one-half of all Full Members participate.

A proposal to amend the Statutes may be made by the Executive Board, either on the initiative of the President or members of the Board, or upon written request of at least ten percent of the Full Members. A proposal to change the statutes shall require the approval of at least two-thirds of those present in the meeting of the General Assembly or participating in the postal ballot.

If a meeting of the General Assembly or postal ballot fails to achieve the required quorum of one-half of Full Members, a proposal to amend the Statutes may nevertheless be adopted if approved by at least one third of all Full Members.

The General Assembly shall set up a review of these Statutes no later than five years after the formal creation of the Association.

16 Dissolution of the Association

The Association may be dissolved by a decision of a meeting of the General Assembly at which at least two-thirds of all Full Members are present.

A proposal to dissolve the Association may be made by the Executive Board, either on the initiative of the President or members of the Board, or upon written request of at least ten percent of all Full Members. A proposal to dissolve the Association shall require the approval of at least three-quarters of those present at a meeting of the General Assembly.

In the event of dissolution the assets of the Association shall be disposed of according to the decision of the General Assembly.