

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN SOCIETIES COUNCIL**

Adopted by the UCD Societies Council – 20 November 2014

Amended by the UCD Societies Council – 5 October 2016, 25 April 2018, 2 October 2018

### **1 Organisation**

There shall be an organisation to be known as the *UCD Societies Council*, and known in the Irish language as *Comhairle na gCumann UCD*, hereinafter referred to as the Council. The Council shall operate within the broad framework of policies of the University and the Council, other than where explicitly addressed within this document.

### **2 Objects**

The objects of the Council shall be to represent, advocate on behalf of, and support the interests and activities of student societies throughout the University community and elsewhere

### **3 Membership**

- (a) Membership of the Council shall be reserved for recognised student societies, as per Schedule B of this Constitution. A list of members shall be maintained by the Treasurer, included as Schedule C of this Constitution.
- (b) There shall be two types of membership of the Council: Active and Inactive.
  - i. Active Members shall consist of those student societies who meet the following criteria:
    - i. Any student society which has been recognised by the Council, as per Schedule B of this Constitution
    - ii. Any student society which has, following its annual general meeting, registered its representative with the Council
  - ii. Inactive Members shall consist of those student societies who meet the following criteria:
    - i. Any student society which, during the preceding academic session, has not taken part in the affairs of the Council
    - ii. Any student society which, during the preceding academic session, has not applied for a grant
    - iii. Any student society which, during the preceding academic session, has not attended a General Meeting of the Council
- (c) Each Active Member shall be entitled to the following:
  - i. To select a representative to the Council who shall, at all times, be the chief officer of that student society, and who shall not be the chief officer of any other

- student society, club, representative body, or organisation of, or within, the University, or sabbatical officer of the Students' Union
  - ii. To have such representative present at and vote at meetings of the Council on behalf of that student society
  - iii. To have such representative nominate and seek nomination for Council elections
- (d) Inactive Members shall not be entitled to take part in the affairs of the Council.
- (e) Inactive Members shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee following a year of such membership, who shall then decide to award Active Membership on a student society, or a further year of Inactive Membership.

After a further year of inactivity such an Inactive Member shall be declared Defunct and shall be considered no longer recognised. The Treasurer shall be authorised to seek the control of any assets remaining in the name of that student society and to apply them for the benefit of the Active Members.

#### **4 Executive Committee**

- (a) There shall be an Executive Committee of the Council consisting of:
  - i. The Chairperson
  - ii. The Treasurer
  - iii. Delegates to groups external to the Council for the current session, and for the two sessions immediately prior to the current session
  - iv. Delegates to the Recognition Committee for the current session, and for the two sessions immediately prior to the current session
  - v. The two serving Chairpersons of the Council immediately prior to the current serving Chairperson
- (b) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the activities of the Council in accordance with this Constitution, and shall be the authority for interpreting this Constitution.
- (c) Meetings of the Executive Committee shall take place when convened by the Chairperson. There shall be at least one such meeting during each academic term and at least one outside of term. Not less than one week's notice of such meeting shall be given. All decisions at such meetings shall be taken by a simple majority of those voting; the Chairperson shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote.

#### **5 The Chairperson**

- (a) The Chairperson shall be the chief officer of the Council and shall represent the interests of the student body and the objects of the Council to the University. The Chairperson shall speak authoritatively on behalf of the group of students that act as the representatives of the Members of the Council.

- (b) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Council and, unless otherwise specified, of its committees. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside for such meeting, unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.
- (c) The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, subject to approval by the Council.

The Executive Committee shall appoint a working group for the purposes of recommending an applicant for appointment as the Chairperson, consisting of:

- i. The Treasurer, who shall be the chairperson of the working group
- ii. One individual with experience of the workings of the Council and its committees
- iii. One individual independent of the University with experience of the workings of similar student activities in similar settings

The Executive Committee shall decide on the procedures of such working groups.

Without prejudice to the generality of this clause the following general principle shall apply:

Due to the balances extant on various sub Committees of the Council and the University, it is intended that the role of Chair of the Council should be of, or very recently graduated (not more than 2 years upon appointment and not more than 5 years upon completion of the role) from, the undergraduate student body. The role of Chair of the Council may or may not be renewed, but in all circumstances the above general guideline should be observed, in order to ensure that the Chair of the Council is of the student body rather than in any way becoming a long term or indefinite permanent position.

- (d) The term of office of the Chairperson shall run from the time of their appointment to the end of the next full academic year, and may be renewed by the Executive Committee, as per Article 5 (c) of this Constitution.

During his or her term of office, the Chairperson shall not hold any office in, or be a member of the committee of, any member society nor shall he or she hold any office in the Students' Union.

- (e) The Chairperson shall be entitled to attend all meetings of all member societies.
- (f) The Chairperson shall be an automatic delegate of the Council to all other committees. Where only one delegate is sought, the Chairperson shall be that delegate.

## **6 The Vice-Chairperson**

- (a) The Vice-Chairperson may be appointed by the Chairperson, from time to time, from among the members of the Executive Committee, or from among the representatives of the Active Members to the Council, subject to approval by the Council.
- (b) The Vice-Chairperson shall be responsible for:
  - i. Recording the minutes of the meetings of the Council and of the meetings of the Executive Committee
  - ii. In the absence of the Chairperson, presiding over meetings of the Council and of the Executive Committee

Other duties of the Vice-Chairperson shall be agreed from time to time by the Chairperson and by the Executive Committee.

## **7 The Treasurer**

- (a) The Treasurer shall be the University Societies Officer.
- (b) The Treasurer shall be responsible for:
  - i. Any bank account held in the name of the Council
  - ii. Maintaining a schedule of the recognised and defunct student societies, and the dates such decisions were taken, included as Schedule D of this Constitution

Other duties of the Treasurer shall be agreed from time to time by the Executive Committee.

## **8 Meetings**

- (a) The Council shall meet to consider, inter alia, the provision of resources, facilities, and services by the University, such that they may influence the interests and activities of student societies, and, where required, to receive and consider recommendations made by committees of the Council.
- (b) General Meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Chairperson or on the written requisition of at least fifteen Active Members of the Council, subject to the following:
  - i. General Meetings of the Council shall have a quorum equal to one-tenth the number of all Active Members.
  - ii. At least one such meeting shall be held in each academic term.
  - iii. Not less than one week's notice of such meeting shall be given by email to all student society email accounts provided by the Council and to the student email accounts provided by the representatives of each member society. Such notice

shall give an agenda for the meeting and shall call for notices of motion to be given in writing at least two days prior to the meeting.

- iv. All decisions at such meetings shall be taken by a simple majority of those voting; the Chairperson shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote.
- v. Decisions of General Meetings, if not contrary to the provisions of this Constitution, shall have binding force on the committees and officers of the Council.

- (c) An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Council may be convened by the Chairperson with 24 hours notice where the subject of such meeting is of pressing importance. Such notice shall be given by email to the student email accounts provided by the representatives of each member society.

## **9 Grant**

There may be a grant paid annually to the Council by the University or agents acting on behalf of the University. The amount of such grant shall be provided to cover the running costs and activities of the Council and its committees.

## **10 Delegates**

- (a) Delegates shall be elected, or otherwise appointed by the Executive Committee, from amongst the representatives of Active Members, to committees of the Council, and to other groups which may vary from time to time, for the purposes of meeting and furthering the objects of the Council, as per Article 2 of this Constitution.
- (b) Representatives of Active Members shall be eligible to nominate and seek nomination as candidates for election as delegates, as per Article 11 of this Constitution.
- (c) Such delegates shall, at all times, act in good faith and as a member of that committee in the best interests of the Council, and shall not act as a representative of any special interest, except those interests of the Council, and shall not act in a manner as to bring the Council into disrepute.
- (d) The Executive Committee may remove any delegate from his or her committee position due to a dereliction of duty.
- (e) Where a delegate ceases to be the representative of the Active Member to which they belonged at the time of their election, as per Article 3 (c) of this Constitution, and due to a direct action of removal from office within that Active Member, they shall also cease to be a delegate of the Council.
  - i. Ordinarily, where the term of a representative of an Active Member reaches a natural end, in accordance with the constitution of that Active Member, within a session of the Council, their duties as a delegate shall not cease until the end of that session of the Council.

- (f) Where a casual vacancy arises due to the discontinuance of a delegate, the Executive Committee may seek to co-opt an appropriate replacement from amongst the representatives of Active Members for the remainder of the term of that delegate.
- (g) The Council shall remain cognisant of the endeavours of the University to promote diversity and inclusivity and align itself with such endeavours where possible.

## **11 Procedures for election of delegates**

- (a) Elections of the Council shall take place at the first General Meeting of the Council for the academic year. Such notice shall include:
  - i. The positions for which nominations are sought
  - ii. The Procedures for Elections
  - iii. The list of membership of the Council, as per Schedule C of this Constitution, including their constituencies, as per Article 11 (d) of this Constitution
  - iv. The name of the Presiding Officer, who shall be the Treasurer of the Council
- (b) Nominations may be accepted at the meeting, as per Article 10 (c) of this Constitution. Nominees must be present at the meeting, or must otherwise have declared in writing to the Presiding Officer their willingness to be nominated.
- (c) There shall be one constituency for elections, unless otherwise specified.
- (d) Where specified, and for the purpose of creating four electoral colleges for both nomination and election of delegates, Active Members shall be classified as follows, and shall be included as Schedule C of this Constitution:
  - i. Group A; Student societies whose objectives are such as to make them predominantly of interest to students of the humanities
  - ii. Group B; Student societies with a technical or scientific basis
  - iii. Group C; Special interest student societies
  - iv. Group D; All other student societies

The Treasurer of the Council may alter this classification from time to time and shall keep in mind the desirability of having four constituencies which represent similar numbers of student societies.

## **12 Complaints & Discipline**

Complaints and appeals will be managed and dealt with in accordance with the Council Policy on Discipline and Appeals.

### **13 Amendment of Constitution & Schedule**

- (a) This Constitution and its Schedules may be amended only at a meeting of the Council.
- (b) Members of the Council shall be given two weeks written notice, by the Chairperson, of any proposed amendments to the Constitution and Schedule. Such notice shall include the time, date and location of the meeting where the proposed amendments will be voted upon.
- (c) The amendments shall be considered passed if not less than a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at the meeting vote in favour of them. Amendments will come into force immediately, unless otherwise stated.

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **1 Finance Committee**

- (a) There shall be a Finance Committee of the Council consisting of:
- i. The Chairperson of the Council
  - ii. The Treasurer of the Council
  - iii. Eight delegates of the Council, of whom two shall be from each of the four constituencies, elected as per Article 11 (d) of this Constitution
- (b) The Treasurer of the Council shall act as chairperson of the Finance Committee, and shall have a special responsibility for ensuring that the funds available for disbursement are distributed in an equitable manner.
- (c) The function of the Finance Committee shall be to allocate grants to Active Members from the amount allocated for this purpose.

### **2 Procedures of the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall establish its own procedures and criteria for deciding on the amounts of the grants allocated. Without prejudice to the generality of this clause the following general principles shall apply:

- (i) No grant shall be given other than to a student society which is an Active Member of the Council.
- (ii) No grant shall be given to any student society which has not submitted its accounts for the previous session in the manner specified by the Finance Committee, such accounts having been approved and signed by the Senior Treasurer of that student society.
- (iii) No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a grant to the student society of which he or she is a representative.
- (iv) No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a grant to a student society in which he or she could be said to have a vested interest.

In deciding on its procedures and criteria the Finance Committee shall take into consideration any recommendation made by a General Meeting of the Council regarding such procedures and criteria. It shall cause to have a document setting out its procedures and criteria made available on the website of the Council.

### **3 Appeals**

Any society may appeal a decision of the Finance Committee, as per Article 12 of this Constitution.



## **SCHEDULE B**

### **1 Recognition Committee**

- (a) There shall be a Recognition Committee of the Council consisting of:
- i. Chairperson of the Council
  - ii. Treasurer of the Council
  - iii. Two elected delegates of the Council, as per Article 10 of this Constitution
  - iv. Three staff representatives selected by the Executive Committee of the Council, from among the current or former Senior Treasurers to an Active Member society of the Council, where possible.
- (b) The Executive Committee of the Council shall also appoint a chairperson of the Recognition Committee. The chairperson shall have a casting vote, but shall not have a deliberative vote.
- (c) The term of office for the chairperson of the Recognition Committee, and the staff members appointed as per Article 1 (a) (iv) of this schedule, shall be two years from the date of their appointment by the Executive Committee of the Council, which may be renewed.
- (d) The function of the Recognition Committee shall be:
- i. Establishing the procedures and criteria in considering applications for recognition of new student societies so that they may be considered for membership of the Council
  - ii. Considering applications for recognition of student societies
  - iii. Approval of student societies to apply for membership of the Council
  - iv. Dealing with proposed changes in names of student societies
  - v. Dealing with proposed constitutional changes for student societies
- (e) There shall be at least one meeting of the Recognition Committee during each academic term.
- i. The dates for such meetings shall be decided by the Recognition Committee, at its first meeting following the summer period.
  - ii. Not less than two week's notice of each meeting shall be given.
  - iii. The quorum for a meeting of the Recognition Committee shall be one half of the number of its members.
  - iv. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, members of the Recognition Committee may not nominate others to attend meetings on their behalf

### **2 Procedures of the Recognition Committee**

(a) Existing student societies

All societies which have been recognised by the procedures in existence prior to the coming into force of this Constitution and which are listed in Schedule C shall be recognised societies.

(b) New student societies

The Recognition Committee shall establish its own procedures and criteria in considering applications for recognition of new student societies. Without prejudice to the generality of this section the procedures and criteria employed shall be subject to the requirements of this constitution and to the following general principles:

- i. All student societies shall be open to all registered students, graduates & staff of the University.
- ii. Student societies shall not have among their aims and objectives the promotion of actions which are illegal or in breach of the regulations of the University or which would tend to discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, religious belief or sexual orientation.
- iii. All student societies shall have a Senior Treasurer who is a full-time member of the staff of the University.
- iv. All student societies shall have at least two elected officers - a chief officer, to be called the Auditor or otherwise, and a treasurer.
- v. All student societies must accept and abide by any codes of practice that may be adopted by the Council.

In deciding on its procedures and criteria the Recognition Committee shall take into consideration any recommendation made by a General Meeting of the Council regarding such procedures and criteria. It shall cause to have a document setting out its procedures and criteria made available on the website of the Council.

### **3 Decisions of the Recognition Committee**

- (a) The decisions of the Recognition Committee in relation to applications for recognition shall be conveyed, in the first instance, to the group making the application and to the Executive Committee of the Council.
- (b) A proposal for recognition which has been rejected shall not be considered again during the same academic session.
- (c) The decisions of the Recognition Committee with regard to the recognition of student societies shall be registered by the Treasurer of the Council as additions to the list of recognised student societies included as Schedule C of this Constitution. That list shall include the date of such decision.

#### **4 Constitution of student societies**

- (a) Any student society which has been recognised may amend its own constitution in accordance with the provisions of that constitution. All such amendments, including any change of name, which have been duly agreed, shall be notified to the Recognition Committee by the officers of that student society within one month of such agreement. Unless the Recognition Committee considers that such amendment has substantially altered the nature of that student society which was recognised, such amendment shall not be held to alter the recognition of that student society and the constitution so amended shall be deemed to be the constitution of that recognised student society.
- (b) If the Recognition Committee considers that an amendment which has been notified to it would substantially alter the nature of that student society which had been recognised, it shall notify that student society of this opinion. If that student society upholds the amendment the Recognition Committee may decide that the recognition of that student society be withdrawn.
- (c) Copies of the constitutions of the recognised student societies shall be kept by the office of the Chairperson of the Council and shall be available for inspection by any member of the University on suitable notice being given.
- (d) In a situation where no copy of the constitution of a student society can be obtained and a conflict arises over procedures to be followed within that student society, the Senior Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairperson and Treasurer of the Council, may make a ruling which shall be accepted by that student society.

#### **6 Appeals**

Any society may appeal a decision of the Recognition Committee, as per Article 12 of this Constitution.

## **SCHEDULE C**

The following list includes members of the Council, and their representatives, as per Article 3 of this Constitution.

### **1 List of Active Members**

<b>Society</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Representative (Position)</b>
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### **2 List of Inactive Members**

<b>Society</b>
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## **SCHEDULE D**

The following list includes the decisions of the Recognition Committee regarding the recognition of student societies and the date of such decision, as per Schedule B of this Constitution.

<b>Student Society</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>
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