

STUDENTS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM CONSTITUTION

As approved by the Academic Council in June, 2014

1 There shall be an organisation to be known as The Students' Consultative Forum, hereinafter referred to as The Forum.

Objects

- 2** The objects of The Forum shall be to advance the welfare of University College Dublin and of its students and staff. In particular the Forum shall;
- (a) Provide opportunities for leaders of the Student Union, student clubs, societies and other student activities to meet with each other and with members of the administrative and academic staff of the College.
 - (b) Act as a channel for the representation of student opinion to various College officers and bodies.
 - (c) Foster the development of an active and diverse group of sports clubs and societies to cater for the extra-curricular interests of the student body.
 - (d) Make recommendations to the financial authorities of the University with regard to the allocation of funds, from whatever source, to the various sports clubs, societies and representative organisations.

Membership

3 (a) Membership of the Forum shall be constituted as follows:

The Auditors, or chief officers howsoever named, of all student societies which have been recognised according to the procedures in Schedule B and which are classified as Active in the list of recognised societies contained in Schedule C to this constitution.

The Captains of all sports clubs which have been recognised by the Athletic Union Council and the Academic Council and which are classified as Active in the list of recognised student clubs contained in Schedule D to this constitution.

The Sabbatical officers of the Students' Union

The Chairperson of the Societies Council

The Vice-President for Students and the Registrar of the University.

The Chaplains and Student Advisers

The Director of the Forum

The Societies Officer

The Director of Sport

The Director of Student Services and Facilities

The General manager of the Students' Union

Not more than four co-opted members who shall be proposed by the Executive Committee and approved by the General Assembly

- (b) At any meeting of the Forum or of any of its committees, any member of the Forum may be represented by an alternate, chosen by such member.
- (c) At any meeting of the Forum or of its committees, non-members may be invited to attend, with the agreement of the meeting, unless such attendance is specifically excluded by this constitution.
- (d) Student members of the Forum shall continue as members until the end of the academic year in which they assumed membership and their successors in office shall become members in the succeeding academic year.

Executive Committee

- 4 (a) There shall be an Executive Committee of the Forum to be constituted as follows:

There shall be an Executive Committee of the Forum to be constituted as follows:

The Director of Student Services and Facilities

The Director of the Forum

The Societies Officer

The Chairperson of the Societies Council

One Auditor of a society nominated by the Societies Council

The Director of Sport

The Executive Secretary of the Athletic Union Council

One Club captain nominated by the Athletic Union Council

The General Manager of the Students' Union

The President of the Students' Union

One representative selected by the Students' Union

- (b) The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice in each semester. It shall report on its activities to each meeting of the General Assembly. At least one week's notice of meeting shall be given.
- (c) It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to agree upon the appropriate division of the monies allocated to the Forum between its various constituent groups.
- (d) In the event of an elected or nominated member of the Executive Committee, without adequate cause, failing to attend two consecutive meetings, the Committee shall replace such member by another student from the same constituency as the replaced member. The replacement may be chosen by election or co-option.

Chairperson

- 5 (a) The Vice-President for Students shall be the Chairperson of the Forum and of its Executive Committee and shall act as its executive officer. In the absence of the Vice-President for Students, a member, nominated by the Vice-President for Students, shall take the chair for a particular meeting.
- (b) The Vice-President for Students shall be the Chief Returning Officer for all elections held under the auspices of the Forum, including the election of members to its committees, but may appoint a presiding officer to conduct the elections. Notice for all such elections, including elections to the Societies Council, the Societies Finance Committee and the Recognition Committee, shall be displayed by a notice, not less than A3 in size, on the notice-board in the Forum office and shall be sent by e-mail to all eligible electors who have notified their e-mail addresses to the secretary of the Forum.
- (c)

All elections held under the auspices of the Forum, including the election of members to its committees, shall be held using a system of proportional representation with a single transferable vote.

General Assemblies

- 6 (a) There shall be, at least, one General Assembly of the Forum in each semester. The first General Assembly in the first semester of each year shall be known as the Annual General Assembly. The quorum for all such meetings shall be one tenth of the number of members of the Forum. Notice of all general meetings and of committee meetings under the auspices of the Forum, shall be displayed by a notice, not less than A3 in size, on the notice-board in the Forum office, and shall be sent by e-mail to all those eligible to attend such meeting, who have notified their e-mail addresses to the secretary of the Forum, not less than two weeks before such meeting.
- (b) General Assemblies shall be held at times to be decided by the Executive Committee or on written requisition to the Vice-President for Students by any 20 members of the Forum.

No motion shall be considered for debate at a General Assembly of the Forum unless notice of such motion has been given in writing to the Chairperson of the Forum at least seven days before such meeting, has been posted on the Forum notice-board for at least four days before such meeting, and has been circulated by e-mail to all those who have notified their e-mail addresses to the secretary of the Forum.

Societies Officer

- 7 There shall be a Societies Officer appointed by the University. The Societies Officer shall act as the University Officer with responsibility for societies and society activity in the University, and shall have such other duties as are agreed from time to time. The Societies officer shall report to the Vice-President for Students and to the Societies Council.

Director of the Forum

8. There shall be a Director of the Forum appointed by the Vice-President for Students. The Director of the Forum shall be selected from among the members of the College and shall hold office for a term of three years, which may be renewed. The Director of the Forum shall oversee the day-to-day operations of the Forum. The Director of the Forum shall report to the Vice-President for Students.

Annual Report

9. The Director of the Forum shall prepare an Annual Report on the activities of the Forum, which shall be presented to the Academic Council and to a General Assembly of the Forum.

The Constitution

10. Any proposal to amend this Constitution, other than Schedules A, B, C and D, shall require the approval of a simple majority of the members of the Forum voting at a General Assembly of the Forum. If approved by the Forum it shall be sent to the Academic Council for its consideration. Unless rejected by the Academic Council it shall stand as part of the Constitution. Schedule A may be amended, only by the Societies Council, in accordance with the provisions of section 15 of Schedule A. Schedule B may be amended only in accordance with the provisions of section 11 of Schedule B.
11. Schedules C and D shall be regularly updated by the Societies Officer and the Director of Sport respectively, to take account of decisions of the Academic Council or of the Forum.
12. This Constitution shall come into force when it has received the approval of the Academic Council.

SCHEDULES A

THE SOCIETIES COUNCIL

1 There shall be an organisation to be known as the Societies Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council.

2 **Objects**

The objects of the Council shall be to represent the interests of recognised student societies both within the Forum and elsewhere.

3 **Membership**

Membership of the Council shall consist of all recognised student societies. At meetings of the Council each society shall be represented by its auditor or by another member selected in accordance with the constitution of the society.

4 **The Committee**

There shall be an executive committee of the Council consisting of;

The Chairperson
The Secretary
The Treasurer
4 ordinary members

The Societies Officer shall be entitled to attend as a non-voting member at any meeting of the Committee.

5 **The Chairperson**

- (a) The Chairperson shall be the chief officer of the Council and shall preside at all meetings of the Council and, unless otherwise specified, of its committees. In the absence of the chairperson, a meeting may select a member to preside for such meeting.
- (b) The Chairperson shall be elected in an electoral process which shall take place in the Trinity term each year. To be eligible to stand for election, a person must be a registered student of the college or have been a registered student in the academic session immediately preceding that in which the election takes place. The term of office of the chairperson shall run from the start of the Michaelmas term following the election until the beginning of the following Michaelmas term.
- (c) During his or her term of office, the chairperson shall not hold any office in, or be a member of the committee of, any recognised student society nor shall he or she hold any office in the Students' Union.

6 **Members of the Committee**

The offices of Secretary and Treasurer and of the ordinary members of the Committee shall be filled in an electoral process, conducted by the returning officer, within three weeks of the start of the Michaelmas term each year. In conducting this election the returning officer shall arrange that the four seats to be filled are divided equally between the four constituencies described in Section 10 below. Candidates for election to these seats may be auditors of societies or other members of societies nominated by the auditor of those societies.

7 The duties of the Secretary and Treasurer of the Committee shall be decided from time to time by the Committee. These duties shall include the requirement that the Treasurer and the Societies Officer shall jointly operate any bank account held in the name of the Council.

8 **Meetings**

- (a) General Meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Committee or on the written requisition of at least fifteen members of the Council. General Meetings of the Council shall have a quorum equal to one-tenth the number of all recognised, active societies. At least one such meeting shall be held in each academic term. Not less than one week's

notice of such meeting shall be given by notice displayed on the notice board in the Forum office. Each 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. 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. Decisions of general meetings, if not contrary to the provisions of this constitution, shall have binding force on the Committee and officers of Council.

- (b) Meetings of the Committee shall take place when convened by the chairperson. There shall be at least one such meeting during each month of the academic session. 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.

9 Grant

There may be a grant paid annually to the Council by the Executive Committee of the Forum. The amount of such grant, which shall be provided to cover the running costs of the Council and its committees, shall be deducted from the overall amount allocated by the Executive to the societies from Capitation funds.

10 Status of Societies

- (a) There shall be a Schedule to this constitution containing the names of all societies which have been recognised according to the procedures described in Schedule B. The societies shall be classified as to whether they are Active, Inactive or Defunct.
- (b) Any society which, during the preceding two academic sessions has not taken part in the affairs of the Forum, has not applied for a grant, has not attended a general meeting nor held a meeting of its members shall be declared to be Inactive. Notice of the decision to make such a declaration shall be posted on the Forum Notice-board and given to the Senior Treasurer. After a further year of inactivity such an Inactive society shall be declared Defunct and shall be considered no longer recognised. The Societies Officer shall be authorised to seek the control of any assets remaining in the name of the society and to apply them for the benefit of the Active societies.
- (c) For the purpose of creating four electoral colleges for the election of the Societies Finance Committee, member societies shall be classified as follows:
 - (i) Group A; Societies whose objectives are such as to make them predominantly of interest to students of the humanities.
 - (ii) Group B; Societies with a technical or scientific basis.
 - (iii) Group C; Special interest societies.
 - (iv) Group D; All other societies.

The list of societies in Schedule C shall be annotated to indicate the classification of each member society. The Societies Officer may alter the classification from time to time and shall keep in mind the desirability of having four constituencies which represent similar numbers of societies. The Societies Officer shall give notice of such alteration. Such notice shall include at least one A3 sized notice on the Forum notice-board and e-mails sent to all the Council members who have made available their e-mail address

11 Finance Committee

There shall be a committee of the Council to be known as the Finance Committee. The function of the Finance Committee shall be to allocate grants to recognised societies from the amount allocated for this purpose by the Executive Committee of the Forum.

12 Membership of Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be constituted as follows:

The Societies Officer

The Chairperson of the Societies Council

Eight members elected at the first general meeting of the Council in each year of whom two shall be elected from each of the four constituencies defined in Section 10 above.

The Societies Officer 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.

13 Procedures of 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 society which has been recognised in accordance with the procedures detailed in Schedule B below.
- (ii) No grant shall be given to any 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 the society.
- (iii) No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a grant to the society of which he or she is a representative.
- (iv) No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a in which they could be said to have a vested interest.
- (v) In circumstances where the Societies Officer feels that a decision of the Finance Committee constitutes an unfair or inequitable distribution of monies, this decision shall be brought to the attention of the Finance Committee for their consideration and for possible adjustment. In extreme circumstances, the Societies Officer may refer any such case to the Forum Executive for consideration

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 displayed on the notice board in the Forum offices on at least one A3 sized notice on the Forum notice-board. Copies of such procedure and criteria shall be sent to all the Council members who have made available their e-mail or postal address.

14 Appeals

Any society may appeal the amount of the grant awarded to it. The amount awarded to a society may be appealed upon the request of six other societies. Such appeals shall be heard in the first instance by the Finance Committee which shall invite the appellants and their representatives to make a submission. In the event of a failure to reach agreement with the Finance Committee the society or societies may request the intervention of the Committee of the Council which shall appoint a neutral observer to monitor the appeal. The observer shall make such investigation as he or she thinks appropriate and may require the Finance Committee to re-hear the appeal. The observer shall attend any such new hearing and any discussions which take place in the context of the appeal. He or she shall report the results of their observations to the next meeting of the Council and may comment on the decisions taken in relation to the requirements of this constitution and to the rules of natural justice.

Any appeal may result in an award being increased or decreased or in having conditions attached to it.

15. Amendment of Schedule

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

SCHEDULE B

THE RECOGNITION OF SOCIETIES

1. There shall be a Committee to be known as the Academic Council Committee for Recognition of Student Societies (ACCRSS). In the context of this Constitution, the ACCRSS may be referred to as The Recognition Committee. The primary purpose of the Recognition Committee is to consider and review all applications for recognition of student societies.
2. The terms of reference for the Recognition Committee – ACCRSS are:
 - (a) Establishing the procedures and criteria in considering applications for recognition of new student societies
 - (b) Considering applications for recognition of student societies
 - (c) Recommending the recognition of societies to Academic Council
 - (d) Dealing with proposed changes in names of societies
 - (e) Dealing with proposed constitutional changes for societies
 - (f) Making recommendations to Academic Council for the withdrawal of recognition from societies
 - (g) Dealing with disciplinary matters concerning societies.
3. The following shall be members of the Recognition Committee – ACCRSS
 - Chair (Appointed by the President)
 - Vice-President for Students
 - Five Representatives elected by Academic Council from among its members
 - President, UCD Students' Union
 - Chairperson of the Societies Council
 - Two representatives of the Societies Council selected at the first general meeting of the Council in each session
 - Director of the Student Consultative Forum
4. The President shall appoint a Chair for the Committee, from amongst the members of the Committee or from among the members of Academic Council.
5. The Committee shall be supported by the Societies Officer, who will be responsible for maintaining the Schedule of Student Societies.
6. The Committee shall meet at least twice a year. Meetings shall be convened by the Chair who shall give at least seven day's notice of such meeting. The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be one third of the number of members of the Committee. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, members of the Committee may not nominate others to attend meetings on their behalf.
7. Without prejudice to the generality of the powers of the Committee to alter its own procedures from time to time, the following procedures shall govern its operation from the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic session.:

Procedures of the Recognition Committee - ACCRSS

A Existing 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 Procedures of the Recognition Committee

The Recognition Committee shall establish its own procedures and criteria in considering applications for recognition of new 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 societies shall be open to all registered students of the College.

- (ii) Societies shall not have among their aims and objectives the promotion of actions which are illegal or in breach of the regulations of the College or which would tend to discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, religious belief or sexual orientation.
- (iii) All societies shall have a Senior Treasurer who is a full-time member of the staff of the College.
- (iv) All societies shall have at least two elected officers - a chief officer to be called the Auditor or otherwise and a treasurer.
- (v) All societies must accept and abide by any Code of Practice for Society Finances that may be adopted by the Forum.

In establishing its procedures and criteria the Recognition Committee shall take into consideration any recommendations concerning such procedures and criteria made by the Societies Council. It shall cause to have a document setting out such procedures and criteria displayed on the notice board in the Forum office.

C Decisions of the Recognition Committee

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 committee of the Council. Any decision of the committee, either to accept or to reject an application for recognition, may be the subject of a submission by the committee of the Council to the Recognition Committee. Any such submission shall be considered by the Recognition Committee at its next meeting and the committee may alter or confirm its original decision. Any decision to recommend the recognition of a new society shall be forwarded to the Academic Council. If the Academic Council does not reject the decision of the Recognition Committee the Committee its decision shall stand as a decision of the Academic Council.

D A proposal for recognition which has been rejected shall not be considered again during the same academic session.

E Constitution of Societies

Any 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 the society within one month of such agreement. Unless the recognition Committee considers that such amendment has substantially altered the nature of the society which was recognised by the Academic Council, such amendment shall not be held to alter the recognition of the society and the constitution so amended shall be deemed to be the constitution of the recognised society.

If the Recognition Committee considers that an amendment which has been notified to it would substantially alter the nature of the society which had been recognised, it shall notify the society of this opinion. If the society upholds the amendment the Recognition Committee may make a report to the Academic Council recommending that the recognition of the society be withdrawn and its name removed from Schedule C of this Constitution. The decision of the Academic Councils shall be final.

F The decisions of the Academic Council with regard to the recognition of societies shall be registered by the Societies Officer as additions to the list of recognised societies in Schedule C. That list shall include the date of the decision of the Academic Council.

G Copies of the constitutions of the recognised societies shall be kept by the office of the Vice-President for Students and the office of the Student Consultative Forum and shall be available for inspection by any member of the College on suitable notice being given.

H In a situation where no copy of the constitution of a society can be obtained and a conflict arises over procedures to be followed within that society, the Senior Treasurer, in consultation with the Societies Officer, may make a ruling which shall be accepted by the society.

I Disciplinary Procedures

(a) Without prejudice to the rights of the College or of individual students in relation to proceedings against individual students under the terms of the disciplinary code, a society or its officers may be charged with conduct which infringes

on the rights of members of the College or which brings the College into disrepute, or with failing to abide by the provisions of its constitution.

- (b) Accusations leading to charges under this Section may be made by any individual and should be brought in the first instance to the attention of the Societies Officer. The Societies Officer, in consultation with the Vice-President for Students and the chairperson of the Societies Council, shall decide if there is, *prima facie*, a case to be considered. If it is so decided the case shall be referred to the Recognition Committee for decision.
- (c) The Recognition Committee shall regulate and apply its own procedures in accordance with the principles of natural justice. In cases where it is satisfied that the charges brought have been proved, it may impose such penalties as it considers appropriate, including fines, or suspension from office. If the Committee decides that the appropriate penalty is the withdrawal of recognition, such penalty shall be reported to the Academic Council for approval. The Societies Finance Committee shall take such action as is required to execute any penalty which is approved.

J. Amendment of Schedule

Amendments to Schedule B may be initiated only by the Societies Council **or by the Academic Council**. Members of the Council must be given two weeks written notice, by the Chairperson, of any proposed amendments to the Schedule. This notice should also include the time, date and location of the meeting of the Council where the proposed amendments will be voted upon. The amendments will be considered passed if not less than a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a quorate meeting of the Societies Council vote in favour of them. Amendments will only come into force when they have also been approved by the Academic Council.

Schedule E

The Newman Fund

A. There shall be an organisation to be known as the Newman Fund Organisation which shall be a constituent group within the Student Consultative Forum. The objectives of the Organisation shall be to assist those activities of the UCD student body which do not fall within the terms of reference of the other constituent groups within the Student Consultative Forum, by making grants from its resources.

B. The Organisation shall be chaired by the Vice-President for Students. Its other members shall consist of:

- (i) A nominee of the President of the Students' Union
- (ii) A nominee of the Director of Sport
- (iii) A nominee of the Societies Officer
- (iv) The Director of the Student Consultative Forum
- (v) The Co-ordinator of the Student Advisory Service

The quorum for meetings of the Organisation shall be 3 members.

C The Organisation shall meet, from time to time, to consider applications for funding. It shall draw up appropriate rules governing, *inter alia*, the advertising to the general student body of the availability of grants, the procedures for application for grants, and the requirement that grant recipients shall report back to the Organisation on the manner in which grants have been expended. It shall also decide on the procedures for the management of its funds. In considering applications for grants it shall be guided by the following criteria:

- (vi) Applications should be from individuals or groups which are controlled or managed by registered students of UCD.
- (vii) Applications should be from individuals or groups which do not have the right of access to funds coming from the other constituent bodies of the Forum.
- (viii) It shall have absolute discretion, within the terms of the Constitution of the Student Consultative Forum, in the decisions taken on applications.
- (ix) In the case of a disagreement at a meeting about an individual application, the matter shall be decided by a simple majority. The chair of each meeting shall have a deliberative and a casting vote

D. The Newman Fund Organisation shall be entitled to receive funds through the regular funding mechanism of the Forum and from any other source

E. The Organisation shall present an annual financial report to the Executive Committee of the Forum. Any surplus funds remaining with the Organisation at the end of each academic session shall be transferred to the account of the Student Capital Fund.