

# 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

## 1. Organisation

There shall be an organisation to be known as the *UCD Societies Council*, and in the Irish language as *Comhairle na gCumann UCD*, hereinafter referred to as the Council.

## 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 D, as amended.
- 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 any of 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
    - iv. Any student society which, during the preceding academic session, has not submitted an End of Year Report.
  - iii. The list of active members of the Council shall be maintained by the Treasurer and reviewed annually by the Executive Committee.

- c. Each Active Member shall be entitled to the following:
  - i. To nominate their Auditor as their representative at Council meetings.
    - i. Where an Auditor is unable to attend a meeting, they may nominate a proxy observer, subject to the approval of the Chairperson. Such nominations must be submitted to the Chairperson and approved no less than 2 business days before a meeting of the Council.
    - ii. Such proxy observers may not present to the Council, vote on motions, or nominate members to Council committees.
  - ii. To have this 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. The Auditor of each society shall
  - 1. Not have served as Auditor of the given society for more than two sessions without the written approval of the Societies Officer.
  - 2. Not be the Auditor of any other society, sports club, representative body, organisation of, or within, the University, or sabbatical officer of the Students' Union.
  - 3. be a current undergraduate, or postgraduate student in the University, or have graduated during the previous session.
  
- e. Inactive Members shall not be entitled to take part in the affairs of the Council or make use of resources allocated to Active Members including but not limited to grants and room booking facilities.
  
- f. 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:
  - 1. The Chairperson
  - 2. The Deputy Chairperson
  - 3. The Treasurer

4. Delegates to groups external to the Council for the current session, and for the two sessions immediately prior to the current session
  5. Delegates to the Recognition Committee for the current session, and for the two sessions immediately prior to the current session
  6. 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. Not less than one week's notice of such a 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 Deputy-Chairperson shall preside for such meeting, unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.
- c. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Executive Committee, subject to confirmation of the Council. The Executive Committee shall appoint a working group for the purposes of recommending an applicant for appointment as the Chairperson, consisting of:
  1. The Treasurer, who shall be the chairperson of the working group;
  2. One individual with experience of the workings of the Council and its committees;
  3. One individual independent of the University with experience of the workings of similar student activities in similar settings.
- d. The Executive Committee shall decide on the procedures of such working groups.
- e. 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.

- f. 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.
- g. During their term of office, the Chairperson shall not hold any office in, or be a member of the committee of, any member society nor shall they hold any office in the Students' Union, AUC, or any other co-curricular student body in the University.
- h. The Chairperson shall be entitled to attend all meetings of all member societies.
- i. 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, unless otherwise agreed.

## **6. The Deputy-Chairperson**

- a. The Deputy-Chairperson may be appointed by the Executive Committee, from time to time, subject to confirmation of the Council.
- b. The principles and procedures set out in Article 5.(c)-(g) shall also apply the appointment of the Deputy-Chairperson
- c. The principle set out in Article 5(g) shall also apply to the Deputy-Chairperson.
- d. The Deputy-Chairperson shall be responsible for:
  - 1. Recording the minutes of the meetings of the Council and of the meetings of the Executive Committee
  - 2. In the absence of the Chairperson, presiding over meetings of the Council and of the Executive Committee
  - 3. Other duties as 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:
  - 1. Any bank account held in the name of the Council
  - 2. Maintaining a schedule of the recognised and defunct student societies, and the dates such decisions were taken, included as Schedule D of this Constitution
  - 3. 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:

1. General Meetings of the Council shall have a quorum equal to one-tenth the number of all Active Members.
  2. At least one such meeting shall be held in each academic term.
  3. Not less than one week's notice of such a meeting shall be given by email to all student society email accounts provided by the Council. 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.
  4. 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. 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 all student society email accounts provided by the Council.

## **9. Grants**

- a. 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 3(c)(iii) 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 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 due to a direct action of removal from office within that Active Member, they shall also cease to be a delegate of the Council.
- f. 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.

- g. 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.

## **11. Procedures for election of**

- a. Elections of the Council shall take place in the first General Meeting of the academic year.
- b. The notice for this meeting shall include:
  - 1. The positions for which nominations are sought
  - 2. The Procedures for Elections
  - 3. The list of membership of the Council, as per Schedule D of this Constitution, including their constituencies, as per Article 11 (d) of this Constitution
  - 4. The name of the Presiding Officer, who shall be the Treasurer of the Council
- c. Nominations may be accepted at the meeting, as per Article 3 (c)(iii) 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.
- d. There shall be one constituency for elections, unless otherwise specified.
- e. 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
  - 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.

- f. In circumstances where there are fewer than two nominees from a particular constituency, the nominees of other colleges may be elected to represent that constituency.

## **12. Appeals**

- a. Any student society may appeal a decision by the Council or its committees.
- b. Any such 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 only be amended 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.
- c. The amendment shall be considered passed if not less than two-thirds 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:
  1. The Chairperson of the Council

2. The Treasurer of the Council
  3. 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:

- a. Grants shall only be awarded to active members of the Council.
- b. No grant shall be awarded 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.
- c. No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a grant to the student society of which they are a representative.
- d. No member of the Finance Committee may vote on the award of a grant to a student society in which they may have an actual or perceived conflict of 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. A document setting out its procedures and criteria will be 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:
  1. Chairperson of the Council
  2. Treasurer of the Council
  3. The Deputy Chairperson
  4. Two elected delegates of the Council, as per Article 10 of this Constitution
  5. Three staff representatives selected by the Executive Committee of the Council, from among the current 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:
  1. 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
  2. Considering applications for recognition of student societies
  3. Approval of student societies to apply for membership of the Council
  4. Dealing with proposed changes in names of student societies
  5. 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 weeks' 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

## **1. 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 D 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 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 gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community.
- 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, and a treasurer. Both of these officers shall be current students of the University, or graduates from the previous academic year.
- 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. A document setting out its procedures and criteria made available on the website of the Council.

## **3. Decision 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 D of this Constitution.

#### **4. Constitutions 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.

#### **5. Appeals**

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

## SCHEDULE C

### 1. Disciplinary Committee

- a. There shall be a Disciplinary Committee of the Council appointed by the Executive Committee consisting of:
  - i. Two legal professionals who are familiar with the business of the Council.
  - ii. A financial professional who is familiar with the business of the Council.
  - iii. A former Chairperson of the Council, or someone familiar with the business of the Council
  - iv. Two staff members from the pool of senior treasurers.
  
- b. The Disciplinary Committee shall select a chairperson from amongst its membership.
  
- c. The term of office for the Chairperson of the Disciplinary 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. Without prejudice to the rights of the University or of individual students in relation to proceedings against individual students under the terms of the disciplinary code, a student society or its officers may be charged with conduct which infringes on the rights of members of the University or which brings the University into disrepute, or with failing to abide by the provisions of its constitution.
  
- e. 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 Treasurer of the Council. The Treasurer of the Council, in consultation with the Chairperson of the 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.
  
- f. 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, but not limited to, fines, or suspension from office. If the Recognition Committee decides that the appropriate penalty is the withdrawal of recognition, such penalty shall be applied.
  
- g. The Finance Committee of the Council shall take such action as is required to execute any financial penalty which is recommended by the Disciplinary Committee.

## SCHEDULE D

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

### 1 List of Active Members

Actuarial & Financial Society
Africa Society
Agricultural Science Society
An Cumann Gaelach
Arabic Culture and Language Society
Archaeology Society
Architecture Society
Arts Society
Biological Society
Broadcasting / Belfield FM Society
Chemical Engineering Society
Chemical Society
Chess Society
Chinese Students Society
Christian Union Society
Civil Engineering Society
Classical Society
Commerce & Economics Society
Dance Society
Darts Society
Datasoc
DJ

Dramsoc
Drawsoc
Eastern European Society
Economics Society
Electronic & Electrical Engineering Society
Engineering Society
English & Literary Society
Erasmus Student Network Society
Fianna Fail Kevin Barry Cumann
Film & Video Society
Fine Gael Society
Food Society
French Society
Games Society
Geography
Geology Society
German Society
Gospel Choir
Greens
Harry Potter Society
History Society
Horse Racing Society
Horticulture Society
Indian Society
International Students Society
Internet Society
Investors & Entrepreneurs Society
Islamic Society
Italian Society

Japanese Society
Juggling Society
Labour Society
Landscape Architecture
Law Society
LGBTQ+ Society
Literary & Historical Society
Living Stones Society
Malaysian Society
Mathematical Society
Mature Students Society
Mechanical Engineering Society
Medical Society
Music Society
Musical Society
Newman Society
Nordic Society
Nurses Society
Nutrition Society
One Health Society
Pharmtox Society
PhD Students Society
Philosophy Society
Physics Society
Physiotherapy Society
Planning & Environmental Policy Society
Politics Society
Psychological Society
Radiography

Science Fiction & Fantasy Society
Science Society
Sinn Fein Society
Social Democrats Society
Socialist Workers Society
Spanish Society
Sri Lankan Society
St Vincent de Paul Society
Student Legal Service Society
Sustainability Society
Traditional Music Society
UCDTV Society
Veterinary Society
Volunteers Overseas Society
Women+ In Stem Society
World Aid Society