

CONSTITUTION
OF
THE STUDENTS' UNION
OF
DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

March, 2009

Part One – General

Name:

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be the Students' Union of Dundalk Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Dundalk.

Membership:

- 1.2 Membership of the Union shall automatically be conferred on all students registered who have paid capitation on the 1st October of each academic year.

Aims and Objectives:

- 1.3 The aims and objectives of the organisation (hereinafter referred to the Union) shall be:
- 1.3.1 To represent the interest of its members on matters relating to their education and to protect and further their rights as students and citizens.
 - 1.3.2 To develop and expand the welfare and other services available to its members.
 - 1.3.3 To provide such social and recreational amenities as may be possible from the resources available to it.
 - 1.3.4 To act as the spokesperson for its members and as a channel of communication between all other organisations with whom the Union maintains contact for the attainment of these objects.
 - 1.3.5 To promote and encourage the role of the Students' Union within the National Union (Union of Students in Ireland) and to use this facility to its fullest potential to benefit the Union and its members by regular publications and notices.

Part Two – Structures of the Union

- 2.1 The government of the Union is based on the democratic principle that every member shall have the fullest opportunity to participate in controlling Union affairs.
- 2.2 Management of the Union's affairs shall be conducted on five levels:
 - 1) The Union General Meeting (UGM)
 - 2) The Referendum on Union Policy
 - 3) The Class Representative Council
 - 4) The Union Executive
 - 5) The Union President
- 2.3 The UGM shall be the supreme governing body of the Union save in such instances where items are referred to referendum. The Union council shall have the right to determine Union policy, subject to the UGM.

Union General Meeting

- 2.4 Decisions of the UGM shall be binding on The Class Representative Council and Executive, and all members shall be entitled to attend and participate fully.
- 2.5 Meetings shall be held at least once a semester in each academic term subject to the regulations laid down in Sections 2.6 - 2.15.
- 2.6 Five clear days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) shall be given of the intention to hold a UGM and notice of such meeting shall be posted on the Union notice board(s). The business conducted at such a meeting shall include a report from the Union Executive. All other items for discussion must be notified in advance to the Union President no later than 48 hours before the meeting.
- 2.7 The President of the Union, or in his/her absence the Vice-President, shall take the chair at the UGM. In the event of either being unable to take the chair, the meeting shall elect a chairperson, by a show of hands.
- 2.8 The quorum to constitute a valid UGM shall be one hundred and fifty Union members. In the event of no quorum being present the meeting may be reconvened at the same time seven days later when no quorum will be required. Only the business to be dealt with at the original UGM may be discussed at the reconvened meeting.
- 2.9 Emergency general meetings may be convened –
 - 2.9.1 by the Executive
 - 2.9.2 as the result of a motion being passed by The Class Representative Council requesting an emergency general meeting.

- 2.9.3 on receipt by the Union President of a petition signed by at least 10% of the members of the Union requesting an emergency meeting.
- 2.10 In respect of Section 2.9.3 above, a request for an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) shall state the purpose for which the meeting is being called and only items contained in this request shall be discussed.
- 2.11 In all cases the Union President shall give at least 48 hours notice of an EGM which shall include the time and place of the meeting and the business to be discussed. No other business shall be discussed.
- 2.12 Decisions taken at the UGM's shall be posted on the Union notice board(s) within 48 hours of the meeting and they shall be available to any Union member on request.
- 2.13 A referendum on any issue of Union Policy may be requested by:
- The UGM
 - The Class Representative Council
 - The Executive of the Union
 - At least 20% of the members of the Union who submit their request to the Union President in writing.
- 2.14 Decisions of a referendum shall be binding on all Union bodies, including the UGM.
- 2.15 A referendum on the amendment of this Constitution shall be governed by Part 6 of this constitution.

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| The Class Representative Council |
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- 2.16 There shall be a representative body which shall manage the affairs and advise on the policy of the Union, subject to the UGM and the referendum. This body shall be known as The Class Representative Council and shall meet at least twice a semester.
- 2.17 The Class Representative Council shall consist of one representative from each class of all full-time courses offered in the institute. These representatives shall be elected by and from the members of each class. It shall be the responsibility of the Union Executive to inform each class of the requirement to elect a class representative but it shall be the **responsibility** of each class to actually select its representative.
- 2.18 Each representative shall represent the interests and views of his or her class on the Council and keep them regularly informed about the proceedings of the Council.
- 2.18.1 A class may remove its Class Representative by a petition presented to the President or Vice-President consisting of 70% of the registered class.
- 2.19 In the case of a vacancy arising on the Council, whether by the removal of a representative, election to the Executive or otherwise, the Executive shall

- communicate with the class concerned regarding the need to select a new class representative.
- 2.20 Union Executive members shall be ex-officio members of the Class Representative Council
- 2.21 The Council shall have the power to constitute at any time any sub-committees as it may require for the better conduct of its affairs.
- 2.22 Thirty per cent of the total membership of the Council shall constitute a quorum.
- 2.23 There shall be an executive committee selected by general franchise of Union members which shall be responsible for the day to day running of the Union. All Union members are eligible to stand for election for any office on the Union Executive.
- 2.24 The Executive shall consist of the following posts:
1. President
 2. Vice-President
- 2.24.1 The posts of the President and Vice-President of the Union shall be sabbatical positions. The President and Vice-President shall be paid a minimum salary equivalent to grade three, point seven on the pay scale of a Clerical Officer in the employment of an Institute of Technology. The President's term of office shall commence on the 1st July each year and cease on the 30th June of the following year. The Vice-President's term of office shall commence on the 1st August each year and cease on the 30th June of the following year. In the event of no candidate seeking a sabbatical position, the position shall be part-time and subject to the normal electoral procedures.
- 2.24.2 Where either or both of the incoming sabbatical officers following the elections held in accordance with Clauses 3.1 - 3.7 of this constitution are not out-going sabbatical officers, provisions may be made by the Union for cross over training of the said newly elected officers. This cross-over training may take place from the date of the completion of the second semester examinations in that particular year to 30th June of the same year. Provision may be made to pay incoming sabbatical officers an allowance for the period of this cross -over training.
- 2.25 The President shall be the chief representative of students and subject to Council and UGM, shall have four major areas of responsibility.
- Representation
 - Organisation
 - Co-ordination
 - Initiation of policy

- He/she shall chair all Executive, Council and General Meetings. He/she shall also act as Treasurer for the Union.
- 2.26 The President shall have authority to enter into legally binding agreements on behalf of the Union so long as such agreements further the aims and objectives of the Union.
- 2.27 The Union President and Vice-President shall be required to enter into a contract of employment with the Students' Union. Such a contract of employment will contain such other provisions defining the duties of the President and Vice-President as are decided upon by the Union Executive.
- 2.28 The Union shall be entitled to employ a Union Administrative Officer whose duties shall include the servicing of the Students' Union Office.
- 2.28.1 The Vice-President shall act for and on behalf of the President in his/her absence. He/she shall also act as Welfare Officer and shall represent the interests of the members in matters relating to their welfare, as laid down by the Council and UGM. He/she shall also act as Equality Officer. The Equality Officer shall represent the interests of all members of the Students' Union so as to promote equality of treatment and in particular to ensure that such members are not discriminated against or harassed arising from their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, age, physical or mental disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins or membership of the travelling community.
- 2.28.2 The Vice-President shall assist in the development and co-ordination of all entertainment and cultural events.
- 2.29 The Union Vice-President shall be responsible for taking and publishing minutes of all meetings of the Executive, UGM and the Council. He/she shall be responsible for the posting of notices relating to meetings, etc.
- 2.30 The Executive may take such reasonable initiatives in the area of policy as are necessary when the Council is not in session. Such initiatives must be ratified by the Council or UGM.

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| Elections |
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- 3.1 The following time table shall apply for elections to the Executive of the Union.
- 3.1.1 Elections shall be held in the second semester of the academic year.
- 3.1.2 The actual timing of the elections shall be determined by the Union Executive in consultation with the Returning Officer, taking into account the date of

commencement of the second semester of the academic year and the date for the commencement of the end of year examinations in the Institute subject to clause 3.1.3 below.

- 3.1.3 In no circumstances shall the elections take place within three weeks of commencement of the second semester exams.
- 3.2 The following provisions shall apply to the elections for the officers of the Union Executive.
 - 3.2.1 Nominations for all offices shall open eight days excluding Saturday and Sunday before the day on which the voting for the said offices shall take place. Nominations will be closed four days, excluding Saturday and Sunday before the date on which the voting shall take place.
 - 3.2.2 No person may be nominated for more than one office on the Union Executive.
 - 3.2.3 Canvassing for the sabbatical offices may not commence until after the closing of nominations on the said offices.
 - 3.2.4 To be nominated as a candidate, a Union member must be proposed in writing by five other Union members.
- 3.3 All elections for the Union Executive shall be by secret ballot using the single - transferable vote system of proportional representation.
- 3.4. Any member of the Union who is not available to vote on the day of polling for any position on the Union Executive for any of the following reasons.
 - (i) Course related work experience
 - (ii) Course related class trips and visits
 - (iii) Representing the Institution in sporting and other activitiesshall be facilitated before the day of polling.
 - 3.4.1 It shall be the duty of the President in consultation with the Returning Officer to put in place special arrangements to facilitate any such member of the Union.
 - 3.4.2 The special arrangements will be supervised strictly to prevent any possible abuse and in no circumstances will the reasons specified at 3.4.1 above be extended for any other reason.
- 3.5 All elections for the Union Executive shall be overseen and supervised by a member of the academic staff who has a working knowledge of the relevant voting system and who is appointed by the Union Executive for this purpose. Such staff member shall continue to fulfill this function until such time as he or she shall indicate that they no longer wish to continue or is removed and replaced by the current Union Executive.

- 3.5.1 All disputes concerning the conduct of elections for all Executive positions shall be arbitrated upon by the said staff member and his or her decision shall be final.
- 3.5.2 The said staff member shall be returning officer for all elections to Executive positions. The counting of votes for all such elections shall commence immediately on the close of voting. The returning officer shall organise the counters of the votes.
- 3.5.3 Voting for all Executive positions shall on polling day take place for at least six consecutive hours. Polls can open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.
- 3.5.4 The returning officer shall ensure that the results of such elections and details of the count shall be posted on the Union notice board within 24 hours of the completion of the count. A copy shall also be delivered to the Director of the Institute.
- 3.6 Elections for casual vacancies arising for whatever reason in the office of President and Vice-President are subject to the same rules and regulations as ordinary elections for such positions and shall be held within four weeks of the said vacancy arising.
- 3.7 No Union member shall hold a sabbatical office or any combination of sabbatical offices for more than three years.

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| Vote of no confidence |
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- 4.1 A vote of no-confidence in the President or Vice-President shall be the method by which such an officer of the Union shall be removed from office. The following provisions shall apply to any such proposal:
 - 4.1.1 A vote of no-confidence must be proposed in writing and supported by the signatures of 10% of the Union membership.
 - 4.1.2 Immediately on receiving such a proposal the Executive shall convene a UGM. The quorum for such meeting shall be 20% of the Union membership. If no quorum is present twenty minutes after the time set for the commencement of the meeting the meeting shall terminate. There is no provision for the reconvening of such a meeting either by adjournment or by compliance with the procedure at 4.1.1 above within one calendar month of the previous meeting. The only business to be conducted at such a specially convened UGM shall be the said motion of no confidence.
 - 4.1.3 For the motion to be successfully carried a 75% majority of those present must vote in favour of the motion shall be required.

- 4.1.4 In the event of a sabbatical officer being removed from office by this procedure he or she shall be entitled to be proposed as a candidate for the subsequent election for such an office.

Finances

- 5.1 The financial year shall begin on the 1st June and end on the 31th May of the following year.
- 5.2 The Union Executive, along with the Administrative Officer (Student and Academic Affairs) of the Institute's administrative staff, shall ensure that auditors are appointed for the purpose of auditing all the accounts of the Union. Such auditors shall be a recognised firm of Auditors whose place of business is in Dundalk. Once such auditors are appointed they shall continue to hold office until such time as they shall resign or be removed by a vote of a UGM convened for that purpose. The auditors appointed shall be remunerated in accordance with normal commercial practice.
- 5.2.1 The audited accounts shall be made available on request by any union member.
- 5.2.2 The day to day conduct of Union finances shall be the responsibility of the President of the Students' Union. In exercising this accountability and responsibility, the President of the Union shall consult with and inform as appropriate the following: the Director of the Institute, the Secretary/Financial Controller, the Student Affairs Officer, the Union Administrative Officer and the Vice-President of the Students' Union.
- 5.2.3 Whenever possible, all financial transactions shall be by cheque. All Union cheques which relate to expenditure arising from funds derived from Student Capitation Fees shall be signed by the Union President and counter-signed by the Secretary/Financial Controller or the Student Services Officer. In respect to other accounts operated by the Students' Union arising from self-generated funding, the joint signatures of the President and the Administration Officer of the Union shall be required for the proper drawing of a cheque on such accounts.
- 5.2.4 In preparing audited accounts of all income and expenditure of the Students' Union, the auditor shall prepare separate statements as to the funds generated by the activities of the Union itself.

Referendum and Adoption of this Constitution

- 6.1.1 This Constitution may be altered in any way either by deletion, addition of provisions, etc. by means of a Referendum
- 6.1.2 Such a Referendum must be preceded by discussion of the proposed change or changes at a specially convened UGM.

- 6.1.3 Prior to such a UGM copies of the proposed change must be placed on the Union notice board and be available for inspection at the Union Office for at least 3 days excluding Saturday and Sunday.
- 6.1.4 Proposals for change in the Constitution may be made either by the Union Executive, The Class Representative Council, UGM or on foot of a petition by 150 Union members.
- 6.1.5 Following discussions of the proposal for alteration of the Constitution at the said specially convened UGM, the proposal shall be voted on by a referendum of the Union members.
- 6.1.6 A simple majority in favour of the proposal shall be sufficient to give effect to such a proposed amendment of the Constitution.
- 6.1.7 Where relevant, the provisions regarding the election of Union Executive officers shall apply to Referendum on the Constitution.
- 6.1.8 This Constitution rescinds the previous Constitution of the Union which took effect from 30th April, 1990.
- 6.1.9 This Constitution shall be valid and operation from 20th March, 2009.

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