



CONSTITUTION OF NUI GALWAY STUDENTS' UNION

1. NAME

The name of the association which shall be governed by this constitution shall be, "Comhaltas na Mac Léinn, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh", and in English be "NUI Galway Students' Union", hereinafter referred to as "the Union".

2. MISSION

The mission of the Union shall be to represent its members and promote, defend and vindicate the rights of its members at all levels of society.

3. FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Union shall be the promotion and furtherance of any matters of interest to the membership and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, in particular:

- i. To act as the recognised representative body for registered students within the University and to represent their interests.
- ii. To provide and manage social, recreational and commercial services for the members of the Union.
- iii. To promote discussion and research on all matters of interest to members of the Union particularly educational and welfare matters and to communicate these to the Union members.
- iv. To promote the unity of the organisation and contact between members through assisting clubs, societies and other student organisations of the students within the University.
- v. To promote good relations between students and staff of NUI Galway.
- vi. To encourage and pursue the aspiration of fair and equal access to education through Irish or English for all sectors of the Irish people.

4. MEMBERSHIP

All registered students of NUI Galway shall, on payment of the student levy become full members of the Union. All members of the Executive are full members of the Union by virtue of their being elected.

5. AUTHORITY

Subject to this constitution the powers of government of the Union shall be vested in, and exercised by, the organs established by this constitution in the following order of importance, namely:

- A. Referendum
- B. Board of Trustees
- C. Students' Union Council
- D. Executive Committee
- E. President

A. Referendum

A referendum shall be of all members as laid down in the schedules of the constitution. The Students' Union Council and all Union officers shall be subject to any decision made by a referendum.

B. Board of Trustees

- i. All property, assets, liabilities and investments of the Union shall be held in trust for the members of the Union by the Board of Trustees. At no stage will the trustees be personally at risk for claims against the Union or the liabilities of the Union. The Union and its members shall indemnify and hold harmless the trustees from all claims, cost, risk and expense arising from their position as trustees.
- ii. The Board of Trustees shall advise the President on staffing, administration, finance and other aspects of the Union.
- iii. There shall be no less than five and a maximum of nine trustees of the Union who are appointed by the Executive Committee. Trustees can be removed by a two-thirds majority of a quorate Students' Union Council. They shall hold office until they resign or are removed.
- iv. The Trustees shall meet as often as may be required but in any event at least once per annum.
- v. The Trustees shall not be members of the Union.

C. Students' Union Council

- i. The Students' Union Council shall act as the forum for the Class Representatives.
- ii. All students are allowed to attend the Students' Union Council. Only registered Class Representatives are permitted to vote at the Students' Union Council.
- iii. The Students' Union Council shall meet at least three times per semester.
- iv. All Executive officers are required to attend the meetings. If an officer fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Students' Union Council without written apologies being accepted by the Students' Union Council, he/she shall be deemed to have resigned.

- v. Each Executive officer shall submit an electronic report of work done since the last meeting to the Chairperson of Students' Union Council not less than three college days prior to the meeting. If an officer fails to submit a report for three meetings during the year they shall be deemed to have resigned.
- vi. Members of the Students' Union Council may raise motions by contacting, in writing, the Chairperson of Students' Union Council not less than three college days prior to the meeting. College days are defined as all days on which teaching for undergraduate courses takes place as set out in the University Academic Calendar.
- vii. All students may speak on motions and ask questions of the officers.
- viii. Voting on motions at Students' Union Council shall ordinarily be by simple majority vote. Voting shall be conducted in accordance with the regulations outlined in the relevant Schedule of this Constitution.
- ix. Any member of the Students' Union Council may request a recount of the votes. There shall be a maximum of three recounts, after which the Chairperson shall adjudicate on the issue.
- x. A special meeting of the Students' Union Council shall be called, upon receipt of a written request submitted to the General Manager of the Union, or their appointee. It may be from any of the following:
 - a. The President of the Union (On his/her own initiative)
 - b. The Executive Committee (By simple majority vote)
 - c. The Chairperson of the Students' Union Council, (On his/her own initiative)
 - d. The General Manager of the Students' Union (On the receipt of a written request from five members of the Students' Union Council).
- xi. A maximum of two special Students' Union Councils may be held each semester.
- xii. Notices for all Students' Union Councils shall be given through the normal means of communication employed by the Union, with particular regard to electronic communication.
- xiii. The quorum for a Students' Union Council shall be fifty (50) class representatives.
- xiv. Meetings of Students' Union Council shall be conducted in accordance with such standing orders as may be determined by the members from time to time. Such standing orders may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present and voting. Standing Orders may not be suspended retrospectively.

D. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the day to day running of the representational activities of the Union as outlined in Article 7.

E. President

The President shall exercise plenary powers between Executive meetings and shall on request present a report of work to these meetings and shall be subject to any decision made by the Executive.

6. FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Accounts in relation to the representational function, administrative function and all functions not vested in an incorporated entity of the Union shall be controlled by the Finance Committee.

B. Finance Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the financial concerns of the Union and shall advise the Executive Committee of any developments or initiatives taken.

C. The role of Finance Committee is to:

- i. Approve the annual Students' Union budget.
- ii. Review the budget after six months.
- iii. Receive and examine the Union annual accounts and submit the accounts to the Students' Union Council.
- iv. Determine the administrative terms and conditions of officers' tenure including such matters as remuneration, annual leave and expenses.
- v. Oversee the general financial management and development of the Union.
- vi. Finance Committee must meet as often as necessary to complete its activities and in any case not less than three times annually, the first meeting to take place in the month of July.
- vii. All members of Finance Committee will be entitled to the minutes and documentation of the meetings of the previous years.

D. Finance Committee shall consist of six members. The members shall be:

- i. The President of the Students' Union.
- ii. Two Students' Union Officers appointed by the Executive Committee.

- iii. Three trustees, or persons appointed by the Board of Trustees.
- iv. The Chairperson of the committee shall be a Trustee appointed by the Board of Trustees and shall have a casting vote in the case of a tie.
- v. The Trustees, or their nominees, shall serve for up to three years. The Board of Trustees shall fill any vacancy at the earliest convenience.

7. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. The Executive Committee of the Union shall consist of:

- i. The President
- ii. The Vice-President / Welfare Officer
- iii. The Vice-President / Education Officer
- iv. The Equality Officer
- v. The Postgraduate Officer
- vi. The Mature Students Officer
- vii. The Irish Language Officer
- viii. The Societies' Chairperson
- ix. The Clubs' Captain
- x. The Students' Union Council Chairperson
- xi. A College Convener for each of the colleges of NUI Galway outlined in the relevant Schedule of this Constitution.

i. The President

1. S/He shall act as Chairperson and shall have responsibility to uphold this Constitution and the terms of reference of all Union companies.
2. S/He shall be responsible for liaising with the appropriate staff members of the Union, the Union's companies and with University management.
3. S/He shall have responsibility for the day to day finances of the Union in conjunction with the senior staff member and shall report to the Finance Committee on those issues.
4. S/He shall also be responsible for ultimate coordination of Students' Union campaigns
5. S/He shall be required to act as a member of the Boards of Directors of companies owned by or related to the Union.
6. S/He will represent Union members on University committees.
7. S/He shall be the Chief Executive Officer and chief spokesperson of the Union.
8. S/He shall be the principal delegate to the National Council and Annual Congress of the Union of Students in Ireland.
9. S/He shall also be required to give a mandatory report on work carried out at each Executive meeting.

ii. The Vice-President, who shall act as Welfare Officer.

1. S/He shall have responsibility for providing information and educating the general student body on welfare issues and to this end shall initiate campaigns on relevant and pressing Welfare issues.

2. S/He shall also provide a confidential listening and referral service for members of the Union
3. S/He shall represent members on various University committees.
4. S/He shall also organise and chair the Welfare Forum.
5. S/He shall also be required to give a mandatory report on work carried out at each Executive meeting.

iii. The Vice-President, who shall act as Education Officer.

1. S/He shall have ultimate responsibility for the co-ordination of the CRC in conjunction with the relevant staff members.
2. S/He shall provide a confidential listening and referral service for all Union members.
3. S/He shall represent members on various University committees.
4. S/He also has responsibility for keeping the Executive and general student body informed on relevant educational issues.
5. S/He shall be responsible for dealing with individual requests from students.
6. S/He shall also organise and chair the Education Forum.
7. S/He shall also be required to give a mandatory report on work carried out at each Executive meeting.

iv. The Equality Officer

1. S/He shall have responsibility for the promotion of equal opportunities and equal participation for all members of the Union.
2. S/He shall initiate relevant campaigns to highlight and address difficulties facing students arising from societal and / or campus inequalities.
3. S/He shall be responsible for promoting integration in all student activities
4. S/He shall provide a limited number of hours weekly for the purposes of consultation and referral for Union members.
5. S/He will represent Union members on various University committees.

v. The Postgraduate Officer

1. S/He shall be responsible for developing Union policy on postgraduate education.
2. S/He shall represent the interests of Postgraduate Students
3. S/He shall promote their full involvement in the academic and social life of the university community and the University.
4. S/He shall work primarily in conjunction with the Vice-President / Education Officer.
5. S/He will represent Union members on various University committees.

vi. The Mature Students Officer

1. S/He shall represent mature students on campus.
2. S/He shall promote their full involvement in the academic and social life of the university community.
3. S/He shall work with the other Students' Union officers, clubs, societies and the University as a whole to promote the development and integration of mature students at NUI Galway.

vii. The Irish Language Officer

1. S/He shall be responsible for the promotion of the Irish language and culture amongst the members of the Union.
2. S/He shall enforce the policy set out in Article 18.B.
3. S/He shall support the work of the Irish language societies on campus.
4. S/He shall be proficient in Irish. The Elections Committee may, before an election, demand an Irish Language Officer candidate to demonstrate his/her fluency and literacy in Irish. The Director of Spoken Irish in NUI Galway (or a person nominated by the Director) shall adjudicate. A lack in fluency or literacy shall deem that candidate ineligible for the position.
5. S/He will represent Union members on various University committees.

viii. The Societies' Chairperson

1. S/He shall have the responsibility of liaising between the University's societies, the Union, and the University.
2. S/He shall also help and advise societies and voice their concerns and needs on relevant University Committees.
3. As such, the Union recognises the Societies' Chairperson as the Chief Representative of the University's societies.
4. S/He shall also organise and chair the Societies' Forum.

ix. The Clubs' Captain

1. S/He shall have the responsibility of liaising between the University's clubs, the Union, and the University.
2. S/He shall also help and advise clubs and voice their concerns and needs on relevant University Committees.
3. As such, the Union recognises the Clubs' Captain as the Chief Representative of the University's clubs.
4. S/He shall also organise and chair the Clubs' Forum.

x. The Students' Union Council Chairperson,

1. S/He shall chair the meetings of the Students' Union Council
2. S/He shall represent all class representatives on the Executive Committee.
3. He/she shall work with the College Convenors to see that each class in the University has a class representative.

xi. The College Convenors

1. They shall act as the chairpersons of each relevant College Class Representatives Council ('College Council').
2. They shall represent their College's class representatives and students at the Executive Committee.
3. They shall work with the Chairperson of Students' Union Council to see that each class in the University has a class representative.

B. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Union committees and sub-committees unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and its Schedules. S/He may delegate her/his position on all committees, except the Executive Committee, to members of the Executive Committee or The Students' Union Council.

- C. Officers of the Union shall be elected in accordance with the relevant schedule of this constitution.
- D. The President and Vice-Presidents shall be full-time paid officers of the Union. They shall be remunerated at a rate to be decided by the Finance Committee.
- E. The President shall be responsible for the working and safeguarding of this constitution.
- F. An officer cannot hold two offices at once.
- G. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the day to day running of the representational activities of the Union. The Executive Committee shall decide Union policy and all members of the Executive shall be bound by these policies.
- H. All members of the Executive Committee shall be required to present a work plan for the year ahead to the Executive for approval before week two of the first semester. This work plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated before the start of the second semester and again at the end of the second semester and at any other time that the Executive Committee deems appropriate.
- I. The Executive Committee shall meet weekly during each semester. The quorum shall be seven. The Chairperson shall have the casting vote where necessary. If the number in attendance falls below quorum, the meeting will be regarded as having finished. Minutes of Executive Meetings will be published in the Students' Union website.
- J. If a member of the Executive fails to attend three consecutive ordinary meetings during his/her term in office, without his/her apologies having been accepted by the meeting, s/he shall be deemed to have resigned. If a member fails to attend six meetings consecutively with or without giving apologies, s/he shall be deemed to have resigned.
- K. One day's notice shall be given for all Ordinary Executive Committee Meetings. Emergency Executive Committee Meetings may be called at any time by five officers or the President. A decision made at an Emergency Executive Committee Meeting must be ratified by the next Ordinary Executive Committee Meeting or be counted as being nullified *ab initio*.
- L. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for all detailed matters concerning the functioning of the Union. All members of the Executive shall have a collective responsibility for the successful operation of the Union. All members of the Executive must maintain confidentiality on any matter deemed confidential by the Executive.
- M. The Executive Committee shall be answerable to the Union. It shall take such actions as it deems necessary and desirable in the interest of the Union and its members. The President shall exercise plenary powers between meetings of the

Executive Committee but shall be answerable to the Executive Committee for any decision taken.

N. Incoming full-time Officers shall be required to attend one week of crossover training in advance of taking office. Such training shall be provided by the outgoing Officer. Incoming Officers shall be remunerated at the same rate as the full-time Officers for this week's training. However, this remuneration shall not be payable in the case of an outgoing full-time Officer having been elected to the same or another Executive office.

8. INDEMNITY

All officers shall be indemnified and held harmless by the Union for any losses incurred or claims made against them in the carrying out of their duties so long as the exercise of such duties is in the ordinary course of their officership or has been approved in advance by the Executive Committee.

9. COLLEGE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS

A. Each of the Colleges of the National University of Ireland, Galway, as listed in the relevant schedule, shall have a College Council.

B. A Postgraduates Council shall also be constituted and consist of all Postgraduate class representatives across the University. All references to College Councils shall be interpreted as extending to the Postgraduates Council.

C. The Vice President/ Education Officer shall determine which academic units are assigned to which College Council having consulted with relevant academics in the unit concerned.

D. Each College Council shall comprise of representatives from each class within its College, both undergraduate and postgraduate.

E. The function of each College Council is to discuss issues affecting each College.

F. Each College Council shall hold two meetings each semester during the academic year.

G. Each class representative within the College Council shall be entitled to one vote at their College Council meeting.

H. The Vice President/ Education Officer and the appropriate College Convenor shall attend every meeting of each College Council. The College Convenor shall act as Chairperson of each meeting. The President should attend every meeting of each College Council.

I. Should the College Convenor be unable to attend meetings he/she may delegate this responsibility to another member of the Executive Committee or member of the relevant College Council.

- J. The Postgraduate Officer must attend the Postgraduates Council meetings.
- K. Any motion or items for inclusion on the agenda of College Council meetings shall be submitted to the College Convenor or to the Vice President / Education Officer in writing not less than two college days before the meeting at which they are to be discussed.

10. STUDENTS' UNION COMMITTEES & FORA

The Executive Committee shall establish committees and fora including:

A. The Students' Union General Meeting

- i. The Students' Union General Meeting shall be held at least once a year, with at least three college days notice give to the student body.
- ii. The President of the Students' Union shall ordinarily act as the Chairperson of the meeting, although he/she may ask another member of the Union to act as Chairperson at his/her own discretion.
- iii. The Students' Union General Meeting shall act as the forum for the reviewing of the Union's activities and finances during the semester.
- iv. The President shall give a summary of the Union's finances to the Students' Union General Meeting and shall answer questions pertaining to the finances.
- v. Each Union officer shall also produce a written account of their activities during the year to date for distribution at the Students' Union General Meeting, which shall also be made available electronically by the Union within one week of the meeting. These reports must be submitted to the Vice President/ Education Officer not less than 3 college days prior to the meeting.

B. The Education Forum

The Education Forum shall be chaired by the Education Officer and shall meet once every semester. The purpose of the Education Forum shall be to discuss any relevant issues arising in the University which affect the education of the student body. The Education Forum shall, where necessary propose any relevant agenda items to the CRC for discussion. The Education Forum shall be open to all members of the Union.

C. The Welfare Forum

The Welfare Forum shall be chaired by the Welfare Officer and shall meet once every Semester. The purpose of the Welfare Forum shall be to discuss any relevant issues arising on campus or within the University which affect the welfare of students studying at NUI, Galway. The Welfare Forum shall, where necessary propose any relevant agenda items to the CRC for discussion. The Welfare Forum shall be open to all members of the Union.

D. The Elections Committee

This shall comprise of the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Returning Officer appointed under Schedule I. The duties of this committee are to oversee the running of all Union elections and to decide on any matters relating to such which are not specifically covered in this constitution and its schedules. If a member of the committee is running for re-election, they must resign their position on the Elections Committee. The Executive Committee shall nominate one of their number as a replacement. The Elections Committee must also provide a list of rules and regulations for candidates on Union notice boards before campaigning begins.

E. Publications & Promotions Committee

This shall comprise of the President and the Vice-Presidents and the relevant staff members nominated by the Executive Committee who shall serve as Directors of the Company established for that purpose. The duties of this committee are to oversee the non-editorial organisation of all Union publications and to decide on any matters relating to such which are not specifically covered in this constitution and its schedules. The Committee shall receive and organise for a fair hearing of any complaints in relation to Union publications.

F. The Societies' Forum.

The Societies' Forum shall be chaired by the Societies' Chairperson and shall meet at least once per semester. The purpose of the Societies' Forum shall be to discuss any relevant issues arising which affect the University's societies. The Societies' Forum shall be open to the auditors of the University's societies. An auditor may nominate a society representative to attend in his/her place. The Societies' Chairperson must provide a written report of work in progress and any other relevant information to at least one Societies' Forum per semester and may be requested also by the Societies' Forum to provide additional reports.

G. The Clubs' Forum.

The Clubs' Forum shall be chaired by the Clubs' Captain and shall meet at least once per semester. The purpose of the Clubs' Forum shall be to discuss any relevant issues arising which affect the University's clubs. The Clubs' Forum shall be open to the captains of the University's clubs. A captain may nominate a club representative to attend in his/her place. The Clubs' Captain must provide a written report of work in progress and any other relevant information to at least one Clubs' Forum per semester and may also be requested by the Clubs' Forum to provide additional reports.

11. ELECTIONS

The members of the Executive Committee and The Students' Union Council shall be elected by and from the full members of the Union in accordance with Schedule I. The procedure for all other elections shall be determined by the Elections Committee.

12. REMOVAL OF AN OFFICER

- A. Any officer may be removed by a referendum held in accordance with article 16 of the Constitution.
- B. A quorum for the removal of an officer shall be 50% of the total valid poll in the previous election of the position.
- C. Where such a proposal is approved, s/he will be deemed to have resigned and may not stand for re-election in the subsequent by-election.

13. AMENDMENTS

- A. A referendum of the members of the Union shall be the only method of amending the Constitution and such a referendum shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions laid out in Article 16.
- B. A quorate Students' Union Council may amend the Schedules of this constitution by a two thirds (2/3) majority.
- C. At least seven college days notice shall be given of proposed amendments to the Schedules of this Constitution. The proposed amendments must be clearly publicised by the Students' Union.

14. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

In the event of a dispute as to the interpretation of any part of the Constitution and its Schedules, the ruling of the President shall be sought. The ruling of the President shall stand unless and until it is successfully challenged at a duly constituted Students' Union Council, on a simple majority. However any action taken under the ruling of the President before such a successful challenge shall not be invalidated thereby. In the case of conflict between the texts of any copy of this Constitution and its Schedules enrolled under this section, the text in English shall prevail.

15. INTERPRETATION OF MINUTES AND MOTIONS OF ALL UNION MEETINGS

The President shall rule on disputes as to interpretation of minutes and motions of meetings of the Union having regard to members of the Committee from which the dispute arises.

16. THE REFERENDUM

- A. A referendum of all members of the Union shall be the supreme authority on all matters relating to the government of the Union.
- B. Referenda may be called in relation to Union Policy and the constitution on such matters as they arise.

- C. Such referenda shall be held not more than three weeks and not less than two weeks, from the date of their being called.
- D. Any referendum under this article shall be deemed to have been passed if the majority of the votes cast at such referendum shall have been cast in favour of the proposal.
- E. Only the Executive Committee or a quorate Students' Union Council may propose amendments to the Constitution.
- F. To requisition a referendum, the signatures of 500 members must be appended to the proposed wording of the referendum and submitted to the General Manager.

17. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

- A. The commercial activities of the Students' Union shall be run in accordance with the provisions of this constitution and shall be controlled by the Board of Directors of NUI Galway Students' Union Commercial Services Limited.
- B. The Company will be entirely owned by the members of the Students' Union and shall be held in trust by the Board of Trustees.
- C. The Students' Union Executive shall appoint a Board of Directors who will oversee the running of the Company.
- D. The Board of Directors shall comprise of the following:
 - i. The President of the time-being of the Students' Union who shall be Chairperson of the Board. The Students' Union President's position on the Board of Directors is contingent on his/her holding of the office of President of the Students' Union.
 - ii. The immediate outgoing President of the Students' Union. Where S/He is not available, a person nominated by the President of the time-being shall act in this role.
 - iii. Up to six board members, independent of the Students' Union to be appointed by the Students' Union Executive.
- E. The Students' Union Executive Officers shall be obliged to resign their positions on the Board of Directors at the end of their term of Office or alternatively twelve months after taking up their position on the Board of Directors.

F. The senior staff member of the company shall act as non-voting secretary to the Board. S/He shall be responsible for the organisation of Board meetings and any other duties as may be decided from time-to-time by the Board.

G. At these meetings the senior staff member shall be required to report to the Board on the performance of the Commercial Activities.

18. GENERAL

A. NUI Galway Students' Union is affiliated to the Union of Students in Ireland.

B. The Union shall have two co-equal official languages i.e. Irish and English.

C. All official written and electronic matter of the Union shall be made available in Irish and English.

19. REVOCATION

All previous constitutions are hereby revoked. However, elections adopted under the previous Constitution are not invalidated or made inoperable as a result of this revocation until subsequent annual elections are held.

20. IMPLEMENTATION

This Constitution and any amendments thereto shall come into force thirty days after being approved by referendum of the members of the Union.