

WITSU CONSTITUTION:

Preamble:

Herein are the articles of the constitution of Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union. This constitution derives its authority from the student body of Waterford Institute of Technology. WIT Students' Union is democratically elected by students, who subsequently work on behalf of students. It is the mission of WIT Students' Union to represent its members and promote, defend and vindicate the rights of its members at all levels of society.

Article One: Aims and Objectives

1.1 To represent the members of WITSU in matters pertaining to their rights and interests as students of the Institute and as members of Irish society.

1.2 To seek facilities or services required by its members and where appropriate; WITSU shall seek to provide that service or facility itself.

1.3 To actively work in partnership with the Institute and to actively pursue good relations with the Institute and the public at large.

1.4 To strive to improve the Irish education system.

Article Two: WITSU Membership

2.1 All of the following shall be full members of WITSU:

2.1.1 All registered students of the Institute.

2.1.2 Elected Sabbatical Officers.

2.2 Full members shall be entitled to:

2.2.1 Speak and vote at General Meetings, elections and referenda.

2.2.2 Seek election at any level.

2.2.3 Avail of the services and resources of WITSU.

2.3 All part time students are members of WITSU but cannot run for election for any WITSU position.

2.4 There shall also be a category of membership called honorary membership:

2.4.1 Honorary members shall be:

2.4.2 All past Sabbatical officers.

2.4.3 Individuals proposed by the executive and ratified by WITSU council.

2.5 Honorary members are entitled to speak at general meetings. They shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting, election or referenda conducted by WITSU or seek election at any level, unless an honorary member becomes a registered full time student in the future.

2.6 WITSU does not charge a membership fee and relies on income generation and a block grant allocated from the Institute to fund its activities.

2.7 Any student may choose to disassociate from the WITSU by notifying the President of the WITSU by email of the student's wish so to do. Upon receipt of such notification the WITSU shall take steps, insofar as same are within the control or power of procurement of the WITSU, to remove the student's name and contact details from the electoral register and from the WITSU's

communications database(s). WITSU is committed to supporting all students of the Institute whether or not associated with WITSU and will notwithstanding a notification of disassociation remain available to support any disassociated student should the student subsequently so wish.

2.8 Where the Students' Union is affiliated to any organisation(s), such affiliations will only bind the Students' Union in so far as the articles of this constitution are not contravened.

Article Three: WITSU Structures

3.1 All previous constitutions are hereby revoked. Membership, elections, appointments and policies adopted under previous constitutions are hereby ratified and shall continue in force subject to the terms of this constitution. If any conflict does arise this constitution shall prevail.

3.2 The general management of WITSU's affairs shall be conducted on four levels:

1. Referendum.
2. General Meetings.
3. WITSU Council.
4. WITSU Executive.

Article Four: Referendum

4.1 This constitution including preamble, definitions, freedom of information and articles can only be altered by referendum.

4.2 A referendum can only be called:

4.2.1 By a two-thirds majority of a quorate WITSU council.

4.2.2 By a petition of 350 WITSU members stating the purpose of the referendum and providing a draft question to be put to members in the referendum (which may be altered following receipt of the petition to comply with any legal advice sought by WITSU.) The Petition must then be submitted to the Returning Officer of WITSU.

4.3 A referendum shall be decided by a simple majority.

4.4 A quorum of 15% of the valid electorate will be necessary for the result of a referendum to be valid.

4.5 Referenda shall be binding on all WITSU bodies and no further referendum on the same issue can be held for the duration of the academic year.

4.6 A referendum shall be called within 10 working days of receiving a petition by the Returning Officer. A referendum shall be held not less than two academic term weeks and not more than four academic weeks after it has been called.

4.7 All motions for referenda shall be posted at conspicuous locations throughout all Institute sites at least five lecturing days before the referendum takes place.

Article Five: General Meeting

5.1 The purpose of a General Meeting shall be:

5.1.1 To deal with issues of concern to WITSU members.

5.1.2 To deal with matters referred to the General Meeting by WITSU Council.

5.2 General Meetings may be called:

1. By the WITSU President.
2. By the WITSU Executive.
3. By a majority of quorate WITSU council.
4. By a signed petition from 300 WITSU members, stating the purpose of the General Meeting.

5.3 The quorum for a general meeting shall be 50 WITSU members.

5.3.1 If quorum for a general meeting is not reached, the agenda item can be brought to the next Class Representative Council.

Article Six: Class Representative Council

6.1 There shall be a representative body, which shall determine the policy of WITSU and mandate the WITSU Executive, subject to this constitution and to the decisions of the General Meeting and referenda. This body shall be known as the WITSU Council and shall meet not less than 4 times and not more than 6 times, excluding emergency councils, during the academic year.

6.2 WITSU Council shall consist of the WITSU Executive and the elected representatives of each registered class in the Institute.

6.3 There shall be a minimum of one representative elected in each class with 30 or less students in that class. Classes with more than 30 students are advised to have a second class representative.

6.4 The quorum shall be 20% of the elected members of WITSU Council.

6.5 An Emergency WITSU Council meeting may be called by:

1. The WITSU President.
2. The WITSU Executive.
3. 20% of the WITSU Council members with a written petition to the WITSU President, stating the purpose of the meeting.

6.6 Each WITSU Council meeting shall be advertised at least five days prior to the meeting.

6.7 Motions for discussion must also be included with written notification of a WITSU Council meeting at least five days prior to the meeting.

6.7.1 Emergency motions may be brought up under A.O.B.

6.8 The Chair of Class Representative Council shall be an external person whom is ratified by Class Representative Council at the first meeting of the year.

6.8.1 In the absence of the chair a nominated class representative shall be appointed.

6.9. There shall be an annual financial report presented to Class Representative Council at the final meeting of the academic year.

Article Seven: The Executive

7.1 There shall be an Executive of WITSU.

7.2 They shall be responsible for:

7.2.1 The initiation and development of WITSU policy.

7.2.2 Carrying out the decisions of the General Meeting, Class Representative Council and referenda.

7.2.3 Formal appointment of staff.

7.2.4 Undertake the functions that may be required of them by the WITSU President.

7.2.5 In the event of a tied vote the President shall have the casting vote.

7.3 The composition of the WITSU Executive shall be:

1. The WITSU President.
2. The WITSU Vice President / Education.
3. The WITSU Vice President / Welfare.
4. Communications Officer.
5. Entertainment Officer.
6. Mature Student Officer.
7. Postgraduate Student Officer.
8. International Student Officer.
9. First Year Rep.
10. School Convenors from each school of the Institute.

7.4 The WITSU President shall be the Chief Executive Officer and primary spokesperson for WITSU and shall be responsible for:

1. Representation.
2. Finance.
3. Organisation and management of WITSU staff and the WITSU Executive.
4. Supervision and guidance of policy.
5. The WITSU President shall be the chief interpreter of this constitution subject to appeal from the Board of Appeals.
6. The WITSU President shall be the chairperson of the following WITSU bodies:

1. WITSU Executive meetings.
2. General meetings.
3. Such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings.

7.5 The Vice President for Education shall be responsible for the following areas:

1. Education case work and policy.
2. Student grants.
3. Aiding student employment and careers.
4. Class Representatives.
5. Such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.6 The Vice President for Welfare shall be responsible for the following areas:

1. Welfare and Equality case work and policy.
2. Student finance.
3. Accommodation.
4. General health.
5. Student safety and security.
6. Such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.7 The Communications Officer shall act as secretary to the following WITSU bodies:

1. The WITSU Executive.
2. General Meetings.
3. Class Rep Council.

The Communications Officer shall also be responsible for the recording of minutes from all WITSU meetings and submitting these to the WITSU President.

7.7.1 The Communications Officer shall be responsible for the advertising and awareness of the following WITSU bodies:

1. The WITSU Executive.
2. Class Rep Council.
3. General Meetings.
4. Events and activities.

7.7.2 The Communications Officer may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.8 The Entertainment Officer shall be responsible for:

The running of the day time, evening events and activities of WITSU in the entertainments field in conjunction with the WITSU Executive, primarily the Sabbatical Officers.

The Entertainment Officer may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.9 The Post Graduate Officer shall be responsible for:

7.9.1 The representation of Post Graduate students within the Students' Union.

7.9.2 The Post Graduate Officer has the following responsibilities:

7.9.2.1 Shall be the chairperson of and oversee the operation of the Postgraduate Working Group.

7.9.2.2 Shall work with Sabbatical Officers to ensure Post Graduate students are represented in Students' Union policies and campaigns.

7.9.2.3 Shall represent Postgraduate students on relevant Institute bodies in the pursuance of the Students' Union's aims and objectives and implementation of policies.

7.9.3 The Postgraduate Officer shall be a registered post graduate student of the Institute.

7.9.4 The Postgraduate Officer may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.10 The Mature Student Officer shall be responsible for:

7.10.1 The representation of Mature Students within the Students' Union

7.10.2 Shall work with Sabbatical Officers to ensure Mature Students are represented in Students' Union policies and campaigns.

7.10.3 The Mature Students Officer shall be a mature student upon registration of the Institute

7.10.4 The Mature Student Officer may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.11 The International Student Officer shall be responsible for:

7.11.1 The representation of International Students within WITSU.

7.11.2 Shall work with Sabbatical Officers to ensure International Students are represented in Students' Union policies and campaigns whilst acting as a point of contact between International Students and Sabbatical WITSU officers.

7.11.3 Shall liaise directly with the International Office within the Institute to maximize International Student engagement and inclusion within the Institutes community and its social and academic activities.

7.11.4 The International Student Officer may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.12 First Year Representative:

There shall be a First Year Representative ("Rep") appointed by Class Representative Council at the first meeting of the academic year. The candidate must be a Class Representative.

7.12.1 The role of a First Year Rep is to ensure that the first year student voice is heard at the Executive level of WITSU.

7.12.2 The First Year Representative may be responsible for such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.13 School Convenors:

7.13.1 There shall be a School Convenor from each school of the Institute. Each of the school Convenors shall be a member of the WITSU Executive.

7.13.2 The candidates for the election of a School Convenor will be the council members from the respective school. Convenors for the coming academic year shall be elected by Class Reps of their schools at the final Class Rep Council.

7.13.3 The functions of the School Convenor shall be:

7.13.3.1 The School Convenor is the primary representative of a school on the WITSU Executive and any other committees that may be formed.

7.13.3.2 The Convenor is responsible for the organisation and advertisement of meetings one week in advance taking place within a specific school.

7.13.3.3 Convenors aid electing Class Reps in their school alongside the Vice President / Education Officer.

7.13.3.4 Such further or other work as may be mandated by Council or General Meetings or as may be allocated by the President.

7.14 In the event of the removal from office, resignation, death or incapability of an Executive officer a by-election shall be held if there is sufficient time as decided by the WITSU Executive. Otherwise WITSU Executive shall assume the responsibility of that officer.

7.15 No one individual may hold more than one post at any given time, unless assuming the duties of an absent officer.

7.16 The WITSU President will select their Deputy at the commencement of the academic year.

Article Eight: Elections

8.1 All elections shall be by secret ballot and by the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote in accordance with the legislation and regulations for time being for the election of members to Dáil Éireann. All full members of WITSU shall be entitled to vote and contest for all Executive and Sabbatical positions, excluding Convenors and the First Year rep.

8.2 Candidates for WITSU Executive part-time officerships shall be nominated by any fifty full WITSU members who sign an official nomination form for that purpose. Candidates for WITSU Executive full-time officerships (Sabbatical Officers) shall be nominated by any 150 full WITSU members who sign an official nomination form for that purpose.

8.3 If the elected non-sabbatical Executive officer does not return to the Institute for the following academic year, a by-election will take place as early as practicable in the first academic term.

8.4 In any WITSU election a Re-open nominations (RON) option shall be on the ballot.

Article Nine: Sabbatical Officers

9.1 Elections for Sabbatical Officers shall take place in the second academic term at a date determined by the Returning Officer in consultation with the WITSU Executive.

9.2 The term of office for a Sabbatical Officer shall be July 1st until June 30th of the following year.

9.3 Outgoing Sabbatical Officers may be required to work alongside the new Sabbatical Officer for the first three weeks of the new Sabbatical Officer's term of office. This is up to the discretion of the incoming Sabbatical team.

9.4 In the event of impeachment, resignation or death of any of the Sabbatical Officers their role will be automatically taken over by the remaining Sabbaticals until a by-election can be held providing that there is sufficient time as decided by the WITSU Executive.

Article Ten: Returning Officer

10.1 There shall be a Returning Officer proposed by the WITSU Executive and ratified at the last Class Representative Council of the previous year.

10.2 The appointment of the Returning Officer shall be from July 1st until June 30th the following year.

10.3 In the event that the Returning Officer resigns or is incapable of fulfilling their role then a new appointment shall be recommended by WITSU Executive at the earliest possible time to Class Representative Council.

10.4 The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the running of all elections for Executive officers. The Returning Officer shall also be responsible for the returning of all referenda conducted by WITSU.

10.5 The Returning Officer shall also be responsible for the running of elections for WITSU Council members that are not WITSU Executive Officers.

10.6 The Returning Officer may not hold any type of WITSU membership, nor shall be in the employ of WITSU.

10.7 The Returning Officer may only be removed by the Board of Appeals.

10.8 The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the drafting and enforcement of regulations for all WITSU elections and referendum subject to the terms of this constitution, which will be binding on all parties concerned. Such regulations shall be provided to candidates in elections and posted at conspicuous locations throughout all Institute sites.

10.9 All candidates for election must be full members of WITSU and registered students of the Institute.

10.10 The decision of the Returning Officer shall be final in all matters relating to elections and referenda, save an appeal to the Board of Appeals.

10.11 The returning officer may decide to hold a recount of their own volition or on written request of a candidate or representative of either side in an election or referendum campaign.

Article Eleven: Independent Board of Appeals

11.1 There shall be an Independent Board of Appeals of WITSU.

11.2 Its function shall be to consider and adjudicate upon:

1. Disciplinary matters regarding all elected WITSU Officers and Council members.
2. Appeals regarding WITSU procedures and returning officers decisions.
3. Appeals concerning the WITSU President's interpretation of the constitution.

11.3 The membership shall comprise of:

1. The WITSU solicitor retained by the WITSU Executive.
2. Two former Sabbatical Officers one of whom is a former President.
3. Two external members who have not been a member of WITSU.

11.4 The Board of Appeals shall determine their own procedures based on the laws of natural justice.

11.5 All decisions of the Board of Appeals shall be final.

11.6 WITSU shall be liable for all costs incurred by the Board of Appeals and shall indemnify all of its members against all liabilities incurred by them through their membership of the Board of Appeals.

11.7 A fee of €60 shall accompany all appeals. In the event of an appeal being successful the fee shall be returned.

Article Twelve: Disciplinary Procedures

12.1 All officers shall be bound by a drafted Terms and Conditions of Officership by the WITSU Executive. Such Terms and Conditions shall be ratified by Class Representative Council.

12.2 Officers may only be removed from office pending an impeachment referendum where quorum has been achieved and a 50% plus 1 vote in favour is achieved.

12.3 Short of impeachment, the Independent Board of Appeals shall have the power to impose such other disciplinary sanctions as may appear apposite in the context of a complaint which has been upheld, including, but not limited to, deduction of pay and/or reduction of holiday entitlement.

Article Thirteen: Freedom of Information

13.1 Any member shall be entitled to request a copy of this constitution from any Sabbatical or full time member of staff and will also be available online.

13.2 All minute books of General Meetings and WITSU Council meetings shall be open to inspection by any full time member of WITSU, at any WITSU office, during WITSU hours subject to two Institute days' notice.

13.3 The minute books of the previous year's administration must be handed over in full to the incoming Sabbatical officers.

Article Fourteen: Indemnity

14.1 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.

Article Fifteen: Schedules

15.1 There can be schedules added to this constitution as agreed and voted on by Class Representative Council but shall only be placed into an Article pending a constitutional referendum.

Article Sixteen: Definitions

16.1 Waterford Institute of Technology shall hereafter be called “the Institute.” The Institute’s Students’ Union shall hereafter be called “WITSU.”

16.2 A “full time student” shall be an individual registered on a course for which full time attendance is required in the Institute.

16.3 A “part time student” is an individual who is registered to study on a recognised part time course in the Institute.

16.4 A “repeat learner” is a student who has outstanding modules from previous years.

16.5 An “Erasmus student” is a student from an Erasmus scheme regardless of the country they come from.

16.6 A “Sabbatical Officer” is a full time paid officer who is elected to that post in accordance with the Articles contained within this constitution.

16.7 A “Part Time Officer” is an elected position within WITSU where the student is studying a course in the Institute whilst working part time for WITSU.

16.8 A “Convenor” is the head representative for their school and is elected at the AGM each year.

16.9 A “Class Rep” is an elected representative of a student’s class.

16.10 “Class Representative Council” is an externally chaired forum where class reps discuss, debate and decide upon WITSU policy, procedures and other agenda.

16.11 A “site” is any location or campus where students of the Institute are in attendance on a recognised course in the Institute.

16.12 “Class(es)” shall refer to a collection of students registered on a course and for the purposes of this constitution groups of students at the same level of a course where they are divided for more than 50% of their tuition shall constitute an individual class.

16.13 The “Academic Departments” of a school shall be those recognised by the Governing Body of the Institute.

16.14 “Deputy President” is one of the two VPs, selected by the WITSU President at the commencement of the term. This person shall deputise for the WITSU President when they are absent.

16.15 “Academic Schools” are comprised of particular departments all of whom belong to a particular overarching discipline with the exception of the school of ‘Lifelong Learning’. The other schools in the Institute are ‘Humanities’, ‘Business’, ‘Health Science’, ‘Science and Computing’ and ‘Engineering’.