

## **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. 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. 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.

### **Definitions**

A "full time student" shall be an individual registered on a course for which full time attendance is required in Waterford Institute of Technology.

A "part time student" is an individual who is registered to study on a recognised part time course in Waterford Institute of Technology.

A "Sabbatical Officer" is a full time paid officer who is elected to that post in accordance with the articles contained within this constitution.

A "Site" is any location or campus where full time or part time students of Waterford Institute of Technology are in attendance on a recognised course in Waterford Institute of Technology.

"Class (es)" shall refer to a collection of students registered at a of 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 that 50% of their tuition shall constitute an individual class.

The Academic divisions of a school shall be those recognised by the governing body of Waterford Institute of Technology.

The "current membership fee" shall be the figure the Union receives on the commencement of current academic year for each full time student from Waterford Institute of Technology.

There shall by an executive of the Union established under article 9 of this constitution.

There shall be a council of the Union established under article 8 of this constitution.

## **WITSU Constitution**

### **Article One: Establishment and Name**

**1.1** There shall be a Students' Union in Waterford Institute of Technology; hereafter called "the college".

**1.2** The name of the Students' Union shall be Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union; hereafter called "the Union".

### **Article Two: Aims and Objectives**

**2.1** to represent the members of the Union in matters pertaining to their rights and interests as students of the college and as citizens.

**2.2** To seek facilities or services required by and advantageous to its members and where appropriate, the Union shall seek to provide that service or facility itself.

**2.3** To actively work in partnership with the college and to actively pursue good relations with the college and the public at large.

**2.4** To strive to improve the Irish education system.

### **Article Three: Union Membership**

**3.1** All of the following shall be full members of the Union:

- 1.** All full time students of the college
- 2.** Part time students who pay the current membership fee to the Union.

**3.2** Full members shall be entitled to:

- 1.** Attend all Union meetings except those of the executive.
- 2.** Speak and vote at General meetings, Sabbatical elections and referenda.
- 3.** Seek election at any level.
- 4.** Avail of services and resources of the Union.

**3.3** There shall be also a category of membership called Honorary membership. Honorary members shall be:

- 1.** All past Sabbatical officers.
- 2.** Individuals proposed by the executive and ratified by Union council.

**3.4** Honorary members are entitled to speak at general meetings. They shall not be entitled to vote at any meeting, election or referenda conducted by the Union or seek election at any level.

## **WITSU Constitution**

### **Article Four: Union Structures**

**4.1** The management of the Unions' affairs shall be conducted on four levels.

- 1.** The referendum.
- 2.** General meeting.
- 3.** Union Council.
- 4.** Union Executive.

### **Article Five: Referendum**

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

**5.2** A referendum can only be called:

- 1.** By a two-thirds majority of a quorate Union council.
- 2.** By a majority of a quorate general meeting.
- 3.** By a petition of 300 Union members stating the purpose of the referendum.

**5.3** All referenda shall be decided by a simple majority.

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

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

**5.6** A referendum shall be held not less than two academic term weeks and not more than four academic weeks after it has been called.

**5.7** All motions for referendum shall be posted at conspicuous locations throughout all the college sites at least five college days before the referendum takes place.

### **Article Six: General Meeting**

**6.1** The purpose of a general meeting shall be:

- 1.** To deal with issues of concern to union members.
- 2.** To deal with matters referred to the General Meeting by Union Council.

**6.2.** General meetings may be called:

- 1.** By the president.
- 2.** By a majority of a quorate Union Council.
- 3.** Signed petition from 300 union members, stating the purpose of the General meeting.

**6.3** The quorum for a general meeting shall be 100 Union members.

## **WITSU Constitution**

### **Article Seven: Annual General meeting**

**7.1** The Annual General meeting (hereafter called the AGM) shall be held in the second or third term of every academic year.

**7.2** The executive shall set the date for the AGM.

**7.3** At least five college day's notice must be given

**7.4** All motions for inclusion of an AGM must be submitted in writing to the president at least three college days prior to the holding of an AGM.

**7.5** The agenda for an AGM shall include:

- 1.** Minutes of the previous AGM.
- 2.** Officers report.
- 3.** Financial report.
- 4.** Appointments of the returning officer.
- 5.** Any other business.

**7.6** All officers shall provide a written report typed and submitted to the president at least three college days before the holding of the AGM.

### **Article Eight: Union council**

**8.1** There shall be a representative body, which shall determine the policy of the union and mandate the Union Executive, subject to this constitution and to the decisions of the General Meeting and to referendum. This body shall be known as the Union Council and shall meet at least once a month during the academic year.

**8.2** Union Council shall consist of the Union Executive and the elected representatives of each registered full time class in the college.

**8.3** There shall be one representative elected in each class with 30 or less students in that class. Classes with more than 30 students are entitled to have a second class representative.

**8.4** The quorum shall be half plus one of the elected members of Union Council.

**8.5** A Union Council meeting may be called by:

- 1.** The president.
- 2.** The Executive.
- 3.** One third of the Union Council members with a written petition to the president, stating the purpose of the meeting.

**8.6** Each Council meeting shall be advertised at least two days prior to the meeting.

### **WITSU Constitution**

**8.7** Motions for discussion must also be included with written notification of a Union Council meeting.

**8.8** No motion will be discussed without notice save where a 2/3 majority of those attending a quorate Union Council have voted for said discussion.

### **Article Nine: The Executive**

**9.1** There shall be an executive of the union.

**9.2** They shall be responsible for:

- 1.** Initiation and development of union policy.
- 2.** Carrying out the decisions of the General Meeting, Council, and referenda.
- 3.** Formal appointment of staff.
- 4.** Undertake the functions that may be required of them by the president.

**9.3** The composition of the executive shall be:

- 1.** The Union President.
- 2.** The Union Deputy President/Education.
- 3.** The Union Deputy President/Welfare
- 4.** Communications Officer.
- 5.** Entertainment's Officer
- 6.** School convenors from each school of the college.

**9.4** No one individual may hold more than one post at any given time.

**9.5** Candidates for Executive officer-ships save for the school convenors and Sabbaticals shall be nominated by fifty full union members.

**9.6** The President shall be the chief representative of the students of the college and shall have 6 areas of responsibility:

- 1.** Representation.
- 2.** Finance.
- 3.** Organisation.
- 4.** Supervision and guidance of policy.
- 5.** The president shall be the chief interpreter of this constitution subject to appeal from the Board of Appeals.
- 6.** The President shall chair the following Union bodies
  - 1.** Executive meetings
  - 2.** General meetings
  - 3.** Council meetings

### **WITSU Constitution**

**9.7** The Deputy President/Education shall be responsible for the following areas:

1. Education
2. Employment
3. Union Representatives

The Deputy President/Education will deputise for the President in the President's absence where appropriate, as determined by the President.

**9.8** The Deputy President/Welfare shall be responsible for the following areas:

1. Welfare and Equality
2. Student Safety
3. Accommodation
4. Security and health

The Deputy President/Welfare will deputise for the President in the President's absence where appropriate, as determined by the President.

**9.9** The Communications Officer shall act as secretary to the following Union bodies:

1. Executive.
2. General Meetings.
3. Union Council.

**9.10** The Communications Officer shall be responsible for the advertising and awareness of the following Union bodies:

1. Executive.
2. Union Council.
3. General meetings

**9.11** The Communications Officer shall also be responsible for the recording and circulation of the minutes from all Union meetings.

**9.12** The Entertainment's Officer shall be responsible for the running of the non-commercial services of the union in the entertainment's field. He/she shall develop the policy of the union in the field of entertainments, which shall be implemented by a full time member of the executive.

**9.13** If no first year student has been ordinarily elected to the executive, one shall be appointed by Union Council as a non-voting member of the executive.

**9.14** There shall be a school convenor from each school of the college. Each of the school convenors shall be a member of the executive. The candidates for the election of a school convenor will be the council members from the respective school. The Deputy President/Education Officer shall be responsible for the regulations and running of elections for school convenor.

## **WITSU Constitution**

**9.15** The functions of the school convenor shall be:

- 1.** The school convenor will act as the first point of contact for college staff within the school.
- 2.** The school convenor is the primary representative of a school on the Executive and any other committees that may be formed.
- 3.** The convenor is responsible for the organisation and advertisement of meetings taking place within a specific school.

**9.16** In the event of the removal from office, resignation, death or incapability of an executive officer (save Sabbatical officers and school convenors) the Executive shall assume the responsibility of that officer.

### **Article Ten: Elections**

**10.1** 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 Eireann. All full members of the Union shall be entitled to vote and contest for all Executive and Sabbatical positions, save for school convenors.

**10.2** Elections for non-sabbatical Executive officers will take place at the same time as the Sabbatical Elections. Union Council and School Convenors shall take place as early as practicable in the first academic term.

**10.3** If the elected non-sabbatical executive officer does not return to the college for the following academic year a by-election will take place as early as practicable in the first academic term.

**10.4** If a candidate is running unopposed in any Union election a plebiscite (yes/no) vote shall take place.

### **Article Eleven: Sabbatical Elections**

**11.1** Elections for Sabbatical officers shall take place in the second academic term at a date determined by the executive.

**11.2** The President and the Deputy Presidents shall be the Sabbatical officers of the Union.

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

**11.4** Outgoing Sabbatical officers shall be required to work alongside the new Sabbatical officer for the first three weeks of the new Sabbatical officers term of office.

### **WITSU Constitution**

**11.5** In the event of removal from office, resignation or incapability of any of the Sabbatical Officers their role will be automatically taken over by the remaining Sabbaticals for the remainder of the term of office.

**11.6** Candidates for the Sabbatical officer-ships must be nominated by 150 full union members.

### **Article Twelve: Returning Officer**

**12.1** There shall be a returning officer proposed by the Union Executive and ratified at the Union AGM.

**12.2** The appointment of the returning officer shall be from July 1st following the AGM until June 30th the following year.

**12.3** The returning officer shall be responsible for the running of all elections for Sabbatical and Executive officers. The returning officer shall also be responsible for the returning of all referenda conducted by the Union.

**12.4** The returning officer shall also lay down guidelines for the running of elections for Union Council members that are not Executive or Sabbatical officers.

**12.5** The returning officer may not hold any type of Union membership, nor shall be in the employ of the Union.

**12.6** The returning officer may only be removed by the board of appeals.

**12.7** The returning officer shall be responsible for the drafting and enforcement of regulations for all Union 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 college sites.

**12.8** All candidates for election must be full time registered students of the college.

**12.9** 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.

**12.10** A fee as laid down by the board of appeals shall accompany all appeals. In the event of an appeal being successful the fee shall be returned.

**12.11** The returning officer may decide to hold a recount of his/her own volition or on written request of a candidate or representative of either side in an election or referendum campaign.



## **WITSU Constitution**

### **Article Thirteen: Board of Appeals**

**13.1** There shall be a Board of Appeals of the Union.

**13.2** Its functions shall be to:

- 1.** Deal with disciplinary matters regarding all elected Union Officers and Council members.
- 2.** Appeals regarding Union procedures and returning officers decisions.
- 3.** Appeals concerning the presidents interpretation of the constitution.

**13.3** The membership shall comprise of:

- 1.** The Union solicitor retained by the Union Executive.
- 2.** A nominee of the College Director.
- 3.** A nominee of the Governing Body of the college.
- 4.** A former Sabbatical officer to be co-opted by the other members of the Board of Appeals.
- 5.** A nominee of the T.U.I (Teachers Union of Ireland) from the college.

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

**13.5** All decisions of the Board of Appeals shall be final.

**13.6** All non-returned deposits from elections shall go towards the running costs of the Board of Appeals.

**13.7** The Union 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.

### **Article Fourteen: Disciplinary Procedures**

**14.1** All officers shall be bound by a code of conduct, drafted by the Executive. Such a code shall be ratified by the Board of Appeals.

**14.2** All officers shall only be removed from office for a serious breach of the code of conduct by the Board of Appeals pursuant to a referral from a two-thirds majority of a quorate Union Council.

**14.3** The Board of Appeals shall determine the appropriate course of action for any union officer who breaches the code of conduct. This may include removal of office, dismissal, suspension with or without pay or another form of censure.

**WITSU Constitution**

**Article Fifteen: Freedom of Information**

**15.1** Any member shall be entitled to request a copy of this constitution from any Sabbatical or full time member of staff.

**15.2** All minute books of General Meetings and Council meetings shall be open to inspection by any full time member of the Union, at any Union office, during Union hours subject to two college day's notice.

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