



**GRIFFITH COLLEGE Students' Union**

## **Constitution**

**APRIL 2022**

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**Article 1: NAME**

The name of the organization shall be 'Griffith College Students' Union' Abbreviated to 'GCSU' and in Irish language 'Aontas na Mac Léinn, Colaiste Ui Ghriofa' – abbreviated 'AMLÉ GCSU' and hereafter called The Union.

**Article 2: MEMBERSHIP**

21. Membership of the Union shall automatically be conferred on all students registered on QQI approved courses at the college.
  
22. Sabbatical officers shall be full members of the student union while serving their term of office.

2.2.1. Honorary members are Union members with no voting entitlements.

2.2.2. Honorary membership may be granted to an individual at the discretion of a two thirds majority of the Students' Union Executive.

2.2.3. All Past Presidents and past executive officers shall be considered honorary members of the Union after a full term of office is served.

2.2.4. The Union shall be accountable to its members.

**Article 3: AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1. To promote the collective and individual participation of the membership in the democratic framework of participation and representation of the Union in the college.
  
- 3.2. To represent the interest of its members in matters relating to their education and welfare, and to protect and further their rights as students and citizens.
  
- 3.3. To provide and manage social, recreational, and commercial services designed to meet students' needs and seek to develop and expand these services.
  
- 3.4. To act as the spokesperson for its members in dealing with the college authorities and any other relevant outside group both locally and nationally.
  
- 3.5. To promote and facilitate communication within and between the campuses.

**Article 4: STRUCTURE AND AUTHORITY**

**4.1.** The structure of the Union shall be based on the democratic principle that every member shall have the fullest possible opportunity to participate in Union affairs.

**4.2.** The structure of the Union operates on three levels:

- Referendum

- Class Representative Council
- Union Executive

**4.3.** Standing orders shall be applicable in all Union meetings.

**4.4.** Referendum.

**4.4.1.** The articles of this constitution can only be amended by referendum.

**4.4.2.** A referendum may be called by:

- Class Representative Council
- Petition from 300 Union Members
- Union Executive

**4.4.3.** All referenda are to be decided by simple majority.

**4.4.4.** A quorum of 5% of the Union membership is required to validate a Referendum.

**4.4.5.** Referenda shall be binding on all Union Bodies, including Union General Meetings.

**4.4.6.** The referendum shall be held within two academic term weeks after it has been called.

**4.4.7.** All motions must be posted on the main Union Notice Board on each campus at least 5 college days before the referendum for constitutional amendments. Each notice must contain the current wording of the articles to be amended as well as the articles as they would be, if the amendment or amendments were carried out in the referendum.

**4.5.** Class Representative Council.

- 4.6.1.** There shall be a representative body which shall manage the affairs and give advice on the policy of the Union. This body shall be known as The Class Representative Council and shall meet monthly each semester.
- 4.6.2.** The Class Representative Council is the Supreme Governing Body of the Union. All three campuses shall have their individual class representative council.
- 4.6.3.** The Class Representative Council shall consist of one representative from each class for all full-time and part-time courses offered in the college. 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 select its representative.
- 4.6.4.** It shall be the duty of each Class Representative to represent the interests and views of their class on the Council and to keep their class informed about the proceedings of the Council and the Students' Union.
- 4.6.5.** Each officer will present an officer report each month of meetings attended and work undertaken.
- 4.6.6.** A class representative shall be expected to attend at least 50% of the class representative council meetings every semester. If an individual class representative fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings or 50% of the meetings, a re-election will be held by the Union executive for the said class.
- 4.6.7.** A class may remove its Class Representative by a petition presented to the President or Vice-President consisting of two thirds of the registered class.
- 4.6.8.** In the case of a vacancy arising from 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.
- 4.6.9.** In cases of voting in Class Representative Council, every class has one vote only, no matter how many class reps per class.
- 4.6.10.** The President will cast one vote after conferring with the other officers.

**4.6.** Union Executive.

**4.7.1.** The Union Executive is the following:

- President

- Vice-President - Education & Welfare
- Vice-President – Entertainment
- Vice President – Cork Campus
- Vice President – Limerick Campus

- 4.7.2.** Executives shall be elected by the members of the Union according to the election schedule of this constitution.
- 4.7.3.** The Executive shall be responsible for the initiation of policy of the Union subject to Class Representative Council and Referendum.
- 4.7.4.** No member of the Executive may hold any other Executive/Non-Executive position in the Union at the same time.
- 4.7.5.** The Executive shall meet at least fortnightly during each term.
- 4.7.6.** The quorum for all Executive meetings shall be 50% + 1; however, the President or their nominee must be present for the meeting to be quorate.
- 4.7.7.** All motions passed by the Executive and other meetings must specify the person(s) who is to be responsible for their implementation.
- 4.7.8.** The positions of President and Vice-Presidents shall be paid positions and shall be salaried.
- 4.7.9.** The terms of office of the Executive Officers shall be from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June of the following year inclusive.
- 4.7.10.** At the time of election, the candidates for the position of any Executive position must be full members of the Union. The offices are held for one year and anyone position can be held for two years in total by the same person.
- 4.7.11.** The President and Vice-Presidents shall represent the views of the Union Members which are expressed by the Executive, Class Representative Council or Referendum.
- 4.7.12.** The Officers shall take joint responsibility for the day-to-day functions of the Union.

**4.7.13.** Areas of competence for the Officers shall be allocated at the beginning of each year, following discussion between the Officers. In instances where there is a disagreement in allocating responsibility, the President shall have authority to decide.

**4.7.14.** There shall be five Executive Officers in the Union who shall receive remuneration for their work within the Union.

These are the:

- President
- Vice President for Entertainment
- Vice President for Education & Welfare
- Vice President for the Cork Campus
- Vice President for the Limerick Campus

The following positions will be appointed by the executives, and will be entitled to expenses, which will be overseen by the President.

These are:

- International Officer
- Societies Liaison Officer

**4.7.15.** The position of the President shall be a Full-Time Role.

**4.7.16.** All Vice President positions shall be part-time roles.

**4.7.17.** The International Officer & Societies Liaison Officer shall be voluntary Part-Time positions and shall receive expenses at the discretion of the President of the Union.

**4.7.18.** All officers shall report directly to the President of the Union.

**4.7.19.** They are also directly required to give a report of their work to the Union Executive, Class Representative Council, and any other meeting as requested by the President.

## **Article 5: UNION OFFICERS**

### **5.1. The President**

**5.1.1.** The President shall have full membership and shall be the principal spokesperson, Chief Executive of the Union, and coordinator of all activities of the Union.

**5.1.2.** The President shall be the chief representative of the students and shall have five primary areas of responsibility:

- Finance
- Representation
- Organization
- Supervision



- Guidance on Policy and Media/Publicity Issues

- 5.1.3. The President shall automatically take up office on the college Academic Professional Council at the beginning of their term of office and the outgoing President shall be deemed to have resigned.
- 5.1.4. The President shall perform other duties in relation to the organization of meetings, requesting meetings to take place, and other functions as outlined in this constitution.
- 5.1.5. The President shall be responsible for reporting student issues, feedback to college boards and committees gathered from Class Representative Council and other feedback measures deemed appropriate.

## 5.2. The Vice President–Education & Welfare, Dublin Main Campus

- 5.2.1. The Education & Welfare Officer will deputize for the President during the President’s absence where appropriate, as determined by the President.
- 5.2.2. This Officer is responsible for the implementation and development of the Union’s education policies subject to the general direction of the Class Representative Council, Referendum, or Union Executive.
- 5.2.3. This officer will make every effort to undertake such research surveys, etc., and shall contribute to the development of educational policy locally and nationally.
- 5.2.4. The Education & Welfare Officer shall deal with all queries in relation to student finance.
- 5.2.5. The Education & Welfare Officer will be responsible for all welfare-related events both locally and nationally by attending relevant events, raising awareness of issues affecting students, and contributing to boards and committees within the college.
- 5.2.6. They will be responsible for educational campaigns and events such as “Your Future Week” etc. and the training of Class Representatives at Class Representative Training.
- 5.2.7. The Education & Welfare Officer shall automatically take up office on the Academic Council at the beginning of term and the out-going Vice-President Education shall be deemed resigned.
- 5.2.8. The Education & Welfare Officer shall be responsible for providing a wide range of application forms, a prospectus and other relevant material for colleges both in Ireland and abroad.
- 5.2.9. They will be responsible for providing support and resources to the Vice President for Cork and the Vice President for Limerick to ensure students on

all campuses receive the same campaigns and Education related resources.

### **5.3. The Vice President – Entertainment Officer, Dublin Main Campus**

- 5.3.1.** The Entertainment Officer shall organize various events that cater for the students.
- 5.3.2.** The Entertainment Officer shall also act as an advisor to student groups on event co-ordination
- 5.3.3.** The Entertainment Officer shall also be responsible for organizing the main student weeks (e.g., Freshers, SHAG, Christmas, and so on)
- 5.3.4.** The Entertainment Officer shall oversee promoting and running entertainment events for students both on and off-campus.
- 5.3.5.** The Entertainment Officer will be responsible for providing support and resources to the Vice President for Cork and the Vice President for Limerick to ensure students on all campuses receive the same campaigns and event resources where applicable.

### **5.4. Vice President – Cork Campus**

- 5.4.1.** The Vice President of the Cork Campus shall be the spokesperson and coordinator of all activities of the Union relating to the Cork Campus.
- 5.4.2.** The Vice President shall be responsible for electing Class Representatives and hold a Class Representative meeting at least once a month for students on the Cork campus.
- 5.4.3.** The Vice President shall be responsible for dealing with both education and Welfare related queries with support from the Education and Welfare Officers.
- 5.4.4.** The Vice President shall be responsible for providing feedback to the Cork campus management from the Class Representatives and resolving key issues affecting students.
- 5.4.5.** The Vice President shall be responsible for organizing events for students to enhance their student experience.
- 5.4.6.** The Vice President shall be responsible for holding duplicate campaigns relating to Education, Welfare and social issues which are being ran by the Education and Welfare Officers at the Dublin Main Campus.

### **5.5. Vice President – Limerick Campus**

- 5.5.1.** The Vice President of the Limerick Campus shall be the spokesperson and

coordinator of all activities of the Union relating to the Limerick Campus.

- 5.5.2.** The Vice President shall be responsible for electing Class Representatives and hold a Class Representative meeting at least once a month for students on the Limerick campus.
- 5.5.3.** The Vice President shall be responsible for dealing with both education and Welfare related queries with support from the Education and Welfare Officers.
- 5.5.4.** The Vice President shall be responsible for providing feedback to the Limerick campus management from the Class representatives and resolving key issues affecting students.
- 5.5.5.** The Vice President shall be responsible for organizing events for students to enhance their student experience.
- 5.5.6.** The Vice President shall be responsible for holding duplicate campaigns relating to Education, Welfare and social issues which are being ran by the Education and Welfare Officers at the Dublin Main Campus.

#### **5.6. SU International Officer –Dublin Main Campus**

- 5.6.1.** The SU International Officer shall assist with issues relating to international students in Griffith
- 5.6.2.** The SU International Officer shall liaise with the international office.
- 5.6.3.** The SU International Officer works on a voluntary basis with expenses and additional benefits at the discretion of the President.
- 5.6.4.** The SU International Officer shall be appointed by the Union Executive. The International Officer shall not have any voting rights in the decision of the Union Executive.

#### **5.7. SU Societies Liaison Officer – Dublin Main Campus**

- 5.7.1.** The SU Societies Officer shall assist with the establishment of & issues relating to societies throughout the college.
- 5.7.2.** The SU Societies Officer shall represent the views of the societies on the Executive and shall communicate Union Policy to both areas.
- 5.7.3.** The SU Societies Officer works on a volunteer basis with expenses and additional benefits which will be granted by the President.
- 5.7.4.** The SU Societies Officer shall be appointed by the Union Executive. The Societies Officer shall not have any voting rights in the decision of the Union Executive except when in cases related to societies.

## **5.8. SU Additional Officer – Dublin Main Campus**

- 5.8.1.** The SU Union Executive can appoint additional officers for Welfare and Communication if the need arises.
- 5.8.2.** These officers shall work on a voluntary basis with expenses and benefits at the discretion of the President
- 5.8.3.** These officers shall be appointed by the Union Executive. These officers shall not have any voting rights in the decision of the Union Executive.

## **Article 6: ELECTIONS**

- 6.1.** The Returning Officer for the Sabbatical election will not be a member of the student body. The Returning Officer shall be appointed by a vote of the Class Representative Council. The President will be the Returning Officer for the Part-time Executive positions. The President will be responsible for the good conduct of the election. The election of the Executive shall take place in the second semester of the academic year.
- 6.2.** All members of the Union shall be entitled to vote in and stand for elections for the directly elected part-time positions of the Executive. Only full-time registered students may run for sabbatical positions.
- 6.3.** The elections shall take place within the first 11 weeks from the commencement of the second semester
- 6.4.** No person may be nominated for more than one office as the Union Executive.
- 6.5.** Any person applying for a Sabbatical position must hold a valid visa to work full-time.
- 6.6.** No person may be nominated for a Part-Time Officer role if they are on work placement for more than six weeks in any one semester.
- 6.7.** The dates of all elections and a copy of the election regulations shall be communicated to students at least two weeks before the election.
- 6.8.** All full members of the Union shall be entitled to vote on Executive positions excluding the position of the SU International Officer, & SU Societies Liaison Officer.
- 6.9.** It will be the responsibility of all outgoing Executive Officers, if requested, to make themselves available to all candidates for information purposes.
- 6.10.** Nominations: Candidates for Executive posts must be nominated by 15 Union members.

- 6.11.** The official nomination papers must contain, as well as the names of 15 nominators, the candidate's name as registered in the college, their college ID number, and their course code.
- 6.12.** The election for all positions shall take place within two weeks after the close of nominations.
- 6.13.** Nomination forms signed by the candidates shall be returned no later than 5.00pm on the day of close of nominations.
- 6.14.** The decision on valid candidacy is at the discretion of the President whose decision shall be final. If for any reason the President deems a candidacy to be invalid, a report must be submitted to the Class Representatives as to the reason the candidacy was invalid to ensure fairness and transparency.
- 6.15.** Voting: The system of voting shall be proportional representation with the single transferable vote, as operated under the 1923 Electoral Act of Ireland.
- 6.16.** Votes will be cast in sealed ballot boxes or if in use a secure online voting system.
- 6.17.** Voting slips shall bear the name of each candidate alphabetically and the office being contested. The Chairperson and/or Returning Officer shall publicize the location and arrangement of polling station(s) and shall decide whereby provision is made for all full members of the Union to vote in advance of polling day.
- 6.18.** Polling stations will be situated in the canteen and must not be open earlier than 10:00 am and close no later than 6:00 pm
- 6.19.** The voting stations shall be open for a minimum of two days.
- 6.20.** No other polling station can be opened other than those on the college campuses authorized by the Returning Officer.
- 6.21.** No canvassing may take place within the college canteen on voting days.
- 6.22.** Voters must be able to identify themselves with their college ID card before being able to vote.
- 6.23.** Any vote on which a clear preference is shown will be considered valid.
- 6.24.** Counting: The counting of votes shall take place in an area designated by the Returning Officer. Votes shall be counted on the same day as the voting stations close.
- 6.25.** Candidates have the right to call for a recount after the result of the count has been announced. If a candidate is for any reason absent from the count result announcement the candidate may still request a recount within 20 minutes of the announcement being made. The Returning Officer alone will make the decision as to

when the recount will take place.

- 6.26.** The order of the count after ascertaining total poll shall be at the discretion of the Returning Officer.
- 6.27.** Grievances: Any corrupt practice (i.e., attempted double voting) will be disciplined at the Union Executive's discretion which could lead to disciplinary action by the college if the union deems it necessary to report it.
- 6.28.** Any candidate or ordinary member of the Union who has reason to believe that there was an irregularity of any kind regarding the conduct of the elections shall have the right to lodge an objection with the Returning Officer within one college day of the alleged irregularity taking place.
- 6.29.** By-Elections: The above rules shall also apply for by-election.
- 6.30.** Constitutional Amendments: This constitution can only be amended by a referendum.

**Article 7: CANVASSING**

- 7.1.** Canvassing may not commence until after the closing of nominations.
- 7.2.** Candidates are expected to treat all other candidates with dignity and respect.
- 7.3.** Where an election is in progress under this constitution, the Returning Officer may at their discretion, make such regulations that may be appropriate to govern the canvassing or other activities of candidates in seeking election.
- 7.4.** Hustings/Speeches: All hustings or public debates with or between candidates or interested parties in an election shall be convened by the President. The President will also propose an independent chairperson.
  - 7.4.1.** This chairperson must be agreed to by all candidates.
  - 7.4.2.** Candidates shall deliver speeches in alphabetical order.
  - 7.4.3.** Candidates shall have equal time for their main speeches. Five minutes for Sabbatical Officers and three minutes for Part-Time Officers.
  - 7.4.4.** Points of information shall not be allowed. Points of order may only be made by the candidates and shall only be related to the running of hustings.
  - 7.4.5.** Questions from the floor shall be subject to approval and read out by the Chairperson.
  - 7.4.6.** Parliamentary language must always be observed during hustings.
- 7.5.** All canvassing material must be cleared from each campus by the end of the

voting days.

- 7.6. Any canvassing material deemed inappropriate, or offensive may be removed by the President.

**Article 8: REMOVAL/RESIGNATION FROM OFFICE**

- 8.1. A Sabbatical Officer may only be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of a referendum. The Sabbatical Officer must be given a chance to defend themselves at the Class Representative Council meeting three days before the referendum takes place.
- 8.2. In the event of the resignation or removal from office of the President, it will be the Vice President-Education Officer who will take the role of President. If both President & Vice President Education are removed the Vice President for Entertainment shall take the role of the President.
- 8.3. In the event of the resignation or the removal of both the President and the two Vice-Presidents, there shall be an immediate by-election for the three positions in accordance with the election schedule.
- 8.4. A Non-Sabbatical Officer may be removed from the office by a two-third majority of the Class Representative Council or Union General Meeting.
- 8.5. The Non-Sabbatical Officer must be given a chance to defend themselves and must be informed three days before the meeting of all the accusations made against them. Members can abstain from voting and the President can only exercise their vote in the event of a tie.
- 8.6. In the event of the resignation or removal from the office of a Non-Sabbatical Officer a by-election will take place in accordance with the election schedule.
- 8.7. The resignation of an Executive Officer shall only take effect upon notification of same by letter to the Union President and one other Non-Sabbatical Officer.

**Article 9: UNION POLICY**

- 9.1. Autonomy: The Union is an autonomous organization and shall not be affiliated to any organization whose conditions of membership may affect the autonomy of the Union.
- 9.2. Amendments: The sole amending body of this constitution and schedules shall be by referendum in accordance with 'Article 4' of this constitution.
- 9.3. Indemnity: Every Officer, appointee, or member of staff of the Union shall be entitled to be indemnified out of the assets of the Union against all losses or liability which they may sustain or incur in or about the execution of their office or otherwise in relation thereto, and no Officer, appointee or member of staff shall be

liable for any loss, damage, or misfortune, which may happen to be incurred by the Union in the Executive of the duties of his or her office or in relation thereto. Provided that nothing in this clause shall affect their ability for the consequence of any negligent act on their part.

- 9.4.** The constitution is to be reviewed at least every three years.
- 9.5.** If the student union wishes to affiliate themselves with a body which directly or indirectly levies a membership fee on the union, the decision to affiliate shall only be taken by a referendum.

**Article 10: FINANCE**

- 10.1.** The President shall be responsible for the allocation of all funds in consultation with the college management. The Union must be willing to collectively account for their financial decisions to the membership.
- 10.2.** The Union President shall be responsible to the Union for the keeping of accounts and shall exercise supervision over all Union finances.
- 10.3.** The accounts of the Union shall be audited by a qualified external auditor.
- 10.4.** The Union shall hold bank accounts in the name of the Union.
- 10.5.** Invoices shall be signed by the President and Vice-President - Education Officer.
- 10.6.** The auditor (in conjunction with the Union President) shall be responsible for the preparation of annual accounts relating to the Union activities which will comprise of, as a minimum, a Balance Sheet, a Profit & Loss Count, a Statement of Source and Application of Funds and supporting notes to the accounts as well as comparative figures from previous session accounts.