



U·S·I

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
UNION OF STUDENTS IN IRELAND**

**BUNREACT AONTAS NA MAC LÉINN
IN ÉIRINN**

Adopted by USI Congress April 2007

ARTICLE ONE: TITLE

The name of Ireland's National Union of Students is the Union of Students in Ireland or in Irish, Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn – abbreviated as U.S.I., or in Irish, A.M.L.É hereinafter referred to as 'the Union'.

ARTICLE TWO: MEMBERSHIP

1. The Union is a federation of Students' Unions, referred to as Constituent Organisations of the Union which are themselves based on all registered students of that education or training Institute, including other persons pursuing such courses or programmes involving apprenticeship and other extra mural and training programmes anywhere in Ireland.

Constitution Organisations' Membership

2. All Students' Unions are accepted as Constituent Organisations:
 - a) Whose constitution has been accepted by Congress or by National Council and ratified at a subsequent Congress.
 - b) Which pay regular affiliation fees as decided by National Council.
 - c) Which pay the appropriate regional levy as decided by their Regional Conference, subject to ratification by National Council.
 - d) Which accept the Union Constitution and facilitate the implementation of policy as decided at Congress, keeping in mind the federal nature of the Union.
 - e) Once accepted as a Constituent Organisation affiliated to the Union, a Constituent Organisation may not disaffiliate without providing National Council with twelve months notice in writing, during which notice period the Constituent Organisation shall continue to be in membership, with all the rights and duties pertaining thereto. Upon affiliation a Constituent Organisation shall enter into a legally binding contract confirming their acceptance of this constitution provision.

Individual Membership

3. Individual students are said to be ordinary members of the Union and have such rights as are outlined in this Constitution and its schedules by

virtue of being a member of an organisation accepted in accordance with Article Two.(2). The elected officers are ordinary members for the duration of their term of office and have such rights and duties in addition as are laid down by this Constitution and its Schedules.

ARTICLE THREE: BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE UNION

The basic principle on which Irish students build their Union is the defence, promotion and organisation of the fundamental educational, economic, political, social, cultural, welfare and other interests of all the students of Ireland. Ireland for the purposes of this Constitution will be the island of Ireland.

ARTICLE FOUR: PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES OF THE UNION

To realise their basic principle, the students in and through the Union work for:

1. An education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realise their full potential.
2. An education and training system which truly serves the interests of the people of Ireland.
3. The right of students to a decent standard of living including the right to adequate financial support, proper housing and future prospects of employment in Ireland.
4. The defence and promotion of all democratic and human rights.
5. The provision of student services for the benefit of the membership on the principle that control of student services should lie with the membership.
6. To represent the interests of the students of Ireland at international level.

ARTICLE FIVE: FUNDAMENTAL ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE UNION

The democratic character of the Union is based upon:

1. The self-organisation of Irish students in action as the proper means to realise these objectives and overall aims, by involving the mass of students in deciding upon and carrying out policy through the Constituent Organisations of the Union.
2. The complete autonomy of the Union from all state, college or external authorities, including allowing no interference in its elections, policy-making or finance.
3. The principle sources of funds for the Union's activities are
 - i. the students' subscriptions paid by the Constituent Organisations,
 - ii. funds from commercial activities, sponsorship and grants.
4. The formulation of policy by the students ordinarily by simple majority vote of their delegates at the Congress after consultation and discussion in affiliated Unions.
5. The right of all ordinary members to be elected to any Office of the Union and to elect their officers and executive bodies through their delegates at the Congress and other governing bodies subject to the provisions of this Constitution.
6. The delegation of responsibility to various elected bodies and officers to organise, defend and promote the principal objectives of the Union.
7. The accounting of the leading bodies, committees and individual officers to the members in respect of the work they do or representations they make on behalf of the Union, through the structures of the Union.
8. The right of the students through their Constituent Organisation to call to account and instruct those charged with office within the Union and to discipline and ultimately dismiss those who fail to carry out their responsibilities.
9. The provision to the students of courageous and positive leadership by all executive bodies and elected officers.
10. The right of students to pursue majority Union policy, keeping in mind the federal nature of the Union.

11. The co-operation of the student, through their Union with all organisations who are organising for the same objectives.
12. The right of the Union to engage in commercial services through the Constituent Organisations.

ARTICLE SIX: STRUCTURE OF USI AND ITS GOVERNING BODIES

1. *Congress*

- a) The highest governing body of the Union is its Congress. It has the power to review and amend the Constitution, to decide policy and elect the officers, with the exception of the officers elected by Conference explicitly outlined in this Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. A session of Congress can be convened at any time.
- b) The Annual Congress, held not later than June of each year, reviews the Constitution, finances, work of the National Council, amends or adopts Union Policy and elects the full-time officers with the exception of the officers elected by Conference explicitly outlined in this Constitution.
- c) A Special Session of Congress can be convened on the authority of National Council or Congress or on the written request of eight or more Constituent Organisations representing at least one third of the ordinary members of the Union. It will deal only with the specific matter for which it has been called.
- d) Congress is composed of the Union's current elected officers and delegates elected by and from each Constituent Organisation whose affiliation fees have been paid.
- e) Congress policy lapses after five years.

2. *National Council*

- a) National Council is composed of the Union's current elected officers, the Chairpersons of Working Groups and one delegate nominated by and from each Constituent Organisation which is in benefit.

- b) National Council is the executive body of the Union. Its primary function is to organise and implement effective campaigns to protect and advance the interests of students in terms of the education system and society, under the direction of Congress policy.
- c) National Council cannot reverse the policy of Congress, but can, by a two-third majority vote representing more than 50% of the ordinary members of the Union refer to Congress a policy, the implementation of which would seriously damage the organisation of the Union or its fundamental principle. If this provision is invoked National Council can suspend any further implementation of such a policy or section of policy until the matter is resolved by the next Congress.
This provision can only be invoked if there has been a substantial change in the circumstances relating to that decision by Congress.
- d) The National Council may by a two-third-majority vote representing more than 50% of the ordinary members of the Union declare an emergency situation. In this situation, the National Council may make a new policy by a two-third majority of those present and voting at a meeting of the National Council.
Such new policy shall be subject to ratification at the first Congress following such a decision. Two weeks notice of the proposed new policy must be given to Constituent Organisations.
- e) National Council shall be chaired by the Chairperson of National Council or in his/her absence, by the Deputy Chairperson of National Council. The positions shall be held for a period of 2 years.

The Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of National Council may be removed from Office on a two-third majority vote of a quorate National Council provided that one month's notice has been given to all members of National Council.

3. Officer Board

Officer Board is a Standing Committee of National Council and is composed of the elected officers of the Union.

Officer Board shall:

- a) produce the annual plan of work for the Union
- b) co-ordinate and prepare the work of the National Council
- c) be involved in the preparation of the annual budget along with the Finance Committee

- d) provide day to day leadership to the Union on the basis of Union policy
- e) is collectively and individually responsible.

The quorum for a meeting of Officer Board shall be one third plus one of the total membership.

Only members of the Union are eligible for election to Officer Board

ARTICLE SEVEN: THE OFFICER BOARD

1. The Officer Board is composed of:

- a) The President
- b) The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer
- c) The Education Officer
- d) The Welfare Officer
- e) The Equality Officer
- f) The Area Campaigns Officers, one for each of the Eastern, Southern, Northern, and Western regions
- g) The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Officer
- h) Oifigeach na Gaeilge / the Irish Language Officer
- i) The Disability Rights Officer
- j) The Environmental Awareness Officer
- k) The Postgraduate Officer

2. The full-time officers of the Union are:

a) The President

who has overall responsibility to lead the Union's work, to allocate the work amongst the officers and to report to Congress and National Council

on the Union's work. The President is the chief spokesperson and representative of the Union and chief Officer of the Officer Board.

The President of the Union is the Principal Elected Leader and the Chief Executive Officer of the Union and can take such decisions, in consultation with the Officer Board, as do not require a meeting of National Council or Congress.

S/he shall be elected at Annual Congress, such election to be held after the first session and before the second session of Congress.

b) The Deputy President / Campaigning Officer

in the absence of the President shall assume those duties of the President where necessary. The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer oversees the work of the Area Campaigns Officers subject to direction by the President, National Council and Congress.

The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer has the responsibility to organise and prepare campaign strategies and plans of action as required by National Council in pursuit of Union policy in liaison with the President. The Deputy President/ Campaigning officer has responsibility to assist the membership carry out the subsequent decisions of National Council and Annual Congress.

The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer shall also assist other Officers in their Campaigning work. The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer shall be responsible for the publications brief.

The Deputy President/ Campaigning Officer oversees the work of the Campaigns Working Group of which s/he is Chairperson

S/he shall be elected at Annual Congress, such election to be held after the first session and before the second session of Congress.

c) The Education Officer

has overall responsibility for the implementation and development of the Union's education policy and oversees the work of the Education Working Group of which s/he is Chairperson. The Education Officer has special responsibility for the Union work on academic affairs.

S/he shall be elected at Annual Congress, such election to be held after the first session and before the second session of Congress.

d) The Welfare Officer

has overall responsibility for initiating campaigns for the defence and promotion of student welfare rights. The Welfare Officer has responsibility for the implementation and development of the Union's welfare policy and oversees the work of the Welfare Working Group of which s/he is Chairperson. The Welfare Officer has special responsibility for the provision of welfare publications and materials.

S/he shall be elected at Annual Congress, such election to be held after the first and before the second session of Congress.

e) The Equality Officer

shall have the responsibility for the implementation and development of all Union policy relating to discrimination caused by age, gender, race, religion, nationality, family status, marital status, socio-economic circumstance, political opinion or membership of the Traveller Community.

The Equality Officer oversees the work of the Equality Working Group of which s/he is Chairperson and shall be responsible for the running of Equality Training.

S/he shall be elected at Annual Congress, such election to be held after the first session and before the second session of Congress.

f) The Area Campaigns Officers

shall be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their regions in conjunction with and reporting to Officer Board.

They shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Constituent Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, meetings, conference events, campaigns and training events. They shall communicate regional and Constituent Organisation's issues to Officer Board.

S/he shall be elected at the respective Regional Conference held before July 1st.

S/he shall have been a member of a Constituent Organisation in the respective region where s/he is seeking to be elected.

g) The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Officer

shall be responsible for carrying out the Union's policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, encouraging the participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in the Union and working to eliminate prejudice against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The Officer shall be the spokesperson for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights campaign.

S/he shall be Chairperson of the Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Working Group and ex officio member of the Equality Working Group.

S/he shall be elected at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Standing Conference to be held before July 1st.

4. The part-time officers of the Union are:

h) Oifigeach na Gaeilge / The Irish Language Officer

shall be responsible for carrying out (in conjunction with a full-time officer) Union policy on the Irish language and culture and for encouraging the use of Irish within the Union with the aim of developing a bilingual policy for the Union.

S/he shall be Chairperson of the Irish Language Working Group.

S/he shall be elected at An Comhdháil Seasaimh na Gaeilge to be held before July 1st.

i) The Disability Rights Officer

shall be responsible for carrying out (in conjunction with a full time officer) Union Policy on the rights of students with disabilities and for encouraging the participation of students with disabilities at both a local and national level.

S/he shall be Chairperson of the Disability Rights Working Group and ex officio member of the Equality Working Group

S/he shall be elected at the Disability Rights Standing Conference to be before July 1st.

j) The Environmental Awareness Officer

shall be responsible (in conjunction with a full-time officer) for the implementation and development of the Union's environmental policy, for

creating awareness for both global and local environmental issues, for developing, promoting and supporting initiatives which help conserve and enhance the quality of our environment.

S/he shall be Chairperson of the Environmental Awareness Working Group.

S/he shall be elected at the Environmental Awareness Standing Conference to be held before July 1st.

k) The Postgraduate Officer

shall be responsible for the implementation and development (in conjunction with the Education Officer) of Union policy for postgraduate students and their studies. He/she shall be responsible for encouraging more postgraduate students to take part in the Union both nationally and locally. He/she will be an ex-officio member of the Education Working Group.

S/he shall be elected at a Postgraduate Standing Conference to be held before July 1st.

The Postgraduate Officer must be a postgraduate student at the time of the election.

5. Conditions

The full-time officers of the Union shall serve no more than three years.

They shall be paid a wage agreed by Finance Committee; officers who remain in office for more than one year shall not be entitled to annual increments.

Part-time officers and committee members receive such expenses as are judged appropriate by Finance Committee.

Candidates for membership of Officer Board, salaried or otherwise, shall be required, on acceptance of nomination, to agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of Office as set by Finance Committee and shall on taking up Office sign a contract corresponding to the terms and conditions previously notified to and agreed to by the said candidate.

6. Dismissal

A two-third majority vote of a quorate National Council has the power to dismiss an elected officer or Chairperson of any committee. This is subject to appeal to Congress.

7. Vacancy

In the event of a vacancy occurring among the full-time officers by reason of dismissal, long-term incapacity, resignation or death, National Council will hold an election for the vacant post.

The exceptions to this are:

In the case of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Rights Officer a Special LGBT Standing Conference shall be held to elect a new Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Rights Officer.

In the case of the Area Campaigns Officers a Special Regional Standing Conference shall be held to elect a new Area Campaigns Officers.

In the event of a vacancy occurring among the part-time officers by reason of dismissal, long-term incapacity, resignation or death, National Council will hold an election for the vacant post.

ARTICLE EIGHT: STANDING COMMITTEES

The Union shall have three permanent committees, to be known as Standing Committees. The competence of such committees is set down in the following sections.

The Union acting on a decision of National Council or Congress may from time to time set up ad-hoc committees to advise it on or carry out specific work. All such committees shall be chaired by a full-time officer appointed by the President. Their manner of election and their composition shall be decided by National Council or Congress.

1) Steering Committee

- a) Steering Committee orders the business of Congress according to the provisions of the relevant Schedules and the direction of National Council. It shall chair the sessions of Congress and have responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of Congress. It is elected by National Council after the Annual Congress.
- b) Members of Steering Committee shall not be current members of the Union but shall have attended a previous Congress and shall have been a member of the Union.

- c) Steering Committee shall comprise no less than five members and no more than ten members, who will serve for two years and are eligible for re-election.
- d) The quorum for meetings of the Steering Committee shall be three members.
- e) From their number, the committee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Steering Committee. The Chairperson shall act as a point of contact for National Council.

2) Elections Committee

- a) Elections Committee shall be responsible for the running of all Union elections according to the relevant rules and the direction of National Council.

Elections Committee receives, investigates and adjudicates on all complaints relating to the running of Union elections; organises and chairs Congress elections, organises and chairs hustings for full-time officer elections, makes regular reports to Congress and National Council regarding Union elections, and acts as a credentials vetting Committee for delegates to Congress.

- b) Elections Committee shall consist of no less than three members and no more than six people, who will serve for two years and are eligible for re-election.
- c) The quorum for meetings of the Elections Committee shall be two members.
- d) From their number, the committee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Elections Committee. The Chairperson shall act as a point of contact for National Council.
- e) Elections to Elections Committee will be overseen by members of Steering Committee who are not member of the Elections Committee.

3) Disputes Committee

- a) Disputes Committee shall act as arbitrator in disputes within the Union. It shall have responsibility for adjudicating on complaints made by a member of the Union relating to the conduct of another member of the Union, at

Congress, National Council, a meeting, seminar and/ or conference of the Union.

Disputes Committee shall also have responsibility to adjudicate on alleged misconduct or contravention of policy by an Officer of the Union.

Disputes Committee shall facilitate discussions between Officer Board and a Constituent Organisation in the event of a dispute or grievance leading to a proposed disaffiliation or expulsion.

- b) The Disputes Committee has the power to remove the right of a member of the Union to attend Union meetings, seminars, conferences, National Council or Congress or training events. The Disputes Committee can recommend dismissal of an Officer to National Council.
- c) Members of Disputes Committee shall not be current members of the Union
- d) The Committee shall comprise of the following:
1 trustee; 1 trade union official; 1 solicitor; 1 member of Elections Committee and 1 member of Steering Committee.
- e) Disputes Committee shall sit for 2 years and will be elected at the first National Council of the year in which the committee lapses.
- f) The quorum for the meetings of Disputes committee is four members.
- g) From their number, the committee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Disputes Committee. In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson shall have the casting vote. The Chairperson shall act as a point of contact for National Council.
- h) All proceedings of the Disputes Committee shall be governed by the principles of natural justice.

ARTICLE NINE: STANDING CONFERENCES

The Union shall have 4 Regional Conferences and 5 Standing Conferences that shall direct and co-ordinate the work of the Union in a particular area. Each Standing Conference shall be obliged to present a report to Annual Congress. The report to Annual Congress shall be treated as a motion. Standing Committees shall at all times adhere to Union policy as decided at Congress and as directed by National Council.

1) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Standing Conference

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Standing Conference shall:

- a) Review the development of the Union's policy in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.
- b) Elect a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Officer.
- c) Review the work of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Officer.
- d) Elect the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Working Group.

2) An Comhdháil Seasaimh an Gaeilge / The Irish Language Standing Conference

An Comhdháil Seasaimh an Gaeilge/The Irish Language Standing Conference shall:

- a) Review the implementation of the Union's bilingual policy and its policy on the Irish language and culture.
- b) Elect An Oifigeach na Gaeilge/the Irish Language Officer.
- c) Review the work of An Oifigeach na Gaeilge/the Irish Language Officer.
- d) Elect the Irish Language and Culture Working Group.

3) The Disability Rights Conference

The Disability Rights Conference shall:

- a) Review the development of the Union's policy in relation to disability rights.
- b) Elect the Disability Rights Officer.
- c) Review the work of the Disability Rights Officer.
- d) Elect the Disability Rights Working Group.

4) The Environmental Awareness Standing Conference

The Environmental Awareness Standing Conference shall:

- a) Review the development of the Union's policy in relation to environmental awareness.
- b) Elect the Environmental Awareness Officer.
- c) Review the work of the Environmental Awareness Officer.
- d) Elect the Environmental Awareness Working Group.

5) Regional Conferences

The primary functions of Regional Conferences shall be to:

- a) Debate and decide a programme of work to be implemented by the Regional Council.
- b) Provide a forum for discussion of issues, particularly those relevant to the Constituent Organisations and Area Campaigns Officer(s) in that region.
- c) Elect the Area Campaigns Officer(s).
- d) Review the work of the Area Campaigns Officer(s).

6. The Postgraduate Conference

The primary functions of the Postgraduate Conference will be:

- a) Debate and decide a program of work to be implemented by the Postgraduate Officer.
- b) Elect the Postgraduate Officer.
- c) Review the work of the Postgraduate Officer.

ARTICLE TEN: REGIONS

- 1) There are four regions within USI. These are the Eastern region, the Northern region, the Southern region and the Western region. The regional conferences set the work of the regions. Regions shall at all times adhere to Union policy as decided at Congress and directed by National Council.
 - a) The Northern region consists of affiliated Constituent Organisations and the Area Campaigns Officer within the counties of Fermanagh, Tyrone, Derry, Antrim, Down and Armagh.
 - b) The Southern region consists of affiliated Constituent Organisations and the Area Campaigns Officer within the counties of Carlow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Laois.
 - c) The Western region consists of affiliated Constituent Organisations and the Area Campaigns Officer within the counties of Offaly, Westmeath, Longford, Cavan, Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo and Galway.
 - d) The Eastern region consists of affiliated Constituent Organisations and Area Campaigns Officer(s) within the counties of Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Meath, Louth and Monaghan.

2) Regional Council

The primary functions of Regional Councils shall be:

- a) To promote, defend and campaign for the educational, social and general rights of the Union membership in that region.
 - b) Review the work of the Area Campaigns Officer.
 - c) To provide a channel of communications between Constituent Organisations in that region and Officer Board.
 - d) To explore the continuing improvement of channels of communications between the Union and its ordinary members.
- 3) Each Regional Council shall be composed of the Area Campaigns Officer(s), two delegates nominated by and from each Constituent Organisation in the region, observers from Constituent Organisations and a member of Officer Board nominated by the President.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: WORKING GROUPS

- 1) There shall be nine established Working Groups of which four are autonomous Working Groups.

Autonomy for the purposes of this constitution shall mean the right and duty of the autonomous working groups to set and fulfil their own program of work as directed by their relevant standing conference or Congress.

The Working Groups shall constitute themselves subject to ratification by National Council.

- 2) The five Working Groups are:

- i. Campaigns Working Group,
- ii. Education Working Group,
- iii. Welfare Working Group,
- iv. Equality Working Group and
- v. Postgraduate Working Group

- 3) The four autonomous Working Groups are,

- i. Lesbian Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Working Group
- ii. Irish Language Working Group
- iii. Disability Rights Working Group
- iv. Environmental Awareness Working Group

These Working Groups shall be elected at their respective Standing Conference.

- 4) The National Council shall, from time to time, establish ad-hoc Working Groups.
- 5) Each Working Group will be obliged to present a report on its work to each meeting of National Council and at Congress. The report to Annual Congress shall be treated as a motion. Working Groups shall at all times adhere to Union policy as decided at Congress and as directed by National Council.
- 6) In the event of the resignation, death, removal or incapacitation of an Officer and Chairperson of one of the four autonomous Working Groups, the Working Group may nominate, by means of a simple majority an interim Chairperson who is an elected member of the Working Group. The Chairperson will hold the position as interim Chairperson until such time as a new Officer is elected from the respective Special Standing Conference.

ARTICLE TWELVE: SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS

- 1) There shall be a maximum of seven Sectoral Working Groups laid down in the Schedules, the organisation of which shall be decided by National Council.
- 2) Each Sectoral Group shall be obliged to present a report on its work to each meeting of the National Council and at Congress. The report to Congress shall be treated as a motion. Sectoral Groups shall at all times adhere to Union policy as decided at Congress and as directed by National Council.
- 3) The Sectoral Working Groups will each nominate a Chairperson from their number. The President shall appoint a member of Officer Board as a facilitator for each Sectoral Working Group.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN: FINANCE COMMITTEE

- 1) The Finance Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the financial concerns of the Union and shall advise National Council and Congress accordingly of any developments or initiatives taken.

- 2) The role of Finance Committee is to:
 - a) Draft the annual Union budget in consultation with the Union Officer Board, senior staff member and the Union's Auditor.
 - b) Present the annual budget for approval to the first National Council meeting of the academic year.
 - c) Monitor the budget on a quarterly basis and submit a written report on any budget deviations to the next meeting of National Council.
 - d) Receive and examine the Union annual accounts and submit the accounts with a detailed commentary to the December meeting of National Council for their approval.
 - e) Determine, set and regulate the Union Officer's terms and conditions of employment.
 - f) Oversee the general financial management and development of the Union.
- 3) All decisions and actions taken by the Finance Committee must be referred to National Council for ratification. To overturn the decision and/or action taken by the Finance Committee a two-thirds plus one vote of National Council is required.
- 4) The Chairperson of Finance Committee shall append a statement of opinion on the financial operation and state of the Union to the annual accounts when presented for ratification.
- 5) Finance Committee must meet as often as necessary to complete its activities and in any case not less than seven times annually, the first meeting to take place in the month of July.
- 6) All members of Finance Committee will be entitled to the minutes and documentation of the meetings of the previous year, and at the discretion of National Council, the minutes of all previous years.
- 7) Finance Committee shall consist of eight members.

The members shall be:

- a) The President of the Union
- b) The Chairperson of the committee shall be nominated by the Board of Trustees and elected by National Council. The Chairperson shall have a three-year term and may only be removed from office during that term by

- a two-thirds majority of a National Council, provided that at least one month's notice of such motion is given.
- c) Two members, who must be members of the Union but not of Officer Board and are directly elected by the National Council. The first member shall be elected at the last meeting of the academic year and shall hold office for following twelve months. The second member shall be elected at the first National Council of the academic year and shall hold office for the following twelve months.
 - d) Three persons, who are not members of the Union with the exception of serving Trustees, who can contribute an element of financial or business acumen by virtue of their experience. They shall be nominated by the President and ratified by National Council. Such persons shall hold office for three year terms.
 - e) The senior staff member of the organisation who shall be an exofficio member and shall act as a non-voting secretary to the Committee.

The Auditor of the Union should attend at least those meetings of Finance Committee dealing with preparing the annual budget and receiving and examining the annual accounts, but shall have no voting entitlement.

Board of Trustees

- 8) The Trustees shall advise the President on staffing, administration, finance and other aspects of the Union.
- 9) All the real property and investments of the Union shall be vested in the trustees who shall deal with such property as directed by resolution of National Council or Congress and shall be indemnified against risk and expense out of the assets of the Union.
- 10) There shall be no less than three and a maximum of six trustees of the Union who are appointed by National Council. Trustees can be removed by a two-thirds plus one vote of a quorate National Council. S/he shall hold office for a period of five years unless they resign or are removed.
- 11) The Trustees shall meet as a Board not less than three times annually and shall satisfy themselves as to the financial state of the Union and its assets and any other matters which may be of concern. They shall communicate their satisfaction or otherwise to the Finance Committee.
- 12) The Trustees shall normally not be members of the Union, but in exceptional circumstances where a Trustee is pursuing a course at an Institution whose

students' representative body is eligible for membership that Trustee shall undertake not to involve himself/herself in the governance of that representative body.

Staff Financial Responsibilities

13) There shall be a member of the Union staff who shall be responsible to the President for the administration of the finances of the Union and the proper management of human and physical resources and shall advise the President on the utilisation of same; however, none of the foregoing shall detract from the President's ultimate responsibility for the operation and management of the Union.

National Council Financial Responsibilities

14) The National Council shall have control over all expenditure incurred by and on behalf of the Union and shall direct the President to open such bank accounts as may be necessary and authorise him/her and two others to be the authorised signatories on such accounts. All cheques drawn on such accounts shall bear at least two of the authorised signatures.

15) The National Council shall also have the power to borrow or raise or secure the payment of money for the purpose of the Union and with a view thereto, to direct the Trustees to mortgage or charge any of the real or personal property of the Union. National Council for the purpose of such borrowing or raising or securing the payment of money for the purpose of the Union shall be empowered to authorise the Trustees and the President to act on its behalf and enter into the necessary agreements, sign guarantees or open accounts. The Trustees and the President in acting on behalf of National Council shall be indemnified against risks and expenses out of the assets of the Union.

16) The National Council shall ratify the appointment of auditors to the Union as recommended by finance committee.

17) The National Council shall be issued with an audited statement of income and expenditure and balance sheet prior to the Annual Congress.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN: THE SCHEDULE OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Schedules to the Constitution contain the details provisions necessary for the enactment of the various articles of this Constitution. This Constitution consists of these Articles and all its Schedules. In the case of a conflict arising between anything contained in the schedules of this Constitution and the balance of the

Constitution (i.e. The Constitution less its Schedules), then in such a case the balance of the Constitution as opposed to the Schedule or Schedules will take precedence.

ARTICLE FIFTEEN: THE AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed at the Congress, provided one month notice has been given to Constitution Organisations and must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote provided the number voting in favour exceeds half the total number registered for Congress. The amendments shall take effect within one month of the vote unless a lesser period is stipulated in the motion moving the resolution.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN: AMENDMENT TO SCHEDULES

Amendments to the Schedules may be proposed at the National Council and at Congress and must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. They shall have effect one month after ratification unless National Council or Congress decides otherwise.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN: INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The interpretation of the Constitution shall be vested, in the case of Congress with the Chairperson of that session of Congress, and at all other times with the Chairperson of National Council, who shall formulate an interpretation.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN: IRISH LANGUAGE

The Union Constitution shall be in Irish and may be referred to where appropriate. In the case of a conflict of meaning or interpretation between the English and the Irish translations the English version shall be the definitive.

The Union of Students in Ireland has a bilingual policy, with regard to the Irish and the English languages. USI should give equal standing to both languages in all operations of the Union.

ARTICLE NINETEEN: REVOCATION

All previous Constitutions are hereby revoked. However membership, elections, appointments and policies adopted under the previous Constitution are not invalidated or made inoperable as a result of this revocation.

SCHEDULE A: MEMBERSHIP

Applying for Membership

- 1) An applicant union seeking the status of Constituent Organisation of the Union must fulfil the provision of Article Two (2) by:
 - a. Submitting a copy of its Constitution to the officers of the Union three weeks in advance of the session of Congress or meeting of National Council at which their membership application will be considered;
 - b. Submitting a formal resolution of the applicant union, adopted with the authority of their full membership, this resolution must specifically seek membership of the Union and contain an agreement to pay the affiliation fees, to accept the Constitution of the Union and to facilitate the implementation of the Union's policy.
 - c. Submitting a formal resolution of their Union, adopted with the authority of their full membership, specifically seeking membership of the Union with an agreement to pay the affiliation fees, to accept the Constitution of the Union and to facilitate the implementation of the Union policy.
- 2) The session of Congress or meeting of National Council shall ensure that the conditions for membership are strictly adhered to and shall give full consideration to each application in its own right and hear any presentation made by the applicant Union in support of its membership.
- 3) The Union may defer an application for membership in order to give a Union a period in which to comply with the conditions for membership.
- 4) All Constituent Organisations of the Union must submit annually a copy of their current constitution, detailing any revisions, if any, made in the course of the year.
- 5) An application for Associate Membership will follow exactly the same procedures as outlined above and requires the same submissions.

Conditions of the Membership for Constituent Organisations

- 6) These are the conditions and duties of Constituent Organisations:
 - a) It's Constitution is broadly in accordance with Articles Three; Four and Five of the Constitution;
 - b) That it allows for membership of all students in the institution, covered by the description in Article Two (1);

- c) It is exclusively a student organisation with all the members having full rights and duties without discrimination.
- 7) In the case of a Constituent Organisation having contrary policy to that of the national Union, it shall allow the officers of the Union an opportunity to present Congress views to their members.
- 8) Constituent Organisations will not be considered for quorum purposes until they have submitted an Executive Committee list to the Union and until the first event that delegates from the Constituent Organisation attend from July 1st to June 30th. The Union recognises the part-time nature of many Constituent Organisations and shall consider this when implementing this point.

Conditions of the Membership for Associate Organisations

- 9) Associate membership is open only to student organisations which could not be eligible for the status of Constituent Organisation.
- 10) The duties of Associate Organisations are:
 - a) Co-operation with the Union in implementing its policy as allowed by the rules/Constitution of the Associate Member.
 - b) Support for the Union financially based on a fixed proportion of the relevant member's affiliation fee as decided by National Council.
 - c) To accept the Constitution of the Union.
- 11) The rights of Associate Organisations and their individual members are limited to receipt of the Union publications, attendance at the Union seminars and conferences and those parts of Congress and National Council which are not dealing with internal organisational matters (i.e. finance, elections, constitution, discipline).

Individual Membership

- 12) If any student attends more than one college, their membership rights and duties for the purposes of this Constitution are taken to apply arising out of the status of the Union in the college which is the seat of their primary area of study.

Expulsion

- 13) Violation of the fundamental principle of the Union by any Constituent Organisation can lead to suspension or expulsion unless rectified by the Constituent Organisation concerned.
- 14) National Council, subject to appeal to Congress, may suspend the membership or withdraw it completely from any Constituent Organisation where it is shown to be in continual serious and active violation of the fundamental principle of the Union.
- 15) Breach of the conditions of membership laid down by the Constitution and its Schedules will lead to the forfeiture of the status of Constituent Organisation or Associate Organisation except where National Council decides that the non-payment of dues is the direct result of the actions of the educational or state authorities against a Constituent or Associate Organisation. In such a case the Constituent or Associate Organisation shall make such payment as decided by National Council.
- 16) In no case can simple policy difference result in the suspension or expulsion of a Constituent Organisation.
- 17) Suspension or expulsion can only take place after a formal resolution to this effect has received a two-thirds majority vote at the National Council or Congress.
- 18) A resolution proposing such action by the Union shall be circulated to all Constituent Organisations one month in advance of the session of Congress or meeting of National Council which is to hear the disciplinary motion. A representative of the Constituent Organisation concerned has the right to speak before the vote is taken.
- 19) The removal of the status of Associate Organisation follows the same procedures and requires the same conditions.

Default

- 20) Any Constituent Organisation who fails to pay affiliation fees for a period of three consecutive years can be termed at the discretion of Finance Committee and National Council, to have withdrawn from the organisation.

Re-admissions

- 21) Re-admissions shall be dealt with as in the case of a first time applicant.
Where a Constituent Organisation's membership lapses or is forfeited that Constituent Organisation shall discharge all of its financial obligations to the Union before its membership can be again considered.

SCHEDULE B: FINANCE

- 1) The term "in benefit" describes a Constituent Organisation which is fulfilling its financial obligations to the Union as laid down in the Constitution and Schedules.

Subscriptions

- 2) All Constituent Organisations shall provide certified details of student numbers, as outlined in this Schedule, before 31st May in every year.
- 3) The Annual Subscription for which a Constituent Organisation or organisation in association is liable shall be decided by National Council. It shall be calculated on the number of students represented by that organisation in the last completed academic year.

Constituent Organisations shall pay and be liable for all full-time students and for those part-time students from whom they receive a fee. Where a student of a Constituent Organisation is by virtue of the course of study also considered as a part-time student in another Constituent Organisation, they shall only be affiliated through the Constituent Organisation in which they are registered as a full-time student. The Constituent Organisation in which they are registered as part-time students shall not affiliate them and shall not be liable for any fees in respect of them whether or not they receive an affiliation fee from the students.

Arrears

- 4) All Constituent Organisations who owe arrears shall agree with the Finance Committee a schedule for arrears payments, such schedule to be completed inside 2 years (exceptionally 3 years with the approval of Finance Committee) and such schedule to be agreed by May National Council. In the event of Finance Committee's refusal of such an application an appeal can be made to a National Council preceding Congress.

Failure to comply with the above will result in loss of delegate status at Annual Congress.

- 5) Affiliation Fees owing must be cleared on receipt of invoice. In the case of a Constituent Organisation failing to clear an invoice or successfully seek a deferral of payment the Finance Committee shall, without prejudice to the right of Finance Committee to withdraw delegate status at Congress, refer the matter to Disputes Committee. In the case of Constituent Organisations failing to discharge obligations or satisfy Finance Committee by Jan 1st of a given year the matter will be referred to Disputes Committee.

- 6) Any Constituent Organisation in serious financial difficulties may apply to the Finance Committee to have a payment(s) deferred. Such application must be in writing and accompanied by such financial information as is available. In the event of Finance Committee's refusal of such application, an appeal lies to the Disputes Committee.

SCHEDULE C: PROCEDURES

Procedures for Congress

- 1) At the beginning of the academic year, National Council shall decide on the date of the Annual Congress.
- 2) Special Sessions of Congress may be called in the manner laid down in Article Six of the Constitution. They must be held within one month of notice to the Constituent Organisations and/or the President of such a request and within three weeks of notice to the Constituent Organisations from the President.

3) Delegates at Congress

- a) Each Constituent Organisation is entitled to a minimum of two delegates. Each Constituent Organisation is entitled to one delegate for every 700 ordinary members (or greater part thereof) for whom affiliation fees are paid.

That is:

- 0 - 1050 students - 2 delegates
- 1051 - 1750 students - 3 delegates
- 1751 - 2450 students - 4 delegates etc.,

- b) Delegates shall be elected on the basis of a free vote at student general meetings, or assemblies of that nature.
- 4) Delegates shall have speaking and voting rights
- 5) All Officers shall be delegates to Congress. Any incoming officers shall have observer status if s/he is not acting as a delegate for their Constituent Organisation. All members of the Working Groups shall have Observer status with speaking rights at Annual Congress, if s/he is not acting as a delegate for their constituent organisation.
- 6) Delegate entitlement shall be calculated on the basis of the number of members registered in the Constituent Organisation's College as full-time students plus the number of part-time students registered in the Constituent Organisation's College whose affiliation fees have been paid by the Constituent Organisation. The figures used for these calculations shall be those which are obtained from each Constituent Organisation in the last completed academic year.

Observers at Congress

- 7) Each Constituent Organisation shall be entitled to send a maximum of two observers to Congress. Observers shall have speaking but not voting rights except where a delegate from the same Constituent Organisation transfers his/her voting card to an accredited observer. No person may exercise more than one delegate vote at one time

Visitors at Congress

- 8) Visitors may be invited by National Council to attend the Congress. They shall speak only at the invitation of National Council, subject to ratification by Congress during formal business, or at the direct invitation of Congress, decided during formal business. Visitors shall under no circumstances exercise a vote.

Quorum at Congress

- 9) The quorum of a meeting of the Congress shall consist of one half plus one of the total of the number of delegates registered as in attendance at Congress provided that one half plus one of the total number of delegates entitled to attend Congress are registered as in attendance.

Motions at Congress

- 10) Constituent Organisations may submit ten motions each. All full-time and part-time members of Officer Board may submit five motions each. Committees/Working Groups established under the auspices of this Constitution with the exception of the Elections and Steering Committee may submit 5 motions each.
- 11) All motions must contain a mandate. Motions may be submitted under the following headings: Union Organisation, Education, National Affairs, Welfare, Equality, International Affairs, USI Administration and Finance and Constitutional Amendments.
- 12) Constitutional Amendments require a two-thirds plus one vote of a quorate congress in order to be passed as will National and International affairs motions not directly affecting the members of the Union. All other motions need a simple majority vote to become policy.
- 13) Steering Committee shall facilitate the composing of motions and amendments to policy motions providing that those Constituent Organisations who are proposing like or similar or amendments agree mutually to the composing of such motions and amendments that they have submitted.

- 14) Congress Motions shall be timetabled on the basis of a single priority ballot of all motions submitted. The length of the various sessions of Congress shall be determined by the Steering Committee of the Union, based on the number of votes received by motions in each section in the priority ballot.
- 15) National Council, in consultation with Steering Committee shall set such deadlines for submission of motions as it feels necessary, bearing in mind the need for these motions to be thoroughly discussed by the membership in the Constituent Organisations.

Agenda at Congress

- 16) The Agenda for the Congress shall be based on:
 - i. Record of decisions of previous meeting
 - ii. Formal Business
 - iii. Report from the Officers on the work of the Union
 - iv. Report from Working Groups
 - v. Elections
 - vi. Motions
- 17) Reports by Working Groups, Regional and Standing Conferences and Sector Groups to Annual Congress must be submitted to Officer Board three weeks in advance of the commencement of Congress.

Role of Steering Committee at Congress

- 18) The Steering Committee shall chair and co-ordinate the composing sessions.
- 19) The Steering Committee shall advise National Council on the adoption of deadlines for the receipt of reports, nominations, motions and amendments for Congress.
- 20) On the nomination of the President, National Council shall elect a Congress Director who shall organise the Congress under the direction of the Steering Committee.
- 21) Motions and amendments must be in the hands of the Congress Director by the date decided by National Council.
- 22) The Steering Committee shall perform such other functions as are laid down in the Constitution and Schedules including the preparation of a record of the decisions taken by each session of Congress which shall be presented to the President within one month of the end of Congress.

23) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Congress shall be conducted with the Standing Orders. laid down in the Schedules.

Procedures for National Council

24) Delegates at National Council

Each Constituent Organisation may nominate one delegate to the National Council and may nominate a different delegate for each item on the agenda, notice of which must be given to the Chairperson before the commencement of formal business. Delegates shall have speaking and voting rights. All members of Officer Board shall have speaking and voting rights. Officer Board shall be treated as a Constituent Organisation with regard to voting entitlements, and thus have one vote, which shall be cast by the president or by his/her nominated proxy. In the case of a card vote, each member of Officers Board shall have full voting rights.

25) Observers at National Council

Observers from Constituent Organisations, Associate Organisations or Union Committees may attend meetings of the National Council. Observers may speak with the consent of the National Council, given before the commencement of formal business, but in no circumstances exercise a vote.

26) Visitors at National Council

Visitors may be invited by the National Council to attend its meeting. They shall speak only at the invitation of the National Council given before the commencement of formal business and shall in no circumstances exercise a vote.

27) Ordinary meetings of the National Council shall take place at least four times during the academic year.

Quorum at National Council

28) The quorum at an ordinary meeting of the National Council shall be half plus one of all Constituent Organisations in benefit. The votes of the Officer Board shall not be included in the determination of a quorum.

29) Ordinary meetings of the National Council shall be convened by the President. At least ten days notice must be given to all Constituent Organisations of such meetings.

30) Emergency meetings of the National Council may be convened to discuss urgent business and must be called within one week of the written request of any five Constituent Organisations. The request shall state the purpose for which the meeting is being called and only this business shall be discussed at

the meeting. The quorum of such emergency meetings shall be one-third of all Constituent Organisations entitled to be present and voting. All Constituent Organisations must have at least five days notice of the date, venue and business to be discussed at such a meeting. Constituent Organisations must receive five days notice of details of proposals for (a) the adoption of emergency policy and (b) the suspension of policy.

- 31) Each delegate to the National Council shall have one vote except in the event of a tie vote or upon the demand of at least five Constituent Organisations or on votes which are subject to ratification by Congress, whereupon there shall be a card vote based on representation at Congress.

Agenda at National Council

- 32) The agenda for ordinary meetings of the National Council shall be based on:

- i. Minutes of the previous meeting
- ii. Formal business
- iii. Reports from Officers, Working Groups and Committees.
- iv. Report from Officer Board.
- v. Plans of Action and Proposals,
- vi. Elections
- vii. Any other business

- 33) An agenda for each meeting shall be sent to each Constituent Organisation at least five days before the date appointed for the meeting, accompanied by the Report from the Officers on the workings of the Union five working days before the date appointed for the National Council. Any Constituent Organisation may make written submissions to the Council.

Chairing at National Council

- 34) The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson shall be elected at the last National Council of the academic year or when a vacancy arises at the first National Council following the date on which the position becomes vacant. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson shall not be members of the Union, but shall be familiar with the workings of the Union and have attended Annual Congress or National Council meetings in the past. In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, National Council may elect an acting Chairperson, who shall not be a member of Officer Board.

- 35) A Report on the proceedings of the National Council shall be published where appropriate in the regular publications of the Union for the education of the membership.

36) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution the National Council shall be conducted in accordance with Standing Orders 5a, 7, 9a to e, 10, 12b, 12d, 13 to 16 laid down in the Schedules.

Procedures for Committees

37) National Council may dismiss a member of Steering Committee or of Elections Committee by submitting a motion to dismiss to all members of National Council. The motion shall state the grounds for dismissal and the committee member concerned shall have the right to speak on the motion before any vote is taken.

Steering Committee Procedures

38) Steering Committee shall be elected by National Council not later than October. Candidates for the Steering Committee elections shall have attended a previous Congress and shall have been a member of the Union. Candidates shall be proposed by a Constituent Organisation or the President. Constituent Organisations must receive at least two weeks notice of the election. The Steering Committee shall remain in office until a new Committee is elected.

39) The election to Steering Committee shall be in two stages, firstly, a plebiscite whereby candidates receiving a vote of 50% + 1 shall be deemed elected, unless more than ten candidates receive more than 50% + 1, in which case the second stage of the election shall be carried out and eligible candidates (those candidates who received a vote of 50% + 1 in the plebiscite) shall be elected by means of a Proportional Representation, Single Transferable Vote.

Elections Committee Procedures

40) Candidates for Elections Committee shall have a good knowledge of the rules governing Union elections, shall have attended a previous Congress and shall not have been members of the Union for at least one year prior to seeking election to Elections Committee.

41) Candidates for Elections Committee shall be proposed by a Constituent Organisation or the President. Constituent Organisations shall receive at least two weeks notice of the election which shall take place at the same time as the elections of full-time officers at Congress for that year and shall be conducted according to the rules governing full-time officer elections. In the event of a vacancy occurring during the term of any Elections Committee, National Council shall hold an election for the vacant post, following the same procedure as that for full-time officer posts.

42) Elections Committee shall have responsibility for the smooth running of all Union elections, except those for ad-hoc Committees that may be set up from

time to time by National Council. Elections Committee, with the approval of Congress, shall appoint from among its members a Returning officer to supervise such elections as Elections Committee has responsibility for. National Council shall, on the nomination of the President appoint a Returning Officer for elections to ad-hoc Committees.

- 43) Elections Committee shall propose timetables for Union Elections to National Council and shall inform Constituent Organisations of the timetables agreed.

Ad-hoc Committee Procedures

- 44) Ad-hoc Committees established under Article Eight of the Constitution shall be elected by proportional representation by National Council on the nomination of the President or Constituent Organisations. National Council may stipulate at its absolute discretion that candidates for election to such committees shall have such qualifications or experience as it deems necessary. An ad-hoc committee shall meet regularly until it has completed the specific work for which it was set up. The quorum for such committees shall be 50% of the membership.

- 45) All permanent and ad-hoc committees shall give a report of their work annually to Congress. These reports shall form an appendix to the Officers Report at Congress.

Procedures for Working Groups

- 46) The membership of ad-hoc Working Groups established by National Council shall be decided by National Council. At least one member shall be a member of the Officer Board and shall act as Chairperson.

- 47) Within the four autonomous Working Groups an Executive shall be established whereby each member of the Working Group shall be designated a portfolio for which they shall have the responsibility for progressing. The executive portfolios shall be designated by the Chairperson upon consultation with the members of Working Group.

- 48) An Interim Chairperson of an autonomous Working Group will hold full speaking and voting rights at National Council and Congress if s/he is not acting as a delegate for their Constituent Organisation. S/he will hold speaking rights at Officer Board meeting. S/he shall be required to present to National Council a report of his/her activities.

Procedures for Sector Groups

- 49) The Sectoral Working Groups are as follows:

- a) Institute of Technology Sectoral Working Group
- b) University Sectoral Working Group
- c) Teacher-Training Sectoral Working Group
- d) Art & Design Sectoral Working Group
- e) Private Colleges Sectoral Working Group
- f) Further Education Sectoral Working Group
- g) Health Sciences Sectoral Working Group

50) At the first meeting of the academic year the Sectoral Working Groups will each nominate a Chairperson from their number. The duties of the Chairperson are as follows:

- i. Convening the Sectoral Working Group.
- ii. Report to National Council as to the work of the Sectoral Working Group

Procedures for Regional Councils and Conference

51) A Regional Council or Conference shall be called by the Area Campaigns Officer at the request of

- i. The Regional Council
- ii. Officer Board
- iii. Three Constituent Organisations from the Region
- iv. The Regional Conference

52) Each Constituent Organisation shall be entitled to send a maximum of two delegates to Regional Council plus a maximum of six observers.

53) No session of Regional Council or Conference shall proceed to business unless three Constituent Organisations from the Region are present.

54) Each Regional Conference shall be composed of the Area Campaigns Officer, minimum of two delegates plus half the Congress delegate entitlement, nominated by and from each Constituent Organisation in the region, observers from Associate Organisations and the Officer(s) of the Union designated to that region by the President.

55) Regional Council shall meet at least 4 times a year and the first meeting of the academic year shall be held before the end of August.

56) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Regional Council and Conference shall be conducted with the Standing Orders. laid down in the Schedules.

Procedures for Standing Conferences

57) Delegates at Standing Conferences

- a) Each Constituent Organisation is entitled to one fifth of their annual congress delegate entitlement, for the purpose of delegates at Standing Conference.
- b) Special Sessions of a Standing Conference may be called in the manner laid out in Article Six of the Constitution (that refers to Special Sessions of Congress). They must be held within one month of such a request.

58) The Officer Responsible shall have delegate status, with full speaking and voting rights at Standing Conference.

Observers at Standing Conferences

59) All members of the equivalent autonomous Working Group shall have Observer status with speaking rights at Standing Conference, if s/he is not acting as a delegate for their Constituent Organisation.

60) Members of Officer Board shall have Observer status, with full speaking rights at Standing Conference.

Quorum at Standing Conferences

61) The quorum of a meeting of Standing Conference shall consist of one half plus one the number of delegates registered as in attendance at Standing Conference provided that one third plus one of the total number of delegates entitled to attend Standing Conference are registered in attendance.

Motions at Standing Conferences

62) Colleges may submit five motions each. Each member of the Officer Board may submit two motions each.

63) Steering Committee shall facilitate the composing of motions and amendments to policy motions providing that those Constituent Organisations who are proposing like or similar motions or amendments agree mutually to the composing of such motions and amendments that they have submitted.

64) Standing Conference motions shall be timetabled on the basis of a priority ballot of all motions submitted.

65) Agenda at Standing Conferences

- i. Steering Report of previous meeting
- ii. Formal Business
- iii. Report from the coordinating Officer
- iv. Individual reports from the coordinating Working Group
- v. Hustings
- vi. Elections
- vii. Motions
- viii. Any Other Business

66) A member of Steering Committee shall chair Standing Conference.

67) Motions and amendments must be in the hands of Steering Committee by the date decided by the coordinating Working Group. Motions concerning matters arising after this date may be submitted to the Standing Conference and shall be termed "Emergency Motions". The Steering Committee shall advise Standing Conference as to whether or not motions submitted in this way shall be discussed as Emergency Motions. Standing Conference shall decide by a simple majority on such questions.

68) Elections Committee shall have responsibility for the smooth running of the elections at the Standing Conference.

69) Steering Committee shall perform such functions as are laid in the Constitution and Schedules including the preparation of a record of the decisions taken by each session of Standing Conference which shall be presented to the coordinating Officer within one month of the end of the Standing Conference.

70) Subject to the provisions in the Constitution, Standing Conference shall follow the procedure laid down in the Schedules and its Standing Orders.

SCHEDULE D: ELECTIONS

Elections at Congress

- 1) Elections at Congress shall be the responsibility of Elections Committee.
- 2) Nomination papers for any office may be inspected by a Constituent Organisation after they have been lodged with the Returning Officer, on a date decided by National Council. A completed list of candidates stating the names of proposing Constituent Organisations and the office for which the Candidate is nominated shall be circulated to all Congress delegates at least four hours before voting.
- 3) Electors shall mark their ballot papers and the count shall be conducted according to the provisions of the Electoral Act (1992) of the Republic of Ireland.
- 4) In all elections where there are any nominations, ballot papers shall include as an option the statement "Re-open Nominations". For the purpose of counting votes, the "re-open nominations" box shall be treated as a candidate. If the "Reopen nominations" candidate is elected, the Returning Officer shall declare the vacancy unfilled and shall hold an election for the vacant post at the next National Council.
- 5) In the case where only one nomination for a full-time office is received a plebiscite (yes/no) election will be held during the contested elections. A candidate in this situation must receive 50% + 1 of all votes cast.
- 6) Candidates or their representatives shall be entitled to attend the count in respect of the office for which they have been nominated.
- 7) When election results are announced the number of first preferences secured by each candidate shall be announced.
- 8) No person may stand for election to an officer position who has ceased to be a member of the Union.
- 9) a) Candidates for the office of President, Deputy President, Education Officer, Welfare Officer and Equality Officer must be nominated in writing by a Constituent Organisation before the date agreed by National Council which shall be not less than six days before the beginning of Congress.

b) Each candidate for full-time position with the exception of officers of autonomous campaigns and the regions must submit along with their college nominations, details of college and student status and a manifesto of not more than three pages (A4) size typed.

- c) Candidates for full-time positions with the exception of Officers of autonomous campaigns must submit to the Union a refundable deposit of €50 to be submitted with their nomination form.
 - d) All leaflets, handouts and other printed election material issued by the candidate or on their behalf in the furtherance of their campaign must be printed through the Union. Other forms of elections campaign must be authorized by Elections Committee and a cost calculated before they may be produced and used.
 - e)
 - i) Hustings for full-time Officers shall be convened on a regional basis at the discretion of the Area Campaigns Officers and at the request of the Constituent Organisation within that region.
 - ii) Times and dates for these hustings shall be submitted to Elections Committee at the time of close of nominations.
- 10) 10. No person who has already served in any one full-time office for two consecutive terms, or part of two consecutive terms, shall be eligible for election to that office. Full time Officers may serve no more than three years in total. The one-year term of office shall be from the 1st of July to the 7th of July.

Dismissal of Officers Elected at Congress

- 11) In accordance with Article Seven of the Constitution, a motion to dismiss an elected officer may be proposed at a meeting of National Council provided one month's notice has been given to all members of National Council. The motion shall state the grounds for dismissal and the officer concerned shall have the right to speak on the motion before any vote is taken. The exceptions to this are the Area Campaigns Officers.

Elections at National Council

- 12) The Standing Committees shall be elected by proportional representation by National Council on the nomination of the President or Constituent Organisations. National Council may stipulate at its absolute discretion that candidates for election to such committees shall have such qualifications or experience as is deemed necessary. Elections shall be conducted at National Council according to the provisions of the Electoral Act (1992) of the Republic of Ireland except in the case of card votes, when the conduct of elections shall be modified accordingly.

Elections at Regional Conferences

- 13) Area Campaigns Officers shall be elected at Regional Conferences following Annual Congress. Their term of office shall be the same as that of full-time officers.
- 14) The Area Campaigns Officer shall be elected at the Regional Conference in accordance with the following provisions.
 - i. Nominations for the post of the Officer should be made in writing by a CO in accordance with regulations laid down by the Elections Committee.
 - ii. No person may be nominated for election to Area Campaigns Officer unless they are a member of the Union from a Constitution Organisation in the region concerned.
- 15) Any person who has held the post of full-time Area Campaigns Officer on two occasions shall be ineligible to stand for re-election to that post.
- 16) Each CO shall be entitled to a minimum of two delegates plus half of their Congress delegate entitlement.

Dismissal of Officers Elected at Regional Conferences

- 17) Area Campaigns Officers may be similarly dismissed by the Regional Council which elected them following the same procedure including one month's notice to National Council and to the Constituent Organisations in the area. National Council must secure a two third majority of the Constituent Organisations in the region at the respective Regional Council before dismissing an Area Campaigns Officer where at least two thirds of Constituent Organisations in the region are present.

Elections at Standing Conference

- 18) The coordinating officer and the coordinating Working Group shall be elected at Standing Conference.
- 19) The Working Group shall be composed of the coordinating officer and seven other students elected by Standing Conference and up to six others co-opted by the Working Group. The Working Group shall be elected by proportional representation on the nomination of the coordinating officer or Constituent Organisations. Nominations must be received by 6.00 PM on the first day of Standing Conference.
- 20) Elections at Standing Conference shall be the responsibility of Elections Committee.

- 21) Nomination papers for the post of coordinating officer and the coordinating Working Group may be inspected by a Constituent Organisation after they have been lodged with the Returning Officer. A completed list of candidates stating the names of proposing Constituent Organisations shall be circulated to all Conference delegates at least four hours before voting.
- 22) Electors shall mark their ballot papers and the count shall be conducted according to the provisions of the Electoral Act (1992) of the Republic of Ireland.
- 23) In all elections where there is more than one nomination received, ballot papers shall include as an option the statement "re-open nominations" box shall be treated as a candidate. If the "re-open nominations" candidate is elected, the Returning Officer shall declare the vacancy unfilled and shall hold an election for the vacant post at the next Working Group.
- 24) In the case where only one nomination for the post of coordinating officer is received, a plebiscite (yes/no) election will be held during the contested elections. A candidate in this situation must receive 50% + 1 of all votes cast.
- 25) Candidates or their representatives shall be entitled to attend the count in respect of the office for which they have been nominated.
- 26) When election results are announced the number of first preferences received by each candidate shall be announced.

SCHEDULE E: STANDING ORDERS

The business of the Congress shall be conducted in accordance with the following Standing Orders:

- 1) The time of assembly and adjournment shall be fixed by the Steering Committee with the exception of the times of opening and closing of the Congress which will be decided by National Council.

Any delegates with the support of 10% of delegates present may on a point of order call a quorum count. In the event of Congress being inquorate the Chairperson shall adjourn that session until Congress becomes quorate. No formal business shall be conducted after 10.30 p.m. This Standing Order once adopted cannot be changed in the course of Congress

- 2) A member of the Steering Committee, appointed by that Committee shall preside at all sessions of the Congress except for the initial formal business when the chair shall be taken by the President of the Union.
- 3) The Chairperson of the session or any other member of the Steering Committee shall not exercise a vote at any session of the Congress or participate in any substantive debate.
- 4) The Chairperson shall have general responsibility for ensuring that discussion is conducted in an orderly fashion and that speakers are not interrupted except as provided for in these Standing Orders. S/he shall enforce any time limits and other matters recommended by Steering Committee and approved by Congress by simple majority vote.

Conduct of Debate

- 5) a) Every motion, amendment or report shall be proposed by an officer or a Constituent Organisation and shall thereafter be open for discussion.

b) No member shall speak more than once on the same question (unless it is a report) except the mover of the original resolution who shall be allowed the right of reply to the discussion immediately before the vote is taken.
- 6) Voting on resolutions shall take place in the order recommended by Steering Committee and approved by Congress.
- 7) If an amendment is carried, the mover thereof shall become the mover of the amended substantive motion.

- 8) Composing sessions shall comprise of a member of Steering Committee and the proposers of the motions and amendments which it is proposed to composite. Such sessions shall take place at the National Council meeting preceding Congress. No motion shall be composed without the consent of the proposer of the motion(s) which it is proposed to composite. Composing sessions may appoint proposers for the motions it has been agreed to composite and recommend an order of business.

Procedural Motions

- 9) The following procedural motions may be moved:-
- a. A motion that the question be now put;
 - b. A motion that the question be not put;
 - c. A motion that the question be taken in specific parts;
 - d. A motion to refer (or refer back) the matter to a specified later time or meeting or Officer or Committee or National Council;
 - e. A challenge to the Chairperson's ruling;
 - f. A motion of no confidence in the Chairperson;
- 10) Procedural motions shall require a seconder, and cannot be proposed during a point of order or during the act of voting or during a speech.
- 11) The proposer of any procedural motions may speak to it for one minute followed by one speaker against it for one minute. The proposer of the substantive motion shall have priority in speaking against procedural motions except in the case of procedural motions (e) and (f) where the Chairperson shall have priority. The motion shall then be put to a vote without discussion.
- 12) a) When procedural motion's (e) or (f) is proposed the Chairperson shall immediately leave the chair until it is determined.
- b) If procedural motion's (e) is carried the Chairperson shall rule in accordance with the procedural motion.
- c) If procedural motion's (f) is carried, the Chairperson to whom it relates shall not take the Chair for the remainder of the session
- d) The Chairperson may refuse to put any procedural motion if one of similar effect and related to the same subject matter has been defeated within the previous fifteen minutes.
- 13) If procedural motion's (a) is carried, the Chairperson shall allow the proposer the right of reply before proceeding to the vote.
- 14) Only one procedural motion may be proposed at any one time; amendments may not be proposed to procedural motions.

Points of Order and Information

- 15) A point of order shall take precedence over all other business except the act of voting, unless it relates to the conduct of the vote. It may be raised by any member provided s/he raises the points immediately and states that s/he is rising "on a point of order" and specifies the matter to which the point of order relates. A point of order shall relate only to the procedure adopted or to the conduct of the meeting.
- 16) Points of information may be raised by any member who states that s/he is rising on such a point, and such member may be heard if the speaker gives consent. Points of information shall be limited to 15 seconds, such time to be taken from the time allowed to the speaker at the microphone.

Method of Voting

- 17) Voting shall be by show of delegates' cards, each delegate having one vote, except in the case of elections, when it shall be by secret ballot in accordance with the system of proportional representation as laid down in the Electoral Act (1992) of the Republic of Ireland. If a delegate is temporarily absent s/he may deputise his/her vote to a registered observer from the same Constituent Organisation provided that such a person does not thereby exercise more than one vote. The Chairperson, with the approval of Congress, shall appoint tellers.

Procedures for Complaints with Elections

- 18) Complaints on any matter relating to the conduct of any Union election may be made by a Constituent Organisation President or an officer of the Union and shall be addressed to the Elections Committee before the opening of ballot boxes for the election to which the complaint relates. No ballot box shall be opened until all complaints have been resolved. Elections Committee, having fully considered the complaint received, shall recommend a course of action to Congress (in the case of full-time officer or Elections Committee elections) or to National Council (in the case of all other elections) and ask if there are any objections. In the absence of any objections, the Elections Committee's recommendation shall be binding. Objections shall be clearly stated and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to be sustained. In the event of an objection being sustained, the only course of action shall be a new election.
- 19) Complaints relating to the conduct of a count of votes in any Union election may be made by a Constituent Organisation President or an officer of the Union and shall be addressed to the Elections Committee within 14 days of the count to which the complaint relates. The result of the count to which the complaint relates shall not become binding until all complaints have been

resolved. Elections committee, having fully considered the complaint received, shall recommend a course of action to a meeting of National Council to be held within 14 working days of receipt of the complaint, and shall ask if there are any objections. In the absence of any objections, the Electoral Committee's recommendation shall be binding. Objections shall be clearly stated and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in order to be sustained. In the event of an objection being sustained, the only course of action shall be a new election.

- 20) Upon completion of all Union elections, ballot papers shall be sealed in packets and kept in the custody of the Returning Officer for six months. Packets, if not opened, shall be destroyed after this time. Packets will be opened only in the event of a complaint relating to the conduct of the count or in the event of a candidate taking Court action.

Eligibility of Candidates for Elections

- 21) Queries concerning the eligibility of a candidate for any Union election may be made by a Constituent Organisation President or an officer of the Union and shall be addressed to Elections Committee not later than one week prior to the election concerned. Voting in the election concerned shall not commence until all queries are answered. Elections Committee shall investigate any query raised and shall report to the next meeting of National Council and shall recommend a course of action and ask if there are any objections. In the absence of any objections, the Elections Committee recommendation shall be binding. Objections shall be clearly stated and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to be sustained. In the event of an objection being sustained, the only course of action shall be a new election.
- 22) Queries concerning the credentials of any delegate to Congress may be made by a Constituent Organisation President/ Delegation Leader or an officer of the Union and shall be addressed to Elections Committee. Elections Committee shall investigate and make a Report and recommendation to Congress at the earliest opportunity and shall ask that Elections Committee's recommendation shall be binding. Objections shall be clearly stated and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting to be sustained. In the event of an objection being sustained the Elections Committee shall adopt that course of action.

Suspension of Standing Orders

- 23) Business which is not on the agenda can only be introduced by suspension of Standing Orders. Standing Orders, other than this order and Standing Order number one may be suspended upon a motion to that effect being passed by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Such motions shall require

a seconder, shall state the purpose for which it is sought to suspend Standing Orders and the maximum period for which they are to be suspended, and shall be put to a vote without discussion. They may not be proposed while a member is speaking on a point of order or during the act of voting. Only that business for which Standing Orders are suspended may be discussed during the suspension.

24) These Standing Orders shall not be changed during the course of Congress.

Proposed by USI Education Officer