

## **University of Limerick Students' Union**

### **Bye Law 1: Rights of students, Decision-making and Definitions**

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NB. The University of Limerick Students' Union is also known as Student Life and both terms are used throughout the Bye Laws.

#### **1. Purpose of the Union**

The purpose of University of Limerick Students' Union (ULSU) is to:

- a. advance the education of University of Limerick students and of the University of Limerick as a whole
- b. promote and actively pursue the betterment of the interests of University of Limerick students
- c. represent the interest of University of Limerick students and act as a channel of communication in dealing with the University and other bodies
- d. promote, encourage, and facilitate student Clubs and Societies equally

#### **ULSU commits to:**

- a. doing these things without discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or medical condition, except where action is needed to promote equality of opportunity
- b. being independent of any political party or religious organisation

#### **2. Rights of students**

- a. To participate in the activities of the Union.
- b. To avail of the support and services provided by the Union.
- c. To have their interests represented by the Union.
- d. To participate in the decision-making structures of Student Life by:
  - i. Setting Union policy in relation to political, social, welfare or academic issues by voting in referenda
  - ii. Electing students to the positions listed in v. below, according to the rules in Bye Law 8: Elections
  - iii. Informing the work of Student Council by participating in the Students Forum as described in Section 5 below
  - iv. Participating in Student Council meetings according to the rules in Bye Law 2: Student Council

- v. Standing as: Class Representatives; Department Representatives; Faculty Representatives; Interest Group Councillors; Chair or Deputy Chair of Student Council; Full time Student Officers; or Part time Student Representatives

### **3. Decision-making structures of the Union**

The four key elements in Student Life decision-making are:

- i. Referendum
- ii. Students Forum
- iii. Student Council
- iv. Student Executive Committee (Executive)
- v. Board of Directors

All those participating in these decision-making structures are obliged to act in accordance with the Constitution, the Bye Laws, and the University of Limerick code of conduct.

### **4. Dealing with problems**

- a. Anyone who has a problem with Student Life may address the issue by using the Student Life complaints procedure.
- b. If any student is in breach of the University of Limerick code of conduct, the matter will be dealt with by the University and not by Student Life.
- c. If any student is in breach of the Clubs and Societies code of conduct, the matter will be dealt with as outlined in the Clubs and Societies Rulebook and not by Student Life.

### **5. Referendum**

- a. The purpose of a referendum is to decide on Union policy in relation to political, social, welfare or academic issues and any projects impacting on the student experience, provided it is not in conflict with the aims and objectives of the Union or Article 11.5 of the Constitution.
- b. Levies can only be introduced or extended if passed by referendum.
- c. Any decision to affiliate to the Union of Students of Ireland or any other organisation must be passed by referendum. Such affiliations only bind the Students' Union in so far as the provisions of the Constitution or the Bye Laws are not contravened. All affiliations passed by referendum will be reviewed

by Student Council every three years. Student Council may decide to renew the affiliation for another three years or put it forward to referendum. Student Council can only renew an affiliation twice.

- d. A referendum will be called on any political, social, welfare or academic issue if
  - iii. Student Council decides by a two thirds majority to call a referendum or
  - iv. A petition of at least 200 students calls for a referendum
- e. Student Council is responsible for approving the terms of referendums on the recommendation of the Executive.
- f. Referendums are run in accordance with the rules in Bye Law 8: Elections.
- g. The result of a referendum will take priority over any existing Union policy on the same issue. If the referendum involves an amendment to the Bye Laws, the Bye Laws will be updated accordingly once the referendum is passed.

## **6. Students Forum**

- a. The purpose of the Students Forum is to provide opportunities for students to raise issues of concern, have input into the formation of Union policy and to receive information about the running of the Union.
- b. The function of the Students Forum is to:
  - viii. Identify issues of concern to students
  - ix. Discuss policy proposals to be put to Student Council
  - x. Discuss proposed policies from Student Council
  - xi. Receive updates from full-time Student Officers
  - xii. Receive updates from Executive Committee
  - xiii. Receive updates on the Union's Strategic plan
  - xiv. Receive updates on the finances of the Union
- c. A meeting of the Students Forum takes place each semester. It is the responsibility of the Leadership and Representation Office (LRO) to co-ordinate the organisation of the Forum by agreeing dates with Student Council and posting them on the website; and collating information from Student Council, Executive and the Board of Directors to ensure the agenda reflects current activities and issues.
- d. Individual students who want to bring an agenda item to the Student Forum for discussion should email the President requesting the item be put on the agenda, at least five university days before the Forum meeting. The

President will discuss the request with Executive so that information can be prepared for the discussion. If the item cannot be taken at that Forum, the President will inform the student making the request.

- e. The Student's Forum is co-facilitated by a staff member of the LRO and the President or his/her nominee.
- f. An unscheduled Student Forum can be called by first writing to the Student President or other relevant Student Officer, to discuss the need and nature of the request. The President/Student Officer shall bring this to Executive for discussion. If Executive decide an additional Students Forum is necessary, they will organise this with the LRO. If Executive decide an additional Students Forum is not necessary, a Students Forum may be called by way of petition requiring 100 signatures from the student body. This is then brought to the LRO who will organise the Student Forum.

## **7. Student Council**

- a. The purpose of Student Council is to:
  - i. Represent the voice of University of Limerick students
  - ii. Identify issues that are of concern to students and ensure they are raised with the Student Life senior management team or governing body of the University
  - iii. Oversee the work of Executive
- b. The function of Student Council is to:
  - i. Decide the policy of the Union in relation to political, social, welfare and academic issues, subject to any relevant referenda and Article 11.5 of the Constitution.
  - ii. Inform and advise on the development of internal organisational Union policy.
  - iii. Instruct and hold the Executive to account.
  - iv. Monitor and discuss the events and decisions of the University's decision-making bodies and raise the concerns of students with the Executive members on Student Council and Student Life senior management team.
  - v. Attend Student Forum meetings and gather feedback on views of students.
  - vi. Contribute to the development of the strategic plan of the Union and propose any amendments to the plan to the Board of Directors.
  - vii. Review the draft Union budget received from the Board of Directors for discussion and feedback.

- viii. Make recommendations to the Board of Directors in relation to Student Officer pay.
  - ix. Receive reports from the Board of Directors.
  - x. Receive reports from the Executive.
  - xi. Make, repeal, or amend Bye Laws jointly with the Board of Directors, in line with Article 25 of the Constitution.
  - xii. Establish committees of Student Council as necessary, with the Executive Oversight Committee as a standing committee.
- c. More information about Student Council is available in Bye Law 2: Student Council.

## **8. Executive**

- a. The purpose of Executive is to:
- i. Undertake representation and campaigning work
- b. The function of Executive is to:
- viii. Carry out the decisions made by students through referendums, Student Council, Clubs and Societies Council where relevant, and act in accordance with the Bye Laws and any relevant legislation.
  - ix. Act in the absence of Student Council at times outside of the academic year.
  - x. Act as a channel of communication between students, the University management and governing body and any other organisations.
  - xi. Establish working groups, where relevant, and receive any reports from sub committees.
  - xii. Liaise with and provide relevant updates to the Students Forum and any other forum for students.
  - xiii. Initiate policy and present it to Student Council for discussion and final approval by the Board of Directors.
  - xiv. Fulfil the specific responsibilities for each office in the job descriptions outlined in Bye Law 7: Representatives
- c. More information about Executive is available in Bye Law 3: Executive.

## **9. Board of Directors**

- a. The purpose of the Board of Directors is to take responsibility for the governance of the Union in the following areas:
- i. Overall direction of the work of the Union staff

- ii. Financial management
  - iii. Legal and regulatory compliance
  - iv. Accountability
- b. Under the constitution of University of Limerick Student Union Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), the function of the Board of Directors is to:
- i. Act prudently to protect the assets and property of the Union and ensure that the Union finances operate efficiently and effectively, in line with the Union's financial regulations.
  - ii. Approve the Union budget in consultation with the Student Council and to ensure that financial reports are made available to Student Council on request.
  - iii. Ensure that proper books of account are maintained and audited annually.
  - iv. Submit the Union budget, annual report, audited accounts, and any other information annually to the UL Finance Department as it is a prerequisite of the University's Governing Authority before funding will be transferred. The Board of Directors must also ensure full participation in audits carried out by the University's Governing Authority Audit Committee.
  - v. Open bank accounts in the name of the Union and lend, invest or borrow money in line with the Union's finance regulations.
  - vi. Approve the Union's annual report detailing the activities of the Union, the Union finances, including any donations made to external organisations, and any other information required under the Companies Act.
  - vii. To ensure the Union acts as a responsible employer.
  - viii. Monitor the performance of the General Manager.
  - ix. Create the Strategic Planning Framework and monitor and evaluate the progress of the Union Strategic Plan, which agrees the direction and priorities of the work of the Union but does not constrain the priorities of Executive or the Student Officers.
  - x. Review the risks to which Union is subject; take action to mitigate these risks and ensure sound risk management.
- c. More information about the Board of Directors can be found in Bye Law 4: Board of Directors.

## **10. Definitions**

Academic Year – Shall begin on the first day of the Autumn Semester and end on the last day of the Spring Semester as defined by the University Academic Calendar.

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Class – Undergraduate and taught postgraduate classes for each year of every course as defined by the University. In the case of Research Postgraduates, a class shall be defined as their college of research.

Class Representative – A representative who is directly elected by the students in their constituency as outlined in Bye Law 7: Representatives.

Clubs and Societies Council – A body made up of the Clubs and Societies Executive and at least one liaison officer from each club and society.

Clubs and Societies Executive – A body made up of the Student President (or his/her nominee) and others determined by Clubs and Societies Council as outlined in the Clubs and Societies Rulebook.

Constitution – The constitution of University of Limerick Students' Union Company Limited by Guarantee.

Department Representative - An elected representative from each department in each faculty in the University.

Directly Elected – A Union position elected in accordance with the provisions of Bye Law 8: Elections.

Executive – As defined in Section 7 of this Bye Law.

External placement – Placement outside of the University as part of the academic programme, for example Co-operative Education, Study Abroad, Teaching Practice, and other such placement.

Leadership and Representation Office – The delivery of Student Leadership & Representation as a core activity is supported by the Leadership and Representation Office, comprised of 3 full-time staff members.

Non-Voting Member Status – Having the right to attend, speak and be counted as part of the quorum at a meeting, but not having the right to vote.

Notification – Shall be written and signed.

Observer Status – Having the right to attend and observe at a meeting, but not having the right to communicate or vote.

Policy- A course of action or guiding principle intended to determine the union's opinion on a matter.

Participant Status – Having the right to attend and speak at a meeting, but not having the right to vote.

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Proportional Representation – method of voting that allows voters to indicate their first and subsequent preferences for candidates.

Qualified Majority – A majority of two-thirds or more.

Referendum – As defined in Section 4 of this Bye Law.

Senior Management personnel - The General Manager is the head of staff and is supported by the union's senior management team, which includes the Student President. The General Manager's responsibilities include overseeing the work of all department heads and leading on the development and implementation of the strategic plan. The General Manager takes a lead on all HR activities, is responsible for the financial oversight of the organisation, and acts as the key staff liaison with Board of Directors.

Semester – An academic semester as defined by the University academic calendar.

Student Council – As defined in Section 6 of this Bye Law.

Student Forum – As defined in Section 5 of this Bye Law

Teaching Week – Any week in which scheduled teaching takes place during a semester.

Union – The University of Limerick Students' Union.

Union office – Main Reception of the Union premises.

University – University of Limerick, as defined in the Universities Act 1997.

University Day – 9am – 6pm on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday during the semester, excluding University Holidays.