



# **Maynooth University**

## **SOCIAL DEMOCRATS**

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### **Society**

### **Constitution**

**Date Passed:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## **1. Name of Society:**

- 1.1. The name of the Society shall be the “Maynooth University Social Democrats Society” and can be referred to as the “Social Democrats” or abbreviated as the “SocDems”, hereafter referred as “the Society”.
- 1.2. In Irish the society will be called the “Daonlathaigh Shóisialta”.

## **2. Aims and Objectives:**

The aims and objectives of the Society shall be as follows:

- 2.1 To educate the students of Maynooth university on the concepts and ideals of social democracy.
- 2.2 To represent the interests of the Social Democrats party on campus and at youth politics events.
- 2.3 The society has a responsibility to represent the beliefs and concerns of the membership to the national party.
- 2.4 To join in direct actions, such as protests, that align with the beliefs of the society and that help bring around social democracy.

## **3. Membership:**

- 3.1 Full membership of the Society shall be open to all registered students of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY); St.Patrick’s College, Maynooth (SPCM); the Pontifical University and National Seminary of Ireland upon payment of a subscription fee as set by the Governing Executive Committee of the Society and in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Capitation Committee.

**3.2** Full members of the Society shall be:

- i) Entitled to attend and speak at all general meetings of the Society
- ii) Eligible for election to the Society's Governing Executive Committee
- iii) Entitled to propose amendments to this constitution, at any time, with the support of 10% of the membership of the society

**3.3** The Society recognises the importance that staff and graduates of MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY and SPCM can play in the development and long-term success of a Society. It shall therefore endeavour to maintain contact with such former members as wish to retain their connection with the Society.

**3.4** To this end the Governing Executive Committee of the Society shall be empowered to create a class of "Associate Member" of the Society.

**3.5** Associate Membership shall be open to all staff and alumni of MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY and SPCM upon payment of a subscription fee as set by the Governing Executive Committee of the Society and in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Capitation Committee. The associate membership fee shall not be less than the ordinary membership fee and no more than 10 times the ordinary membership fee.

**3.6** Associate Members shall be entitled to attend all general meetings of the Society. Voting rights of associate members at general meetings shall be determined by the Governing Executive Committee and may be altered by a majority vote at a general meeting of the Society.

**3.7** Associate Members shall be ineligible for election to the Society's Governing Executive Committee.

**3.8** Other rights of Associate Members shall be determined by the Governing Executive Committee but may also be granted or revoked by a majority vote at a general meeting of the Society.

**3.9** The rights of an Associate Member shall not exceed those of an ordinary member of the Society.

- 3.10** All members have a right to equality, safety and dignity. Any member who has been found to have breached these rights by engaged in discriminatory or offensive acts can have their membership suspended indefinitely or completely revoked in accordance with section 5 of article 9 of this constitution.
- 3.11** Membership of this society excludes membership of any other group at Maynooth University that is associated with any political party, registered or otherwise, that is present or active on the island of Ireland.
- 3.12** All members shall be bound by this constitution.

#### **4. Governing Executive Committee**

- 4.1** The Society shall have a Governing Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as “the committee”) which shall be elected annually by the membership.
- 4.2** The committee shall run and direct the ongoing activities of the Society on behalf of its members and in accordance with the aims and objectives.
- 4.3** Although decisions should be arrived at by the consensus of the committee (where possible), committee decisions shall be decided by majority voting.
- 4.4** A quorum for committee meetings shall be two thirds of committee members.
- 4.5** The Committee shall consist of :
- i) Chairperson
  - ii) Secretary
  - iii) Treasurer
  - iv) Public Relations Officer
  - v) A number of other Members, e.g. Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Equipment Officer, Ordinary Committee Members, etc.
- 4.6** Assistant positions shall be filled by co-option by the committee as the need arises.
- 4.7** The committee has the ability to create new core committee positions as the need arises which can be filled by co-option but the creation of the position and the member selected must be approved by a majority of the membership entitled to vote on such matters at an EGM.

- 4.8 Sub-committees may be co-opted where the need arises and at the discretion of the committee.
- 4.9 A sub-committee will be formed to investigate complaints and recommend disciplinary acts concerning accusations against committee members.
- 4.10 The Term of Office of these elected officers shall be one year running from 1<sup>st</sup> July until the 30<sup>th</sup> June of the following year.
- 4.11 A person shall not hold the same office for more than 2 successive years.

## **5. Election of the Governing Executive Committee**

- 5.1 The committee members shall be democratically elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or at an Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Society.
- 5.2 Society AGM's and committee elections, where possible, should be held before the end of semester 2 of a given academic year in accordance with Capitation Committee rules.

## **6. Duties of Governing Executive Committee**

- 6.1.1 The Chairperson shall be the chief officer of the Society whose functions include chairing all meetings of the committee and officiating at meetings of the Society.
- 6.1.2 The Chair of any meeting shall have an ordinary vote at committee meetings and meetings of the Society. In the event of a tied vote on any matter they shall have the casting vote.
- 6.3.1 The Secretary's function shall be to deal with all correspondence and records of the Society.
- 6.3.2 The Secretary keep minutes of all committee meetings, of all general meetings, of the Annual General Meeting or any other meetings relating to the business of the Society when requested by the committee.
- 6.3.3 The Secretary may keep a record of authorisation of expenditure.
- 6.3.4 The Secretary shall give notice to all members of the Society's meetings, events and functions.

- 6.3.5 The Secretary shall assist the Public Relations Officer to organise fund raising events and sponsorship where necessary.
- 6.4.1 The Treasurer's function shall be to administer the funds of the Society and to maintain accounts and budgets.
- 6.4.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance of accounts subject to the decisions of the committee in compliance with the regulations set down by the Capitation Committee.
- 6.4.3 The Treasurer shall keep full records of income and expenditure of the Society. The Treasurer shall also keep a record of who authorised various expenditures and shall issue receipts.
- 6.4.4 The Treasurer shall sign all cheques and withdrawals forms from the Society's bank account.
- 6.4.5 Where the Treasurer is decreed as unavailable, another designated person may sign cheques and withdrawal forms for the Society on consultation with the Capitation Committee
- 6.5.1 The Equipment Officer shall be responsible for the fixed and current assets of the Society in compliance with the regulations set down by the Capitation Committee.
- 6.5.2 The Equipment Officer shall maintain a record of all fixed and current assets belonging to the Society and will report an inventory list to the committee at the start and end of the academic year.
- 6.6.1 The Public Relations Officer (along with the Secretary) shall be responsible for the advertising of all functions of the Society through all means possible.
- 6.6.2 The Public Relations Officer (along with the Secretary) shall deal with external correspondence and maintain records of the contribution outside bodies have had for the Society and to give notice to all members of these contributions.
- 6.6.3 The Public Relations officer will also act as the event's organiser and the responsibilities of the equipment officer shall fall to them.
- 6.7 The committee is required to meet at least once every calendar month of the academic year.
- 6.8 The committee must make at least one of its members available to meet with the ordinary members at least once every calendar month of the academic year in a public place to answer questions and to inform members of actions within the society's governing executive.

## **7. Dismissal and Resignation of Committee Members**

- 7.1 No member of the committee shall be dismissed from office unless:
  - i) Written notice of a resolution to seek such a dismissal, signed by 10% of the members of the Society is received 4 working days prior to a general meeting at which such a resolution shall be debated.

- ii) Two thirds of the Governing Executive Committee may also call a meeting to debate the dismissal of another committee member.

**7.2** A resolution to dismiss a committee member shall be passed by a simple majority voting at the relevant and quorate meeting.

**7.3** A committee member wishing to resign must submit a letter in writing declaring that intention to resign to the Secretary, who will immediately inform the committee as a whole. The responsibilities of that person shall be delegated to other committee members(s) until a by-election can be held to re-elect a new person to the position.

## **8. Meetings**

**8.1** There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) held each year.

**8.2** The AGM shall be held no later than in the final month of the Academic year where the main committee members will be elected (where possible).

**8.3** Elections for the offices of the Governing Executive Committee shall take place at this meeting.

**8.4** A quorum of the meeting shall be 3 Governing Executive Committee members and 10% of the ordinary membership

**8.5** The business of the AGM shall include elections of relevant Executive Governing Committee as well as annual reports from the outgoing Governing Executive Committee (which should include a Treasurer's report on the finances of the Society).

**8.6** An Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be convened if:

- i) 10% of the ordinary membership of the Society request such a meeting in writing.
- ii) A quorum of the Governing Executive Committee requests such a meeting in writing.
- iii) A vacancy on the current committee occurs and there is a need to elect a replacement.

**8.7** Elections for the offices of the Governing Executive Committee shall take place at the AGM or EGM (where relevant). Excluding extraordinary circumstances that prevent the membership from assembling in person.

**8.8** Notice of all meetings shall be given to the membership at least 5 working days prior to the date of the meeting.

**8.9** At a meeting, a member may propose a resolution relating to the business of the Society. The resolution shall be voted on by a show of hands and a declaration of the President that the resolution is carried (unless a secret ballot is demanded by any 5 members) shall be conclusive evidence that the resolution has passed or failed.

- 8.10** In the event that the President's resolution (8.9) is challenged, a recount of the votes will be administered in which a number of appropriate people will be appointed by the committee as "tellers" to count the votes. The result will be announced by the President or the Vice-President (where requested by the general meeting).
- 8.11** No resolution may contravene Maynooth University policy or Capitation Committee policy.

## **9. General**

- 9.1** There shall be a Honorary President of the Society who shall be a staff member in compliance with the regulations set down by the Capitation Committee.
- 9.2** The membership fee for the Society shall be in compliance with the conditions set down by the Capitation Committee
- 9.3** Each member of the Society shall be entitled to receive a copy of this Constitution, on demand, free of charge.
- 9.4** In the event of a clash with the Capitation Committee rule and regulations, the Capitation Committee rules and regulations shall take precedence above this constitution and is subject to Capitation Committee Policy at all times.
- 9.5** In joining the Society, members agree to be bound by the rules and regulations of the Society as laid down in this constitution and by the Governing Executive Committee. Members violating these rules and regulations shall be answerable to the committee and may have their membership revoked and no monies refunded, for persistent breaches or extremely serious breaches, as deemed by a majority of the committee. In the event that the committee cannot resolve a dispute with a member(s), the Capitation Committee shall rule on the matter and it's decision shall be final.
- 9.6** The society may pass resolutions that reflect the beliefs and positions of the membership
- 9.6.1** a petition backed by 10% of the membership containing the conditions of the resolution must be presented, 4 days before a meeting where the resolution will be discussed, to the secretary
- 9.6.2** the resolution will be accepted or rejected by a vote of the committee needing a 2/3 majority to pass
- 9.6.3** no resolution will be accepted if it goes against the policy of the national party or the policy of Maynooth university



## **10. Amendments to this Constitution**

- 10.1** Notice of a proposal to seek an amendment to this Constitution shall be given to the members at least 4 working days prior to the meeting at which such a proposal shall be considered
- 10.2** The ordinary membership of the society shall be able to propose an amendment to this constitution with a petition backed by 10% of the ordinary membership
- 10.3** A proposal to amend this Constitution must receive the approval of 2/3s of the members present and entitled to vote at the relevant meeting.