



# **Constitution of the Maynooth University Literary & Debating Society**

**Passed on the 25 April 2022 of the  
227<sup>th</sup> Session of the Society**

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

1. The name of the Society shall be the “Maynooth University Literary & Debating Society”, hereafter referred to as the “Society”.

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

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

1. To encourage all students, staff and graduates of Maynooth University to become members of the Society (“Members”) and engage with the arts of literary and debating.
2. To maintain a welcoming and progressive society that respects all, and to foster a positive and accepting atmosphere within the Society.
3. To develop and maintain strong links with the community, in both the local and wider sense, through collaborations with community groups, secondary schools, third-level institutions, literary artists and other such relevant parties.
4. To promote the training and development of Members who wish to improve their expertise and talent in the fields of literary and debating.

## **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 Clubs and Societies Committee. As indicated - [Committee Resources - MU Life Clubs & Societies](#)
- 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
- 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 who 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 in consultation with the MU Clubs and Societies 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 and speak at all general meetings of the Society. Eligibility of Alumni to compete on behalf of Maynooth University/SPCM will be determined by the relevant National Governing Body.
- 3.7** Associate Members shall not have voting rights and are ineligible for election to the Society's Governing Executive Committee.
- 3.8** All other rights of Associate Members shall be determined by Maynooth University Clubs and Societies Committee.
- 3.9** The rights of an Associate Member shall not exceed those of an ordinary member of the Society.
- 3.10** All members shall be bound by this constitution and guidance documents (resources on MU Life) and decisions of MU C&S Committee

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

- 4.1** The Society shall have a Governing Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as the "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) Auditor
  - ii) Secretary/Vice-Auditor

- iii) Literary Convenor
- iv) Internal Debates Convenor
- v) External Debates Convenor
- vi) Treasurer
- vii) Public Relations Officer
- viii) 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** Sub-committees may be co-opted where the need arises and at the discretion of the committee.

**4.8** 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.

**4.9** 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 Clubs and Societies Committee rules.

**5.3** To seek election to the committee, each candidate must have 2 nominations by current members of the Society.

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

**6.1.1** The Auditor 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.

**6.2.1** The Vice-Auditor shall assist the Chairperson in all their duties.

- 6.2.2** The Vice-Auditor shall assume the duties of the Chairperson (unless otherwise directed by a general meeting of the Society) in the event that the Chairperson is absent or is unable to perform their duties.
- 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 Clubs and Societies 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 Clubs and Societies Committee.
- 6.4.6** The External Debates Convenor shall be responsible for organising the Society's participation in intervarsity debating competitions and shall carry out this role in consultation with the Committee. They shall endeavour to ensure that the Society attends as many competitions as is practically possible, given the funds of the Society and the interest of Members in relation to attending such events.
- 6.4.7** The Internal Debates Convenor shall be responsible for organising the Society's internal House debates. They shall decide upon a motion to be submitted to the Committee for approval and shall source speakers (and judges, if required) for the debate. Such debates are to be a weekly event unless otherwise decided by the Internal Debates Convenor in consultation with the Committee.
- 6.4.8** The Literary Convenor shall be responsible for organising participation in literary events, in consultation with the Committee.
- 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.

## **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 any annual reports or handover documents 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).
- 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 Auditor 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 Auditor'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 Auditor or the Vice-Auditor (where requested by the general meeting).
- 8.11** No resolution may contravene Maynooth University policy or Clubs and Societies Committee policy.

## **9. General**

- 9.1** There shall be an Honorary President of the Society who shall be a staff member in compliance with the regulations set down by the Clubs and Societies Committee. The Honorary President's term of office shall be for one academic year. Honorary Presidents shall be entitled to attend and speak at all general meetings of the Society. Honorary President shall not have voting rights and are ineligible for election to the Society's Governing Executive Committee. The rights of an Honorary President shall not exceed those of an ordinary member of the Society.
- 9.2** The membership fee for the Society shall be in compliance with the conditions set down by the Clubs and Societies 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 Clubs and Societies Committee rule and regulations, the Clubs and Societies Committee rules and regulations shall take precedence above this constitution and is subject to Clubs and Societies 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 Clubs and Societies Committee shall rule on the matter and it's decision shall be final.

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



- 10.1** All amendments to this constitution need to be approved by the Clubs and Societies Committee in advance of notifying members. 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** 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.