

**The Constitution of Maynooth  
University Literary & Debating  
Society**



**Adopted on 13/10/20 of the 226th  
Session**

# Contents

<b>Definitions and Descriptions</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Article I - The Society</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Article II - Membership</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Article III - The Committee</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Article IV - The Executive Committee</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Article V - Elections of the Committee</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Article VI - Duties of the Committee</b>	<b>9</b>
The Auditor	9
The Secretary/Vice-Auditor	9
The Treasurer	10
The External Debates Convenor	10
The Internal Debates Convenor	11
The Open Convenor	11
The Literary Collective Convenor	11
The Literary Events Convenor	12
The PRO	12
The Maidens Convenor	12
The Schools Convenor	13
The First Year Representative	13
<b>Article VII - Dismissal and Resignation of Committee Members</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Article VIII - Meetings of the Society</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Article IX - Amendments</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Article X - General Provisions</b>	<b>15</b>

## Definitions and Descriptions

**“Annual General Meeting”** This is a general meeting in which the members of the committee are elected and other official business may occur. (Hereafter referred to as the “AGM”).

**“Associate Member”** This is a member that is not part of the student or staff bodies of Maynooth University. Usually this includes Alumni and past graduates.

**“Auditor”** The Auditor is the leader of the Society. They observe, advise, maintain and instruct on all business of the Society. This includes overseeing, managing and motivating the Committee, the Executive Committee and the Committee members.

**“Autumn General Meeting”** This is a meeting which usually occurs to elect new members to roles that were left vacant after the AGM. Naturally this includes class representatives.

**“C&S Committee”** This refers to the Maynooth University Clubs and Societies Committee.

**“Chair”** This means the conducting, organising and officiating of meetings.

**“Committee”** This means all the elected Members of the Society who perform roles as set out in this Constitution. Collectively they are the Committee and perform specific functions in this capacity.

**“Constitution”** Refers to this document.

**“External Debates Convenor”** This role relates to the organising, attendance and participation of Members at debating events that occur outside the Society. Namely this includes Intervarsities or Opens organised by societies of other institutions.

**“Executive Committee”** A select group of roles who perform additional responsibilities in addition to those which occur in their role and their position on the Committee. Usually in matters of serious concern or importance for the Society.

**“Extraordinary General Meeting”** This is a general meeting which does not occur regularly and may occur as set out in this Constitution (hereafter referred to as an “EGM”).

**“First Year Representative”** A class representative who deals with matters relating to First Years of the Society.

**“General Meeting”** An official meeting attended by all members of the Society who wish to attend. Distinct types of general meetings may occur as specified in this Constitution.

**“Honorary Life Member”** An individual who has been bestowed membership for life (hereafter referred to as an “HLM”).

**“Internal Competitions Convenor”** A role which organises internal debating competitions within the Society. This may include competitions such as Maidens, Mace or any other event.

**“Internal Debates Convenor”** A role that organises the Society’s House debates and a flagship internal event the Liferaft Debate. The Liferaft debate pits different University Departments against each other to debate why they (as a geographer, chemist etc) should have the singular seat on this hypothetical liferaft, the proceeds go to charity.

**“Literary Collective Convenor”** A role which organises a group of performers to attend internal and external literary events. Usually of a competitive nature.

**“Literary Events Convenor”** A role which organises events such as Poetry Slams and Open Mics.

**“Maidens Convenor”** A role which only organises the Society’s internal Maidens Novice Debating Competition.

**“Members”** Any individual who has attained membership of the Society through the provisions set out in this Constitution.

**“Open Convenor”** A role which organises the Society’s flagship event, “The Maynooth Open”. An Open where societies of other institutions or individuals may attend.

**“Public Relations Officer”** Two roles (Design Officer and Online Communications Officer) which design the Society’s promotional material and manage the Society’s social media presence (hereafter referred to as the “PRO”).

**“Schools Convenor”** A role which organises the Society’s “Aoife Begley Memorial” secondary school debating competition.

**“Secretary”** The Secretary has numerous responsibilities namely those relating to, assisting other roles in the (administrative) organisation of events, monitoring and maintaining (official) correspondence of the Society and matters relating to observance, implementation and compliance of the provisions of this Constitution.

**“Society”** Reference to Maynooth University Literary & Debating Society.

**“Treasurer”** The Treasurer is responsible for the financial matters of the Society.

**“Vice-Auditor”** The Vice-Auditor maintains prudent observance of the matters to which the Auditor is engaged should they have to step in for the Auditor or assume a delegated

responsibility. They advise the Auditor on matters pertaining to the Auditor's duties and business of the Society.

## **Article I - The Society**

- 1.1. The full name of the Society shall be Maynooth University Literary & Debating Society.
- 1.2. The shortened name of the Society shall be MU Lit & Deb.
- 1.3. The aims and objectives of the Society shall be as follows:
  - 1.3.1. 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.
  - 1.3.2. To maintain a welcoming and progressive society that respects all, and to foster a positive and accepting atmosphere within the Society.
  - 1.3.3. 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.
  - 1.3.4. To promote the training and development of Members who wish to improve their expertise and talent in the fields of literary and debating.

## **Article II - Membership**

- 2.1. Membership of the Society shall be open to all students, staff and graduates of Maynooth University and be obtained by paying the appropriate fee.
- 2.2. The membership fee for the Society shall be in compliance with the conditions set down by the C&S Committee.
- 2.3. Members of the Society shall be entitled to attend the General Meetings of the Society and the Society’s events.
- 2.4. The Society recognises the importance that graduates, and former students of Maynooth University and its predecessor institutions can play in its development. It shall endeavour to maintain contact with such former members as wish to retain their connection with the Society.

- 2.5. The Executive Committee of the Society shall be empowered to create a class of Associate Member of the Society. Associate Members may include graduates and other non-students of Maynooth University and shall pay an annual membership fee to the Society. The amount of this fee shall be determined by the Executive Committee but may be altered by a majority vote of a general meeting of the Society. The associate membership fee shall not be less than the ordinary membership fee and shall be no more than 10 times the ordinary membership fee. Associate Members shall not be eligible for election to the Society's Executive Committee. Associate Members shall be entitled to attend all general meetings of the Society. Voting rights and other rights of Associate Members at general meetings shall be determined by the Executive Committee, subject to alteration by a majority vote of a general meeting of the Society. The rights of an Associate Member shall not exceed those of an ordinary member of the Society.
- 2.6. A class of Honorary Life Members exists within the Society. The Executive Committee of the Society shall be empowered to award an HLM at the final General Meeting of the academic year. Honorary Members may include graduates and other nonstudents of Maynooth University and shall be exempt from membership fee to the Society. The HLM is awarded for continued and outstanding contribution to The Society. Save for instances of exceptional circumstances (i.e. extraordinary internal contribution from a Member or notable contribution from an external individual), an HLM will only be awarded to members active in the Society for at least two years. It is recommended that the Committee award a maximum of two HLMs per annual session.
- 2.7. All membership is voidable on grounds of misconduct. Misconduct can include harassment of Members, propagation/use of hate speech or miscellaneous activity that can rationally be interpreted as a breach of this Constitution. Claims of misconduct must be submitted to the Executive Committee who must accurately and fairly document the situation. In cases of repeat or gross misconduct, the alleged offender will be made aware of the claim against them and have a hearing scheduled. The Executive Committee may determine, in extreme cases, that the conduct of the member warrants the temporary halting of their membership until a hearing occurs. The accused will be given a chance, either in person or through writing, to defend

against the claims. Following the hearing, which must occur in reasonable time, the Executive Committee shall vote on a motion to void the membership and ban the individual. The Secretary will then conduct the vote by paper. The vote shall be anonymous and require a majority of the Executive Committee in order to succeed.

- 2.8. Should an incident of misconduct occur within Article 2.7 but relate to a member of the Executive Committee then the Committee will act in place of the Executive Committee in accordance with Article 2.7.
  - 2.8.1. Should a vote of the Committee occur, it shall require a 2/3rds majority in order to succeed.
  - 2.8.2. Should the incident further concern the Secretary, then the Auditor shall act in accordance with Article 2.8 in place of the Secretary.
- 2.9. All Members shall be bound by this Constitution.

## **Article III - The Committee**

- 3.1. The Committee shall run the Society on behalf of the Members and in accordance with Article I.
- 3.2. All powers, functions and responsibilities other than those specifically falling to the Executive Committee or individual roles as defined in this Constitution, shall be vested in the Committee.
- 3.3. Although decisions should be arrived at by the consensus of the Committee where possible, Committee decisions shall be decided by majority vote. Except where otherwise specified by this Constitution.
- 3.4. A quorum shall be five members of the Committee.
- 3.5. In the extraordinarily unlikely event that the Auditor has either resigned or is unable to perform their duties (whether temporarily or otherwise) and the Vice-Auditor has also either resigned or is unable to perform their duties (whether temporarily or otherwise), then the Committee shall be empowered to appoint an interim Auditor, who shall assume the duties of the Auditor to give effect to the provisions of this Constitution, until such time that an election can be arranged or the Auditor can return to perform their duties.



- 3.5.1. Should the Vice-Auditor return after the appointment of an interim Auditor then the Committee must decide whether the interim Auditor shall continue in accordance with Article 3.5 or whether the Vice-Auditor shall now perform their duties in accordance with Article 6.5.
- 3.6. The term of office of Members of the Committee shall be one session. A session begins on the 1st of July and ends on the 30th of June.
- 3.7. A person shall not hold the same office for more than three successive sessions.

## **Article IV - The Executive Committee**

- 4.1. The Society shall have an Executive Committee, which will itself be a subset of the Committee.
- 4.2. The Executive Committee shall consist of: The Auditor, The Secretary/ Vice-Auditor, The Treasurer, The Literary Events Convenor, The External Debates Convenor and The Internal Debates Convenor. These roles occupy these positions in addition to their place on the Committee. All other positions occupy a place solely on the Committee.
- 4.3. All roles that derive their existence directly from the provisions of Article 6 of this Constitution, are afforded Constitutional protection and cannot be abolished or modified.
- 4.4. The Executive Committee shall have the power to determine other Committee positions as required; these positions are not afforded constitutional protection (non-protected role) and are designed to adapt to the constantly changing needs of the Society.
- 4.5. The Executive Committee retains the power to alter or abolish a non-protected role only if it is vacant or if it gains the consent of the Member currently occupying the role.
  - 4.5.1. To abolish a non-protected role where the consent of the Member is absent, the remaining Committee must vote in favour of abolishing the role by a 2/3rds majority. The Member to whom this vote is occurring may vote in the matter.

## **Article V - Elections of the Committee**

- 5.1. Members of the Committee shall be democratically elected at the AGM and, where a vacancy occurs or where a position is unfilled, at the Autumn General Meeting or at an EGM.
- 5.2. To seek election to the Committee, a candidate must have two nominations by current members of the Society.

## **Article VI - Duties of the Committee**

### **The Auditor**

- 6.1. The Auditor shall be the chief officer of the Society whose functions include acting as the Chair of all meetings of the Committee, the Executive Committee and officiating at meetings of the Society.
- 6.2. The Chair shall have an ordinary vote at Committee meetings and meetings of the Society.
- 6.3. In the event of a tied vote in any matter of the Executive Committee, the Committee and general meetings of the Society, the Auditor shall have the casting vote.

### **The Secretary/Vice-Auditor**

- 6.4. The individual elected to this role performs the functions of both the Secretary and Vice-Auditor.
- 6.5. The Vice-Auditor shall assist the Auditor in all of their duties.
- 6.6. The Vice-Auditor shall assume the duties of the Auditor, unless otherwise directed by a general meeting of the Society, in the event that the Auditor is temporarily absent or is temporarily unable to perform their duties.

- 6.7. The Secretary's function shall be to deal with all correspondence and records of the Society, as well as to organise all meetings in accordance with the decisions of the Committee and with this Constitution.
- 6.8. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all Society meetings, including Committee meetings, general meetings, and any other meetings relating to the business of the Society when requested by the Committee.
- 6.9. The Secretary may keep a record of authorisation of expenditure.
- 6.10. The Secretary shall give notice of the Society's meetings, events and functions to all members.
- 6.11. The Secretary shall be responsible for the keeping and administration of all records of the Society, other than those falling under the responsibility of the Treasurer.

### **The Treasurer**

- 6.12. The Treasurer's function shall be to administer the funds of the Society and to maintain accounts and budgets.
- 6.13. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance of accounts subject to the decisions of the Committee and in compliance with the regulations set down by the C&S Committee.
- 6.14. The Treasurer shall keep full records of income and expenditure of the Society. The Treasurer shall also keep a record of who authorised expenditures and shall issue receipts.
- 6.15. The Treasurer shall sign all cheques and all withdrawals from the Society's bank account.
- 6.16. Where the Treasurer is decreed as unavailable, another designated person may sign cheques and for withdrawals for the Society in consultation with the C&S Committee.

### **The External Debates Convenor**

- 6.17. 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.

- 6.18. 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.

### **The Internal Debates Convenor**

- 6.19. The Internal Debates Convenor shall be responsible for organising the Society's internal House debates and flagship internal event, The Liferaft Debate.
- 6.20. 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.

### **The Open Convenor**

- 6.21. The Open Convenor shall be primarily responsible for organising and convening the Society's flagship Maynooth Open Debating Competition, in consultation with the Committee.
- 6.21.1. The Executive Committee may determine that the Open Convenor for the session can either be (a) an individual to be elected to the role or (b) individuals appointed by the Executive Committee from existing members of the Committee, if this occurs the existing members do not gain additional voting rights.
- 6.21.2. Should the Executive Committee make a decision pursuant to 6.21.1(a), the Open Convenor shall gain ordinary voting rights at Committee meetings.

### **The Literary Collective Convenor**

- 6.22. The Literary Collective Convenor shall focus on improving Members skills in the art of literary. This shall culminate in a performance team who shall attend both internal and external literary events in both a competitive and non-competitive setting. This shall also include appropriate training sessions. They shall perform this role in consultation with the Committee.

## **The Literary Events Convenor**

- 6.23. The Literary Events Convenor shall be tasked with running the Society's flagship literary event, the Slam Poetry event. They shall also organise literary focused Open Mics in addition to this event, in consultation with the Committee. They may also organise further literary events, in consultation with the Committee.

## **The PRO**

- 6.24. There shall be two distinct types of PROs within the Society. This shall include a Designs Officer and Online Communications Officer.
- 6.25. The Online Communications Officer shall be tasked with growing and maintaining the Society's online and social media presence.
- 6.26. The Designs Officer shall be tasked with creating new promotional material for the Society and the events or functions it decides to organise.
- 6.27. The PROs (along with the Secretary) shall be responsible for the advertising of all functions of the Society through all means possible. The PROs shall perform their roles in consultation with the Committee.

## **The Maidens Convenor**

- 6.28. The Maidens Convenor shall be responsible for organising the Society's internal Maidens Novice Debating Competition, in consultation with the Committee.
- 6.28.1. The Executive Committee may determine, in consultation with the Maidens Convenor (if the position is occupied) and the Committee, to elevate the Maidens Convenor to the role of Internal Competitions Convenor.
- 6.28.2. The Internal Competitions Convenor shall be responsible for running all the Society's internal debating competitions, bar those falling under the responsibility of the Internal Debates Convenor. This can include Maidens and other competitions such as Mace. They shall perform this role in consultation with the Committee.

## **The Schools Convenor**

- 6.29. The Schools Convenor shall be responsible for organising the Society's secondary school debating competition (the Aoife Begley Memorial Debate Competition) and any other secondary school debating events in which the Society is involved, in consultation with the Committee.

## **The First Year Representative**

- 6.30. The First Year Representative shall be responsible for broadcasting the Society's events to first years and encouraging first years to become a Member of the Society. They shall perform this role in consultation with the Committee.

## **Article VII - Dismissal and Resignation of Committee Members**

- 7.1. Written notice of any resolution to seek the dismissal from office of a Member of Committee must be signed by 10% of the membership of the Society or two thirds of the Committee and submitted to the Secretary. Upon receipt of such notice, the Secretary shall notify the member of the Committee concerned as soon as possible and shall notify the membership of the Society at least four working days prior to a general meeting at which such a resolution shall be debated.
- 7.1.1. Should the resolution in Article 7.1 refer to the Secretary, then the Auditor will act in accordance with Article 7.1 in place of the Secretary.
- 7.2. A member of the Committee may be dismissed from office only when a resolution has been put before the membership of the Society pursuant to Article 7.1 and approved by a simple majority of the general meeting concerned.
- 7.3. A Committee member wishing to resign must submit a letter in writing declaring that intention to resign to the Secretary, who shall immediately inform the Committee as a whole.

- 7.3.1. Should the Secretary wish to resign they shall inform the Auditor who shall act in accordance with Article 7.3 in place of the Secretary.
- 7.3.2. The responsibilities of a Committee member who resigns shall be shared among the other Committee members until a by-election can be held to elect a new person to the position.
- 7.4. Any Member of the Committee that is absent from more than three consecutive meetings of the Committee without valid reason (as determined by the Executive Committee by majority vote) shall be deemed to have resigned their post with immediate effect.
- 7.5. Article 7.4 does not apply to members of the Executive Committee, instead this Article shall prevail. Any Member of the Executive Committee that is absent from more than three consecutive meetings of the Committee without valid reason (as determined by the unanimous vote of the other Executive members) shall be deemed to have resigned their post with immediate effect.

## **Article VIII - Meetings of the Society**

- 8.1. There shall be an AGM held each session, at which elections for Members of the Committee for the next session will take place.
  - 8.1.1. All other elections apply to the current session only.
- 8.2. There shall also be an Autumn General Meeting held in October of each session at which class representatives for the Society shall be elected.
- 8.3. The AGM shall be held no later than in the final month of the Academic year.
- 8.4. A quorum of a general meeting shall be three Committee members and 10% of the Members.
- 8.5. The business of the AGM shall include elections of Committee members for the next academic year as well as annual reports from the outgoing Committee, which shall include a Treasurer's report on the finances of the Society.
- 8.6. An EGM shall be convened if: 10% of the Members of the Society request such a meeting in writing, or; two thirds of the members of the Committee requests such a meeting in writing, or; a vacancy on the current Committee occurs.

- 8.7. Notice of all general meetings shall be given to the membership at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 8.8. Any member may propose a resolution relating to the business of the Society at a general meeting, except where such resolution proposes to alter this Constitution; the resolution shall be voted on by a show of hands. A declaration by the Auditor that the resolution has been carried or has failed, unless a secret ballot is demanded by any five Members, shall be conclusive evidence that the resolution has passed or failed.
- 8.9. In the event that a declaration of the Auditor under Article 8.8 is challenged, a recount of the votes will be administered in which a number of appropriate people shall be appointed by the Committee as tellers to count the votes. The result will be announced by the Auditor or, where requested by a majority of attendees at the general meeting, the Vice-Auditor.
- 8.10. No resolution may contravene policy of Maynooth University or that of the C&S Committee.

## **Article IX - Amendments**

- 9.1. Notice of a proposal to seek an amendment to this Constitution shall be given to the membership at least five working days prior to the meeting at which such a proposal shall be considered.
- 9.2. A proposal to amend this Constitution must receive the approval of two thirds of the members present and entitled to vote.

## **Article X - General Provisions**

- 10.1. There shall be an Honorary President of the Society who shall be a staff member, in compliance with the regulations set down by the C&S Committee.
- 10.2. Each member of the Society shall be entitled to free access to this Constitution, whether by digital or physical means.



- 10.3. In the event of a clash with Maynooth University or C&S Committee rules and regulations, those rules and regulations shall take precedence over this Constitution.
- 10.4. The Society shall remain apolitical on all issues.