



Equality Working Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Equality Working Group (hereinafter 'the Group') is established in accordance with the University College Cork Students' Union Constitution. The purpose of the Group is to act as a forum for the discussion of issues faced by any student minority group. This may include, but is not limited to, students with a disability, LGBTQ+ students, students of Faith Groups, Student Cares, Student Parents, racial and ethnic minority students and HEAR Scheme recipients.

Membership

The membership of the Group shall comprise two elected Students' Union Executive (hereinafter 'the Executive') members and five elected Rights Representatives:

- Equality and Diversity Representative (Chair, *ex-officio*)
- Communication and Engagement Officer (Secretary, *ex-officio*)
- LGBTQ+ Rights Representative
- Gender Equality Rights Representative
- Racial and Ethnic Diversity Rights Representative
- Mental Health (SÁMH) Rights Representative
- Disability Rights Representative

The Chair and Secretary of the Group shall be members of the Executive, elected in accordance with the UCCSU Constitution. The Rights Representatives shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Group. Where a position is not filled at the AGM, an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be held in the first term of the Academic Year.

Standing Orders and procedures must be prepared and approved by the Chair, the Secretary, and the President a minimum of two weeks before the running of a General Meeting. The Chair is required to give two weeks' notice to the Student Body of a General Meeting.

Members are required to attend all meetings of the Group. In the event a member does not attend 3 consecutive meetings without giving apologies to the Chair or Secretary and/or

providing satisfactory reasons acceptable to the Group, the member shall be considered to have resigned.

Responsibilities

The Group shall have the responsibility for:

- Working to promote and defend the right of all students to study and participate in student life without discrimination
- Driving the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda in the Union and the University by ensuring that EDI is a key consideration in all plans developed
- Playing an advocacy role for the Rights Representatives respective representative minority groups, in addition to advocacy for other minority groups
- Carrying out an advisory role to the Executive on its activities and policy direction
- Building a good working relationship with the EDI Unit within the University as so far as practicable without infringing on the independence of the Union

To achieve the above listed responsibilities, the Group may run campaigns, write policy for approval by the Executive or Student Representative Council (hereinafter 'the Council'), and lobby relevant groups.

All members of the Group are required to:

- Uphold principles of honesty, accountability, intersectionality and open-mindedness
- Cooperate fully and completely with the Executive and the Council
- Value the dignity and uniqueness of individual students.
- Encourage fellow members to work at the highest standards, applying acceptable professional practices
- Provide successors with adequate information and guidance required to ensure a smooth transition of responsibility
- Not knowingly communicate any misleading or false information
- Not abuse their authority by using their position in the Group to intentionally acquire personal privileges, gains or benefits

Meetings

The Group shall meet at minimum once a month within each academic term, and at minimum 2 times out of academic term (i.e. during the Summer Holidays).

The quorum for a Group Meeting shall be a qualified majority (50%) of all Group voting members.

The Chair is required to send out a request for agenda items to all members in advance of a meeting. Once agenda items have been received, the Chair shall send out the complete agenda to all members in advance of a meeting.

The Secretary shall aid the Chair in organising the Group Meetings and writing the minutes of meetings. Following a meeting of the Group, the Secretary shall circulate the minutes of the meeting to all members ahead of the next meeting of the Group.

All members of the Group are required to give a brief report on their work since the previous meeting. These reports must be forwarded on to the Chair in advance of a meeting in order to allow the Chair to distribute the reports to the other members.

All decisions made by the Group shall be made by a simple majority vote of all the Group members present and voting. In the case of a tied vote, the Chair may refer the matter to the Executive or the Council to be voted on.

All Executive members are entitled to attend meetings of the Group in a non-voting capacity. They shall give prior notice to the chair where they intend to attend. The Chair may, with the consent of the Group, invite no more than three individuals to attend the Group Meetings as non-voting special advisors to the Group on a once-off basis to aid the Group in the performance of its functions.

Any member of the Group is entitled to call an emergency meeting of the Group. They must give the Chair 4 days' notice so that they may notify the other members of the group.

Conflicts of Interest

Members shall take responsibility to declare any potential conflict of interest in relation to any items of the agenda for Group meetings.

Where a perceived conflict of interest arises, a member shall bring this to the attention of the Group.

Reporting

The Chair of the Group is required to submit a report to the Executive at least once a semester at a meeting of the Executive.

Period of Office

The period of office for the members of the Group shall be from the time they are elected until the next election.

Resignations and Removals

Where a Rights Representative resigns from their position during Semester 1, the Group may fill the position by co-option until an EGM can be held. Where a resignation takes place in Semester 2, the Group may fill the position by co-option until the AGM is held.

In the case of an infringement of their individual responsibilities, a Rights Representative may, in consultation with the President, receive a verbal warning from the Chair, a written warning from the Chair, or in serious breaches of the fundamental principles of this terms of reference and the

UCCSU Constitution, the Chair may unilaterally trigger a vote of no confidence against the individual and a two thirds majority of the Group may remove the individual from their position. Should the Group decide against removing the individual in these circumstances, the matter shall not progress further.

The Council may, with three quarters majority of a quorate Council, trigger a vote of no confidence in a Rights Representative. If a vote of no confidence is triggered in this instance, the Group shall convene within 5 working days and may, with two thirds majority of the Group, remove the Rights Representative from their position. If the Group determines not to remove the Rights Representative, an EGM shall be called at which a motion shall be put to the body responsible for electing that individual to the Group on whether or not to remove said member from their position. In the case where the member is removed, they will be deemed to have resigned and the procedures outlined above shall be followed.

Miscellaneous

Any amendments to these terms of reference must be approved by majority vote of the Council.

ENDS

Approved by the Student Representative Council on 01/12/2021