

Charter of the Committee representing the Foundation and Non-Foundation Scholars of the University of Dublin, Trinity College

'Bearing in mind our election to scholarship, its noble history and great traditions, and ever-mindful of our role in College, we hereby enact, adopt and give to ourselves this Charter'.

1. Objectives

The Charter enshrines the mandate given by the Scholars of Trinity College, the sole College of the University of Dublin, to the members of the Scholars' Committee. It outlines the Committee's functions and structure as well as the regulations by which the Committee and its electorate shall be bound.

The Scholars' Committee shall be the official representative body of all Scholars, and shall strive to be recognised as such by the Board of Trinity College and the Council of the University of Dublin.

2. Interpretation

For the purposes of this Charter:

The 'Scholars' shall be defined as incumbent Foundation and Non-Foundation Scholars elected by the Board of Trinity College, University of Dublin.

A 'quorum' shall be defined as a minimum of twenty Scholars.

The 'Committee' shall be defined as the representative body of the Scholars.

The 'Scholar Alumni' shall be defined as Foundation and Non-Foundation Scholars elected by the Board of Trinity College, the University of Dublin, whose tenure of Scholarship has already terminated according to *The 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin*, Chapter on the Scholars, Section 7.(1).

3. Binding Effect of the Charter

This Charter shall be binding upon members of the Scholars' Committee on confirmation of their election to the Committee.

The Charter shall also be binding upon every Scholar not a member of the Committee, but only insofar as it relates to the regulation of Committee elections and the process of amendment of this Charter.

4. Functions of the Committee

The purpose of the Committee shall be to provide for, promote and defend the interests of the Scholars, and in order to do so the Committee shall endeavour:

- a. To liaise with College and the University through its Officers, Board, Council and Committees, as representatives of the Scholars.

- b. To liaise with the Unions of the Students and Graduate Students of Trinity College as representatives of the Scholars.
- c. To communicate to the Scholars issues which affect their interests as Scholars.
- d. To act as an information source on Scholarship, and to publish and update the Scholars' Handbook annually.
- e. To maintain the Scholars' website as a source of information to the Scholars and the general public.

5. Structure of the Committee

a. Secretary to the Scholars

The Secretary shall:

- chair the Scholars' Committee.
- liaise between College and Scholars on issues relating to Scholarship.
- be the representative officer on all College Committees where the Scholars have a representative, unless otherwise specified in this Charter.

b. Assistant Secretary to the Scholars

The Assistant Secretary shall:

- assist the Secretary in liaising with College, and shall deputise in the absence of the Secretary, except in the case of College Principle Committees.
- act as Secretary to the Scholars' Committee.
- act as Archivist, whose duty it is to retain and safeguard the official text of the current Charter (that which reflects all amendments successfully passed, if any).
- keep a file of all documentation produced by College relating to Scholarship. This information and documentation, along with the official text of the current Charter, shall be passed on to the next Assistant Secretary.

c. Postgraduate Representative

The Postgraduate representative shall:

- represent the Postgraduate Scholars on the Scholars' Committee and the Graduate Students' Union.
- coordinate the organisation of academic fora and similar events.
- advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary on issues relevant to Postgraduate Scholars.

d. Undergraduate Representative

The Undergraduate representative shall:

- represent the Undergraduate Scholars on the Scholars' Committee and the Students' Union Council.
- advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary on issues relevant to Undergraduate Scholars.

e. Accommodation Representative

The Accommodation Representative shall:

- represent the interests of Scholars in relation to rooms.
- be the Scholars' Representative on Residence Committee.
- advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary on issues relating to Scholars' accommodation.

f. Social Secretary

The Social Secretary shall:

- represent the interests of Scholars in relation to Catering.
- act as primary organiser of social events for the Scholars.

g. Public Relations Officer

The Public Relations Officer shall:

- manage the social media accounts maintained by the Committee.
- organise and oversee the design of all materials produced for public dissemination by the Committee.
- coordinate the promotion of all upcoming Scholars' events.

h. First Year Representative

The First Year Representative shall:

- represent the interests of newly-elected Scholars in relation to their place of accommodation, on any relevant committees.
- advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary on issues relating to newly-elected Scholars.

The First Year Representative shall be elected in accordance with Section 7(1), and must be a Scholar intending to take up rooms in the following academic year.

i. Webmaster

A scholar competent in web administration shall be appointed by the Committee each year as the Webmaster of the scholars' website. The Webmaster shall:

- Be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Scholars' website.

The webmaster and shall serve as a non-voting member of the Scholars' Committee, and their presence shall not count towards quorum.

j. Alumni Representative

One of the Scholar Alumni shall be appointed by the Committee each year as the Alumni Representative. The Alumni Representative shall:

- Engage with the Scholar Alumni community, organising events for past Scholars and linking them to the current Scholar community.
- Liaise with the College's Alumni office on behalf of Scholar Alumni.

- Represent the interests of the Scholar Alumni community on the Committee. The Alumni Representative shall serve as a non-voting member of the Scholars' Committee, and their presence shall not count towards quorum.

k. President

A Fellow or Professor of the College can optionally be appointed by the Committee each year as the President of the Scholars' Committee. The President shall:

- assist the Secretary in liaising with College.

The President shall serve as a non-voting member of the Scholars' Committee, and their presence shall not count towards quorum.

6. Meetings of the Scholars

a. Annual General Meeting

1. The Annual General Meeting shall be called by the Scholars' Committee and shall be held within the last four weeks of Hilary Term.
2. The date, venue, time and agenda must be communicated by e-mail to the scholars at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

b. Extraordinary General Meeting

1. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Committee or by a petition of Scholars greater than the quorum being sent to the Secretary.
2. The date, venue and agenda must be communicated by e-mail to the Scholars at least one week in advance of the meeting.

c. Quorum

The quorum must be reached at any meeting of the Scholars in order for elections and changes to the Charter to be deemed valid.

7. Election of the Scholars' Committee

- a. An impartial observer shall be invited to General Meetings of the Scholars to monitor the voting process. The impartial observer shall be the Registrar of Trinity College, or, in their absence, any other College Annual Officer, any Fellow or Professor of the College, or any former Foundation or Non-Foundation Scholar.
- b. Two scholars, who are not members of the Committee or seeking election to the Committee, shall be appointed to ensure the fair tally of votes, under the supervision of the Registrar, or in his/her absence, the senior member of College.
- c. In the election of the Committee each Scholar is entitled to one vote, providing a quorum is achieved. No distinction is made between Foundation and Non-Foundation Scholars in voting or nominations.
- d. The Committee must be elected each year at the Annual General Meeting of the Scholars, or if the quorum is not reached, at an EGM which shall be called within two weeks of the AGM.

- e. Nominations for Committee membership must be proposed and seconded by Scholars.
- f. Nominations for the positions of Secretary and Assistant Secretary must be submitted to the Secretary, and the Scholars notified of the nominations, one week in advance of the AGM.
- g. Nominations for all committee positions apart from those of Secretary and Assistant Secretary may be taken in advance or submitted from the floor during the AGM.
- h. Voting for contested positions is to be held by secret ballot. In the case of a position having a single nomination, a secret ballot shall be held with the option of approving or rejecting the nomination. In the event of a nomination being rejected, the position must be filled at that meeting. If no other nominations are forthcoming the nomination is deemed accepted.
- i. A simple relative majority is required for election, or for the acceptance of an uncontested nomination, that is, the candidate with the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected and in the case of a single nomination there must be more votes to approve the nomination than to reject it.
- j. In the event of a tied vote, the Secretary's vote shall be deciding. If the Secretary is to be a candidate in the vote, the deciding vote shall be given to the most senior Committee member (as per the "Structure of the Committee" section of this Charter) who is not a candidate in the vote.
- k. The names of those elected shall be announced by the senior College officer in attendance. The actual number of votes per candidate shall not be revealed.
- l. Notwithstanding the above procedure, the election of the First Year Representative shall take place after Trinity Monday, and no later than Teaching Week 2 of Michaelmas Term. For the purposes of this election, the electorate is confined to those Scholars elected to Scholarship on the preceding Trinity Monday. The quorum for this election shall be 20% or 15 newly-elected scholars, whichever is fewer.

8. Meetings of the Committee

- a. A meeting of the Committee shall be held within one week of the election, and thereafter at least once per term.
- b. A quorum for the purposes of a meeting of the Committee shall be the Secretary and three other members of the Committee.
- c. Notwithstanding section 8(b) above, a valid meeting of the Committee may take place in the absence of the Secretary, if he/she is absent from College or indisposed due to illness.
- d. However, if the Secretary is merely absent from College, his/her consent by email will be required for such a Committee meeting to be validly held.
- e. A meeting from which the Secretary is absent shall be chaired by the Assistant Secretary in accordance with section 5(b) of this Charter. Quorum for such a meeting shall be the Assistant Secretary and three other members of the committee.

9. Establishment of Subcommittees

- a. The Committee may, from time to time, elect to appoint a subcommittee to assist in the discharge of its duties, or to consider other matters relevant to the Scholars.
- b. Membership of such a subcommittee shall be open to all Scholars and Scholar Alumni.
- c. Any and all subcommittees shall be chaired by a member of the Committee. The chair shall report to the Committee on the work of the relevant subcommittee.
- d. Membership of such a subcommittee will be decided by the Committee and shall be limited to a maximum of six people including the chair.

10. Removal of Committee Members

Members of the Scholars' Committee may be impeached, given that the following procedures are followed:

- a. The proposal is submitted by a petition of at least 20 scholars as an article of the EGM agenda one week in advance of the EGM.
- b. The proposal is voted on by secret ballot at the EGM.
- c. A two-thirds majority of those in attendance is required for the proposal to be successful.
- d. A quorum, is achieved at the meeting.

11. Amendments of the Charter

Amendments may be made to the Charter, given that the following procedures are followed:

- a. The proposal is agreed by the Committee or is submitted by a petition of at least twenty scholars as an article of the EGM agenda one week in advance of the EGM, or as an article of the AGM agenda two weeks in advance of the AGM.
- b. A quorum is achieved at the meeting.
- c. The proposal is voted on by secret ballot.
- d. A two-thirds majority of those in attendance is required for the proposal to be successful.

Revision History:

- Charter Enacted 2006
- Revised Charter adopted at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Scholars on 11 October 2018, to better define the roles of members of the Scholars' Committee, and to adjust the electoral processes in light of the new Academic Year structure.
- Revised Charter adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the Scholars on 25 April 2021 to include the role of Alumni Representative.
- Revised Charter adopted at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Scholars on 13 September 2023, to include the role of President of the Scholars' Committee and to better define the establishment of subcommittees.