



# **Student Council Handbook**

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## **Introduction to Student Council**

Student Council is the supreme decision-making body for students in TU Dublin. It is where you can make a real difference in how you want your college to be ran, and what you want your Students' Union to do for you – by debating issues and submitting [motions](#) and [policies](#) for consideration. It is also where you get to make sure your elected officers are doing what they are supposed to be doing!

Student Council is established under article 6.4 of the [TU Dublin SU Constitution](#) – which is a document of all the rules saying how TU Dublin SU is governed and how it does its business. The Constitution is voted by the students of TU Dublin.

### **Who Reports to Student Council?**

[Full-Time Officers](#)

[Part-Time Officers](#)

Any Committees or Working Groups set up by Student Council

### **Who are the members of Student Council?**

President

Vice Presidents

Part-Time Officers

Student Councillors

= 101 members

### **When does Student Council meet?**

On average once a month for approximately 2-3 hours (7 meetings per academic year).

### **Must I attend every meeting?**

You do not have to attend every meeting however; it is required that you send in apologies (let them know you are unable to attend) to the [Clerk](#) ([Representation@tudublinsu.ie](mailto:Representation@tudublinsu.ie)) if you cannot attend. If you do not attend two meetings in a row and do not send in apologies, you will be expelled from Council.

### **Where can I find further Information?**

Our [website](#) has more information on Student Council, including the Motions and Policy Manuals, relevant documents and Meeting Archives. For further information, please contact the [Clerk to Student Council](#) – [Representation@tudublinsu.ie](mailto:Representation@tudublinsu.ie). [Terms of Glossary](#) (explanations of the terms used in Student Council) are listed at the end of the handbook, and you can use the hyperlinks here to get directly to the explanations of a certain word.

### **How is Student Council ran?**

The Council meeting format is regulated according to a timed [agenda](#), as set out in the [Standing Orders](#) for the meeting. Student Councillors are encouraged to make an input into the agenda. Standing Orders are a set of guidelines, as agreed upon by the Council which guides how the meeting proceeds.

## **Motions and Policies**

All Student Council members can bring forward motions and policies, that will be debated and voted on by the Council.

### **What is a Motion?**

A [motion](#) can be a request for something, a set of instructions, or a type of statement, which if accepted by Student Council becomes binding for two years. It contains a “[mandate](#)” which is a specific task/s that must be completed by a certain date by the [Full-Time Officer](#) under who’s brief it falls. E.g.; holding Black History Month during the month of October. The motion falls (is deemed completed) once the task attached is finished or after two years.

### **What is a Policy?**

A [policy](#) is the stance the Students’ Union takes regarding any particular issue. E.g.; TU Dublin SU stands against unaffordable student housing or that TU Dublin SU adopts an intersectional approach to work. Policies are active for 3 years, unless removed or changed by a motion from the Student Council.

### **How do I write a Motion or Policy?**

A [motion](#) or a [policy](#) must be written in a clear and concise manner, with a title, name of the proposer and seconder, and a date which the task (if any) must be completed by. TU Dublin SU Officers and the [Clerk](#) are available if Councillors feel they need help writing a motion or policy. It is wise to check with the [Full-Time Officers](#) or the relevant TU Dublin SU staff member, if the issue they would like to bring to Council’s attention is something that is already done – just not publicised, or if there are other issues which may stop the motion/policy being accepted by the Council.

### **Submitting a Motion or Policy**

[Motions](#) and [policies](#) need to be submitted to the [Clerk of Student Council](#) 5 working days before the Council meeting.

#### **Example of a Motion:**

##### **Title**

Every motion needs a short title to sum up the topic

*TU Dublin SU Mascot*

##### **Student Council Notes**

An introduction to the motion (you can also use words such as recognises, approves etc)

*That TU Dublin SU does not have a mascot.*

##### **Student Council Also Notes (Body of the Motion)**

This is where you expand on the opening and give additional information.

*Students have recognised that having a SU mascot can increase engagement with the students and raise morale during stressful periods. Students have seen mascots being used in other colleges to have great success in relation to marketing and engagement.*

### **Student Council Mandates**

The task of the motion. A specific officer must be recorded, and an end date given to the motion)

*That the president must choose and acquire a SU mascot before [USI National Congress 2023](#)*

### **Proposed and Seconded by**

Every motion must have a proposer and a seconder who are Student Councillors

*Proposed by: Joe Bloggs*

*Seconded by: Tod Umptious*

## **Debating**

### **How do Debates work?**

The proposer of the [motion](#) introduces the topic to the Council. You may speak for or against the motion or seek a clarification on the issue. [Procedurals motions](#) may be proposed (See section on Procedural Motions). After each side has been heard, a vote is taken by show of hands.

### **How do you speak in a Debate?**

Usually you put your hand up, and the [Chairperson](#) will queue you in an order. Once it is your turn to speak, you must stand up (where possible) and state your name and Campus.

### **What is a Point of Clarification/ Point of Information / Point of Order?**

[Point of Clarification](#) – A Councillor would like to ask a clarifying question (neither for or against the presented issue) about the matter discussed.

[Point of Information](#) – A Councillor would like to offer additional information whilst someone else is speaking. The speaker may accept or decline (politely) this information.

[Point of Order](#) – A speaker has broken the [Standing Orders](#). The [Chair](#) then stops the debate to hear the issue.

## **Procedural Motions**

Procedural motions allow Councillors to call on Council to move the debate along in a certain direction.

- 9a) The question now be put (We want to vote now!)
- 9b) The question not be put (We don't want to vote on this)
- 9c) The motion to be amended (We want to change/remove some words/lines)
- 9d) The motion be referred back (This needs to go to someone, sometime or somewhere else for further work)
- 9e)\* Challenge the [Chairperson's](#) Ruling (We don't like what the Chairperson decided)
- 9f)\* No Confidence in the [Chairperson](#) (We want to get rid of them!)

*\* Please read the Standing Orders for further details on these two procedural motions*

They can be proposed at any time during a debate, except during voting, or “Points of Order/Information”. A vote must be taken to accept or reject the Procedural Motions

### **Voting**

When a vote is called, the person introducing the motion, or their nominee, may sum up the topic. They may choose not to by declaring a “formal or foirmeálta” summation. A show of hand using the voting cards (green for, red against) is then taken and the majority wins. You can vote for, against or abstain from the vote.

## **Elections**

Council members are required at certain times of the year to elect students to various committees or positions within TU Dublin SU. The following are a list of positions which will come to Student Council, but there may be other positions from time to time.

### **Chairperson to Student Council**

The [Chairperson](#) role is an independent position, which means that the person chairing the meeting does not take part in debates and is there to make sure the meeting runs in order. They must not have been a member of the Union for at least four academic years. Elections take place by the end of April every three years, and their terms of office runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July that year until the 30<sup>th</sup> June three years later. The Chairperson has a casting vote if a vote is tied.

### **Deputy Chairperson to Student Council**

The Deputy Chair will act if the [Chairperson](#) is unable to chair a meeting. i.e. if the Chairperson is unable to chair at the last minute, or if they need to take an unscheduled break from the meeting. The Deputy Chair has a second, or casting vote, which means that you will have a vote as a member of Student Council, but if the vote is a tie you will have a second vote. Whilst acting as the Deputy Chairperson, you will need to conduct yourself in an independent capacity.

### **Electoral Commission Student Members**

[The Electoral Commission](#) is an independent body who supervises all the elections, from local Class Rep Elections to our annual elections where the Officers are elected. A very useful body to get involved with if you are interested in the behind the scenes working of the elections, or if you have ideas for the elections. The Electoral Commission also looks at ways to increase candidate interest and voter turn-out. There are 4 student positions available.

### **Student Members of TU Dublin SU CLG**

Each year the Company ([TU Dublin SU CLG](#)) must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to present a report to the members outlining TU Dublin SU's financial statements for the previous accounting year. Each member shall have one vote at the AGM. If an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) is called, all members of the Company are invited to attend. Student Council is entitled to elect 4 students (one from Blanchardstown, one from Tallaght and two from City Campus) as members of the Company (not a Director) to attend the Annual General Meeting. This is a great opportunity for any interested students to take part in representing the members of the company and to see how a company conducts its affairs.

### **Student Directors of TU Dublin SU CLG**

The primary function of the Directors is to manage the [TU Dublin SU CLG](#) on behalf of its members – who are the students of TU Dublin. Directors must act responsibly and honestly in relation to the company and in line with the company's constitution and laws of Ireland. Directors are obliged to carry out their function with due care and diligence. Student Council elects 4 students (one from Blanchardstown, one from Tallaght and two from City Campus) to be directors on the [Board of TU Dublin SU CLG](#) for a period of 1 year. These students have the same responsibilities and duties as all other directors on the Board. This is a great opportunity for students to gain first-hand knowledge of how a company functions and the importance of the role of Director in the decision-making process of the [Board of Directors](#).

## **Accountability of Officers**

It is very important that Student Councillors hold the Officers of TU Dublin SU accountable. All officers create a [report](#) of their work for Council which will be available to everyone on [TU Dublin SU website](#). They also report on their progress on motions and policies set by Student Council. All Student Councillors should read these documents prior to Council Meetings. Councillors can ask questions from any of the officers based on their report, and there is time allocated for that at every meeting. Reading Officer reports and holding them accountable at Student Council meetings is very crucial in the role of a Student Councillor – so ask questions and give feedback at meetings!

If an Elected Officer is not carrying out their duties as per their role description or carrying out tasks assigned to them by the Student Council, the Council may also wish to request that they go through a disciplinary process. Procedures can be found in the [Constitution](#) under Schedule D point 13. Furthermore, there is an option to [impeach an Officer](#), as stated in the Constitution article 17.2 and explained below under the impeachment section.

### **Voting on Officer Reports**

Schedule F, 6.8. of the Constitution states that each Full-Time Officer and Part-Time Officer must be available for questions on their written Officer Report. They can make verbal additions to their Report at the discretion of the Chairperson.

Each Officer report must either be **'approved'** or **'rejected'** by Student Council via a simple majority Council vote. If the report is rejected on two occasions (during their term-of-office), this will automatically trigger the impeachment process (i.e. the release of a petition as per article 17), which will be publicised by the Chair of Council, with the assistance of TU Dublin SU CLG, in a manner deemed most appropriate by the Chair.

### **Under what Grounds can an Officer be removed?**

From a Constitutional point of view, if they have acted outside of their role as prescribed by the [Constitution](#), or if their level of productivity is called into question.

### **How can I bring a Complaint?**

A motion in writing must be signed by not less than half of the total membership of Student Council (i.e. 51 Councillors)

### **Who will investigate the Complaint?**

The President, or in the case of the president the [Chairperson of Student Council](#), can investigate or where appropriate, can ask [TU Dublin SU CLG](#) to investigate the complaint, in accordance with law.

### **What happens whilst the Complaint is being Investigated?**

The officer concerned will carry out their duties as normal unless [TU Dublin SU CLG](#) deems it necessary to suspend them. In this case the affected officer, the President and the [Chairperson of Student Council](#) shall be informed if this procedure is being instigated or taken.



### **What happens next?**

[TU Dublin SU CLG](#) (in conjunction with the Student Council under protocols adopted by the [Board of TU Dublin SU CLG](#) and Student Council) may determine penalties as per TU Dublin SU's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, namely:

- Informal Advisory session
- Formal verbal warning
- First written warning
- Final written warning
- Dismissal

## **Impeachment process**

### **What is the process to impeach a Full-Time Officer?**

In order to impeach a Full-Time Officer, there is a requirement of a petition of 200 members for campus specific roles and 400 or more members for overall roles. The reasoning for impeachment must be clearly stated when aiming to commence an impeachment process. This petition is brought to the Chair of Student Council.

### **What happens after the impeachment petition?**

After a petition goes to the Chair of Student Council, it will be brought up for Council debate within a week. The person who is proposed to be impeached as well as the proposer will be allowed to speak. There will be a vote, and if less than 2/3 of Council members do not endorse the petition, it will be dismissed. If more than 2/3 of Council members endorse the petition, it will go to Electoral Commission, who will operationalise an impeachment referendum within 3-6 weeks. If more than 50% of voters support the petition, the Officer in question will be deemed to have been impeached.

### **Can other elected officials be removed from a position?**

Yes: this is called 'Recall of Office', found under constitution point 17.1. Any person elected to a position (e.g. Student Councillor, Class Representative, Electoral Commission member, etc.) can be removed. This requires 10% of the relevant electorate to sign a petition to the Electoral Commission, who will arrange the recall of office vote, after which a vote will take place within 2 weeks in that electorate. As an example, in the case of recalling an Electoral Commission Member, 10% of Student Council (11 Council members) must sign a petition, after which Student Council will vote on whether to remove the person from Electoral Commission.

## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Agenda (list of items to be considered at the meeting)**

The Agenda sets out the running order of the meeting. The Agenda for the Student Council meeting is timed. If an extension is needed for an item, "[Standing Orders](#)" are raised, and voted on. If a majority agree to extend the time, the Chairperson decides how much extra time should be given to this item.

### **Board of TU Dublin SU CLG**

This is the legal entity that runs TU Dublin SU's business affairs. The Board is comprised of an Independent Chairperson, the Company Secretary, four student reps elected through Student Council, the five [Full-Time Officers](#) and two other independent people. [TU Dublin SU CLG](#) mainly deals with finance, company and HR issues.

### **Class Rep Meeting (CRM)**

The Officers chair the Class Representative Meeting (CRM). Each class in TUD is entitled to one Class Rep. CRM's are held locally and usually during the day. The meetings give reps the chance to elect their Student Councillors, receive information from TUDSU, and address any issues they may have. The local [Student Advisor](#) is responsible for the administration of this meeting. It is the Student Advisor and the Officers responsibility to see that issues raised at these meetings are addressed.

### **Clerk to Student Council**

The Clerk provides all administrative support to the Student Council and to the [Chairperson of Student Council](#) as well as taking [minutes](#) and keep records of all meetings. You can reach the current clerk at [Representation@tudublinsu.ie](mailto:Representation@tudublinsu.ie).

### **Collective Responsibility**

As laid out in the [TU Dublin SU Constitution](#), collective responsibility is when Executive Council members must publicly support Executive Council's decisions, even if they do not privately agree with them. This includes voting on any issues in Student Council.

### **Constitution**

The Constitution is the rulebook for the officers and staff of the organisation. It outlines everything from the structure of the organisation, to the duties and responsibilities of each officer position. TU Dublin SU is legally obliged to conform to all parts of the Constitution. The Constitution of TU Dublin SU is updated on the website [here](#).

### **Electoral Commission**

As TUDSU is a democratic organisation, elections are one of the most fundamental aspects of its functions and are taken very seriously. To ensure TUDSU always conforms with its obligations and responsibilities, the Electoral Commission was created under the Constitution. The Commission is chaired by an independent person and has only student members. The Commission establishes the rules of elections and oversees all procedures during elections.

### **Ex-Officio**

This means automatically being a member of a body (a board, committee, council, etc.) by holding another office i.e. they do not need to be elected to the body. [Full-Time Officers](#) and [Part-Time Officers](#) are ex-officio members of Student Council.

### **Executive Council**

This is an overall committee comprised of the eight elected [Full-Time Officers](#). The Executive Council deals with issues that filter up from specific Class Reps Meetings or Student Fora or can deal with issues that filter down from Student Council or the [Board of TU Dublin SU CLG](#). Meetings are held once a month and are chaired by the President.

### **Full-Time Officer**

This refers to the eight elected Full-Time Officers of TUDSU; President, (3) Deputy Presidents, (3) Vice President Education, Vice President Events (City Campus) and (3) Vice President Welfare and Equality. Full-Time Officers can only run for election for a maximum of three years as per the TUDSU Constitution.

### **Governing Body**

This is the highest forum within TU Dublin. It consists of the President of TU Dublin, appointed external specialists (such as ministers) and 3 Officers from TUDSU (1 Male and 1 female).

### **Guillotine**

Guillotine is a term used to decide the time when the meeting shall conclude. If an extension is needed for any item on the Agenda, "[Standing Orders](#)" are raised, and voted on. If a majority agree to extend the time, the Chairperson decides how much extra time should be given to the item, thus extending the guillotine.

### **Independent Chairperson of Student Council**

The Independent Chairperson of Student Council is elected by Student Council, and he/she/they may not have been a member of TUDSU for at least 4 academic years. The Chairperson calls the Student Council meeting, and determines the Agenda, along with the [Clerk to Student Council](#). The Chairperson then presides over the meeting, and in the case where a vote is tied, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

### **Mandate (official command or instruction)**

This is a command given by Student Council to a person or body to act in a particular way. i.e. "Student Council mandates the President of the Students' Union to conduct a survey of student's opinions". It is the action point deriving from a motion.

### **Minutes**

Minutes are a record of a meeting and give an overview of what occurred during the meeting. Minutes need to be approved at the following meeting, by a member who was present at the previous meeting. Any changes to the minutes need to be done before they are approved.

### **Motion (formal proposal)**

Any student councillor can bring a motion to Student Council. A motion is usually presented to deal with one single issue. A motion can mandate [Full-Time Officers](#) and [Part-Time Officers](#), or the Union as a whole. Once a motion is passed any mandate contained within it must be completed within 2 years.

### **Officer Report**

This is a detailed report submitted to Student Council by the [Full-Time Officers](#) and the [Part-Time Officers](#) detailing their activities undertaken since the last meeting as well as outlining what they are currently working on and any gifts they have received. All student council members can ask questions regarding the Officer Report.

### **Part-Time Officers**

Part-Time Officers are full time students working part time for TUDSU. The Part-Time Officers are accountable to Student Council. They ensure Class Reps are updated at [CRMs](#), and ensure an effective representative system is maintained.

**Point of Clarification**

A member of the meeting would want to ask a clarifying question about the topic. The question shall not be for or against the matter discussed.

**Point of Information**

A member of the meeting offers additional information on a subject. The speaker has the option to accept or decline to hear the information offered.

**Point of Order**

A Point of Order may be raised at any point during the meeting, if a member feels that the speaker has broken the rules of the meeting. The speaker must accept the Point of Order, and it is up to the Chairperson to rule on this or refer it to the audience.

**Policy**

A policy is passed through the Student Council. It is a document outlining where TUDSU should stand on an issue that has been voted on and becomes the official 'party line' of TUDSU for the following five years. A policy cannot be passed that conflicts with TUDSU's own Constitution or that could be seen to contravene any of our members' rights.

**Post Graduate Officer**

Post Graduate Officer is a [Part-Time Officer](#) who acts as a representative of all post graduate students within TU Dublin. They are an [ex-officio](#) member of [Governing Body](#) and Student Council.

**Procedural Motion**

Procedural motions ([9a – e](#)) are used in formal debate to assist the chair in moving debate along, and they empower members to take control of the debate and ensure it is moving in an appropriate direction. When a Procedural Motion is called, it is seconded by another member of the meeting. Speakers are then taken for and against, after which a vote is taken on the procedural motion, before returning to the main issue.

**Programme of Work**

The programme of work is a document that sets forth the priorities for TUDSU in the forthcoming year. It must be presented to the Student Council at its first meeting.

**Quorum**

This is the minimum amount of people present at the meeting, for the meeting to proceed. If there are fewer than the stated numbers, quorum may be called, and the meeting may not go ahead. Quorum may be called at any point during the meeting, and if called during the meeting, all decisions and votes taken before this fall. Student Council quorum is 25 student councillors.

**Standing Orders (Meeting guidelines)**

These are a set of guidelines that Student Council establishes and adopts. They set out how the meeting should run and how the Student Council makes decisions. Standing Orders can be amended by way of a motion to Student Council.

**Student Advisor**

Student Advisors are more commonly known as SA's. They look after local democracy ensuring minutes are kept, local databases are up to date and people are notified of meetings etc. Secondly, they are the first point of contact for any student seeking assistance on a variety of issues. Thirdly they are responsible for some of the local casework.

### **Student Fora**

Student Fora are an informal meeting of students to bring their concerns to the Officers of their site. Student Fora can be held at any time which suits students. Any student can call for a Student Form to be held if they have the support of 50 students in writing.

### **USI**

Union of Students in Ireland. U.S.I. is the National representative Union of Students in Ireland. Its 'members' are not individual students but Member Organisations (or MOs) - this merely means individual Students' Unions. Individual Students' Unions decide themselves whether they wish to be members or not. USI are responsible for student representation at a national level and hold many National seats, as well as being involved on a European level. USI also spear head several annual National Campaigns, (education grants, SHAG etc) as mandated through their regular National Councils and particularly at the annual convention known as USI Congress.

### **TU Dublin SU CLG**

TU Dublin SU operations are run by a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), which is owned by the Students of TU Dublin by virtue of their membership of the Union. Because of our status as a CLG, we are required to have a [Board](#). The company does not involve itself with the Politics of the elected representatives of the Students Union and instead is tasked with the operational functions of the Union (such as Financial Management and Human Resources). All of these functions are provided in order to support the work of the elected officer team of the Students Union. You can find more information about the CLG [here](#).