



The Constitution:

**The Society For International
Affairs
(SOFIA)**

1. Name

- a. The Society shall be known as the Society for International Affairs, Trinity College Dublin, or by the acronym "SOFIA".

2. Objectives

- a. The objectives of the Society are:
 - (i) to promote the discussion of diplomacy and diplomatic affairs,
 - (ii) to give visibility to current international affairs and provide a platform for discussion and networking,
 - (iii) to acquaint students with the activities and mechanisms of the embassies and foreign affairs departments to guide students considering a diplomatic career,
 - (iv) to allow students to meet experts and significant contributors of the field of diplomacy
 - (v) to acquaint students with the workings of conferences and to give members a chance to represent the university in competitions.

3. Membership

- a. Membership shall be open to all capitated students and staff of the University of Dublin on payment of an annual subscription as shall be decided by the Committee or Annual General Meeting (AGM) within the limits set by the CSC.
- b. Honorary Membership may be given to those individuals who have made a significant contribution to the society, or as a contributor to diplomacy and international affairs, as shall be decided by the Committee. Honorary Members are not entitled to vote at an AGM or EGM, nor are they permitted to run for election for a position on the Committee. Additionally, they are allowed to attend any event of the society. Honorary Membership may not be bestowed on serving members of the Committee.

4. The Committee

- a. The Committee shall consist in a Senior and Junior Branch.
- b. The Senior Officers shall be elected as laid out in Article 8 and shall consist of the following:
 - i. Chair
 - ii. Secretary
 - iii. Treasurer
 - iv. Public Relations Officer (PRO)
 - v. Events Officer

c. The Junior Officers shall be elected as laid out in Article 8 consist of the following:

- i. Assistant Secretary
- ii. Web and Design Officer
- iii. Competitions Coordinator
- iv. Junior Freshman Representative

d. Up to three (3) OCMs shall be elected as laid out in Article 8.

e. No individual may hold more than one position on the committee.

f. The Committee shall be responsible for the running of the Society; organising events for the benefits of its members and attending to the general pursuit of the society's aims.

g. Committee members may be removed from office before the completion of their term only by a motion gathering a two-third majority of the Committee and a relative majority of the members of the society in the course of an Extraordinary General Meeting.

5. The Role of Committee Members

a. All committee members shall:

- i. Be answerable to the committee
- ii. Attend all committee meetings.
- iii. Attend all society events where possible.
- iv. Have a responsibility to promote the society in the college.
- v. Attend all training provided by the CSC or other bodies when deemed appropriate.

b. No member of committee may profit in any way from their involvement in the society.

c. Chair

- (i) The Chair shall oversee the general running of the Society and coordinate the Committee.
- (ii) They are the official representative of the Society.
- (iii) They shall be answerable to the Committee in the course of their functions.
- (iv) They shall chair committee meetings including any EGMs or AGMs.
- (v) They shall cast the deciding vote in all hung votes with the exception of fiscal issues in which the Treasurer shall retain the right of veto.
- (vi) They shall prepare a handbook to be passed on to their successor.

d. Treasurer

- (i) The Treasurer shall be responsible for all the finances of the Society. They shall collect subscriptions from members, maintain proper accounts and obtain funds.
- (ii) They shall conduct routine communications with the CSC on financial matters.
- (iii) The Treasurer and Chair shall be jointly responsible for the financial affairs of the society.
- (iv) The Treasurer or the Chair or any persons may be requested to appear before the CSC or officer or sub-committee of the CSC to provide information concerning finances of the Society.
- (v) Be responsible for all finances of the society, and have final say on all matters of expenditure of the funds of the society remaining conscious of the consensus of the Committee of the Society.
- (vi) Be responsible for the collection of annual subscriptions from society members.
- (vii) The Treasurer shall close their accounts at the time stipulated by the CSC each year and thereafter as soon as may be possible shall arrange for the accounts to be audited as provided by the CSC and these accounts shall be presented to the Committee and the CSC for approval.
- (viii) They will have the duty of conducting routine communication with the CSC on financial matters including the provision of estimates of expenditure
- (xi) They shall prepare the grant application for submission to the CSC promptly each year.
- (x) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor.

e. Secretary

- (i) The Secretary shall be responsible for all the correspondence of the society and shall keep a written record of it.
- (ii) The Secretary shall be tasked with keeping the minutes of all the meetings of the society and of the committee. All decisions taken by the Committee shall be recorded in writing by the Secretary and published to all members. They will promptly send out minutes from all meetings to relevant parties within 24 hours of the meeting ending.
- (iii) The Secretary will provide the Secretary of the CSC with a record of the Society's activities during their term of office not later than the date set by the CSC for submission of the report and shall be answerable to the Committee.
- (iv) The Secretary will be responsible for all internal and external communications of the committee while using discretion and utmost regard for privacy.
- (v) They shall keep a record of membership that is up-to-date and ensure that it is kept confidential, allowing only the Treasurer and Chair to see it in the execution of their duties.
- (vi) They shall inform the CSC promptly of any changes to the constitution of the society.
- (vii) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor.

f. Public Relations Officer (PRO)

- (i) The PRO shall have the duty to carry out relations with the press, guests, former guests, partners of the society and any organisations that the society chooses to deal with.
- (ii) The PRO shall have the duty to carry out relations with other student societies.
- (iii) The PRO shall have the duty to provide members with all necessary information on activities and events using mediums they deem appropriate to attract the largest audience and the best reception from members. They shall also promote and publicise the activity of the Society and any events it organises and shall be responsible for the advertising campaign of said events.
- (iv) Prepare a handbook for their successor.

g. Assistant Secretary

- (i) The Assistant Secretary shall assist the Secretary and shall serve as a substitute when necessary.

(ii) The Assistant Secretary will have special obligations to the planning and management of the Ambassadors Ball. They will be assisted by an organising subcommittee, as per schedule 3.

(iii) The Assistant Secretary will have the duty of overseeing the Discussion Blog.

(iv) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor.

h. Web and Design Officer

(i) The Web and Design Officer shall maintain and oversee the society's website and online presence.

(ii) They will also be responsible for producing suitable items of graphic design for the publicity of the events and activities in due time. Duties will also include organise and oversee the design, printing and distribution of all the society's printed materials including but not limited to posters, membership cards and leaflets.

(iii) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor.

I Events Officer

(i) The Events Coordinator shall be in charge of organising society events, social events, and receptions.

(ii) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor.

j. Competitions Coordinator

(i) The Competitions Coordinator shall be in charge of overseeing and heading the society's involvement with competitions and conferences.

(ii) They shall prepare a handbook for their successor

k. Junior Freshman Representative

i. JF Representative engages with first year members, and recruiting more new members.

ii. They shall prepare a handbook for their successor

l. Ordinary Committee Members (OCMs)

(i) In addition to the duties of all committee members the Ordinary Members of Committee shall help officers in the execution of their duties.

6. Committee Meetings

- a. The Committee shall meet weekly during term at an agreed date and time.
- b. Notice of not less than one day must be given to committee members ahead of a committee meeting.
- c. Attendance at committee meetings is compulsory for all committee members. Apologies for inability to attend must be sent to the secretary no later than three hours before the meeting is scheduled to begin.
- d. Failure to attend three consecutive committee meetings without accepted apologies shall result in said committee member being subject to the removal procedure laid out in Article 9. Quorum for committee meetings shall be half of the committee. At least one senior officer must also be present.
- e. Accurate minutes of the meeting shall be kept and distributed as outlined in Schedule 1.
- f. All committee shall adopt the guidelines outlined in Article 11.

7. The Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meetings

- a. Notice of no less than 3 days must be given to members ahead of either and Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) or the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- b. Notice must include the date, time, place and agenda for the meeting.
- c. The quorum for either an AGM or an EGM shall be twenty-five people.
- d. Any member of the college may attend either an AGM or EGM but only fully-paid members of the society are entitled to vote.
- e. No persons admitted to membership less than twenty-four hours prior to an AGM or an EGM shall be entitled to vote at that meeting.
- f. An EGM of the society may be called in accordance with the procedure laid out in Article 8.
- g. An AGM must be held once a year in Hilary term in accordance to the procedure laid out in Schedule 2.

8. Calling of an Extraordinary General Meeting

- a. The items brought before an EGM must be exceptional in nature and should refer to changes in the constitution or to bring about an election to fill a vacancy on the committee.
- b. An EGM of the society may be called by 50% of the members of the society submitting a signed petition stating clearly the reasons for the EGM to the Secretary or by the committee submitting the same document.
- c. The petition must be signed by fully paid members of the society and should include society member number, student number and name.
- d. Upon presentation of the petition an EGM must be held within two term weeks.
- e. Notice for the EGM must be given in accordance with Article 7a.

9. Election of Committee Members

- a. Each election shall be of the form of proportional representation, using the PR-STV (Single Transferable Vote) system, as set out in Schedule 3. In the case of there being only a single candidate for a position the members shall be asked to ratify or reject this candidate using a “yes/no” option.
 - b. Candidates must be fully paid members of the society in order to be considered for election to the committee.
- c. All committee positions shall be elected at the AGM with the exception of the Junior Freshman Representative, which will be elected at the EGM. The individual OCM's may be elected at either the AGM or the EGM.
 - d. Each candidate must be nominated and seconded by fully paid members of the society in accordance with Schedule 2.
 - e. Each candidate may participate in hustings or have someone speak on their behalf during the AGM in accordance with the procedure laid out in Schedule 2.

10. Removal of persons from the Committee

- a. Any individual who fails to attend three consecutive committee meetings without explanation shall be deemed to have resigned from the committee and a person to replace them shall be appointed according to Article 9.
 - i. Having missed 2 consecutive meetings without explanation the Secretary shall communicate with the individual the consequences of missing another meeting.
- b. Any committee member who, while on society business, breaks or attempts to break college regulations shall be deemed to have resigned from the committee with immediate effect and a person to replace them shall be appointed according to Article 9.

c. Any member of the committee may step down at any point during the year by formally offering their resignation in writing to the senior officers who shall accept it and replace the committee member as laid out in Article 9.

d. Notice of at least one week must be given.

e. Upon the death or incapacitation of a committee member, a replacement may be co-opted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article 9.

f. A committee member may be impeached for failure to fulfil their duties as outlined in Article 5 through a committee vote at which a supermajority of 2/3rds of the entire committee is attained.

g. At the meeting to remove a committee member, the person being impeached may address the meeting prior to the vote taking place.

h. The vote to remove a committee member must be held by secret ballot and must be carried by a 2/3rds majority of all members of the committee.

i. Following the removal of the committee member a by-election shall take place immediately in accordance with the election procedure in Article 9.

j. A committee member may also be removed through a motion obtaining a simple majority at an EGM.

k. The decision of the committee in the removal of a committee member may be overturned by a motion at an EGM.

l. Any member who resigns from their position or is removed from it may not be elected to the committee again during that society session.

11. Co-opting of a Committee Member

a. Following the promotion, resignation or death of a member as outlined in Article 9 the committee shall convene and shall co-opt an eligible member to fill the role vacated on a temporary basis until the next available AGM or EGM which should take place within two weeks.

12. Finances

a. The Chair or the Treasurer or any member of the Society may be requested to appear before the CSC, or an officer or sub-committee of the CSC to provide information concerning the finances of the Society. If a prima facie case exists that Society funds have been misused or misappropriated, the CSC may ask the Senior Dean to declare the person(s) responsible indebted to the College, in which case they may not be permitted to register for the following academic year or to have their degree conferred.

- b. The Treasurer shall close their accounts in accordance with CSC guidelines and as soon as may be possible thereafter shall arrange for the accounts to be audited as provided by the CSC. In due course these accounts shall be presented to the Committee of the Society and the CSC for approval.
- c. All cheques and withdrawal forms from the Society's bank account shall be signed by two of the designated officers, namely the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

13. Amendments

a. This constitution may only be amended by a vote of a majority of those present at an EGM or an AGM. Notices of such amendments must be submitted in writing not less than five days before the date of the general meeting and must be signed by a proposer and seconder, each of whom shall be fully paid-up members of the Society.

- b. The Schedules of this Constitution may be changed by the Committee, only with a two-thirds majority at a quorate Committee meeting.
- c. This constitution is binding as and from the date of being approved by both the Society and the CSC.
- d. An up to date copy of the constitution shall be available to members upon request.

Schedule 1

1. The Committee bears collegiate responsibility for all its actions. Thus, if a matter is agreed by majority vote, each member must give that decision full public support, regardless of private feelings.
2. Each member has a single vote on each issue. In the case of an equality of votes cast the Chair has a single casting vote. The treasurer retains the right to veto any issues of financial implication.
3. Any member of committee may request that a ballot be held in secret on any vote and this request must be complied with.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting must be accepted at the beginning of the meeting.

Schedule 2

The agenda for an AGM or EGM shall be set out as follows:

1. Reports
 - a. These reports, which should be brief, may be delivered verbally with a written copy available on request.
 - b. The reports should be presented in the following order.
 - i. Chair
 - ii. Secretary
 - iii. Treasurer
2. Any motions submitted for consideration not less than five days before the date of the AGM/EGM. Any such motions must have been circulated to all members of the Society not less than three days before the date of the AGM/EGM.
3. Elections for all on the Committee.
 - a. The elections for the Officers shall take place consecutively in the order Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and PRO, Events Coordinator. Following the elections for the Officers there shall be elections for the following: Assistant Secretary, Web and Design Officer, Competitions Coordinator, Junior Freshman Representative, and no more than three OCM's.

- b. Each candidate will be allowed to address the AGM/EMG if they wish for a maximum of two minutes.
- c. The results from the first election shall be announced before the second election takes place, and so on throughout the elections.
- d. The votes for all elections shall be counted by not less than two tellers, neither of whom shall have any material interest in the election.

Schedule 3

- 1. a. The organising committee for the Ambassador's Ball, to be known as the Ambassador's Ball Sub-committee, is to be chaired by the Assistant Secretary.
 - b. The Sub-committee is to be responsible for the organisation, preparation, and overseeing of the Ball, including all necessary logistics.
 - c. There shall be fair, transparent application process for the Sub-committee, open to all members of the society, with candidates selected on merit. The sub-committee may consist of both committee members and persons from the general membership of the society, and shall have a minimum size of 3 and a maximum size of 7.

The election of all committee members shall take place using the Proportional Representation – Single Transferable Vote (PR-STV) electoral system.

- a. The quota of votes needed to be elected shall be calculated as:
(The total number of valid votes) divided by (the number of seats available in that position plus one), plus one.
- b. Surplus votes exceeding the quota shall be selected randomly and distributed.
- c. All the votes of eliminated candidates will be distributed in accordance with their descending lower preferences.
- d. In the case of there being an equal number of votes between candidates after re-distribution, the candidate with the least first preference votes is eliminated.

3. A Policy Document of the committee should be maintained by the Secretary, containing particular policies that the committee are mandated to follow, unless they choose to amend such policies. (The Policy Document should not be shared beyond the committee, so as to maintain the integrity of the committee's actions).

(a.) Policies may be introduced or amended with a simple majority vote at a quorate committee meeting with a majority of the senior officer's present.

(b.) Any permanent mandates, (from the constitution), or mandates from the members of the society (from the EGM/AGM), takes precedence over the mandates in the Policy Document.

4. Candidates running for the position of Chair must have previously served on a SOFIA committee.

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