

**MARY IMMACULATE STUDENTS' UNION
AONTAS NA MACLEINN
COLÁISTE MUIRE GAN SMÁL**

CONSTITUTION

For Approval by Referendum - 12 February 2026

To be effective from 15 June 2026

PROPOSED

Preamble

There shall be a Students' Union at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and Thurles; hereafter referred to as the College. The Students' Union, which is recognised by an tÚdarás Rialaithe (the College's Governing Authority), shall be the sole student representative organisation for all students of the College.

This is the constitution of the Students' Union, and it derives its authority from the student body of the College.

Herein are the articles of the constitution which establish the fundamental governance framework and shall only be amended by referendum. Operational procedures and administrative details are contained in the Schedules, which may be amended in accordance with the procedures set out in this constitution.

Where the Students' Union is affiliated to any organisation(s), such affiliations shall only bind the Students' Union in so far as the provisions of this constitution are not contravened.

All previous constitutions of the Students' Union are hereby revoked. However, membership, elections, appointments, and policies adopted under previous constitutions are not invalidated or made inoperable as a result of this revocation.

Article 1. Name and Establishment

1.1 The name of the Students' Union shall be Mary Immaculate Students' Union or Aontas na MacLéinn, Coláiste Mhuire Gan Smál; hereafter referred to as MISU.

1.2 MISU shall be the recognised representative voice of the students in all dealings with college staff and management.

1.3 MISU shall be the recognised representative voice of the students in dealings with all other organisations with whom MISU establishes and maintains contact in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

1.4 MISU is an apolitical organisation.

1.5 The status of MISU shall be an Unincorporated Club/Society. MISU Commercial Services shall be incorporated as a Designated Activity Company (DAC) and shall be called MISU Commercial Services DAC.

Article 2. Basic Principles of MISU

2.1 MISU shall be accountable to the students whom it represents.

2.2 MISU shall, in a democratic framework of representation and participation, protect and promote the collective and individual rights of the membership in all relevant matters pertaining to educational, social, welfare, cultural, economic, political and civic development and any other relevant matters pertaining to student life.

2.3 MISU upholds the principles of complete autonomy from all state, college or external authorities and allows no interference from these bodies in its electoral process, voting, policy-making or finances.

2.4 MISU opposes discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, sexual orientation, race, physical ability, intellectual ability, religion, national creed, marital status or ethnicity.

2.5 MISU recognises the importance of culture and the Irish language and will strive to promote and develop it as far as is practical.

Article 3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 To represent and protect the members in academic and non-academic matters.

3.1.2 To work as a democratic and transparent organisation, within the parameters of this constitution.

3.1.3 To actively pursue the engagement and participation of the general student body in the activities of the Union and student life in general.

3.1.4 To promote and pursue the betterment of the education and wellbeing of the members.

3.1.5 To create a positive college experience for the members.

3.2 Objectives

MISU will achieve these aims by:

3.2.1 Connecting directly with students to understand their concerns and priorities.

3.2.2 Advocating for students with college management and staff on matters of importance to the student body.

3.2.3 Empowering students to lead campaigns and action squads on issues that affect their educational and social experience.

3.2.4 Supporting student voice through accessible democratic participation channels.

3.2.5 Ensuring that the student voice is to the forefront of college decisions.

3.2.6 Being an approachable and welcoming point of contact for students.

Article 4. Membership

4.1 Student Membership

4.1.1 All registered students of the College, at both the Limerick and Thurles Campuses , shall be full and equal members of MISU.

4.1.2 Advocacy Officers shall be full members of MISU while serving their term of office.

4.1.3 All members are entitled to:

- (i) Vote in MISU Elections and Referenda,
- (ii) Hold full voting rights at Union General Meetings, and the right to speak at these meetings, subject to standing orders,
- (iii) Avail of MISU's services and facilities provided to the general membership,
- (iv) Participate in democratic procedures and governance mechanisms established by MISU,
- (v) Seek election or appointment to any level, subject to this constitution.

4.2 Honorary Membership

4.2.1 MISU may award honorary membership of the Union to such persons as it sees fit.

4.2.2 Honorary membership shall confer no rights, privileges or obligations to an honorary member or on the Union.

4.2.3 The procedures for awarding, maintaining and revoking honorary membership are set out in Schedule 1.

Article 5. Governance

5.1 The governance of the Union shall be based on the democratic principle that every member shall have the fullest opportunity to participate in Union affairs.

5.2 MISU shall adhere to the principles and practices of good governance.

5.3 The governance of MISU shall be conducted on the following hierarchical levels:

- 5.3.1 Referendum,
- 5.3.2 Union General Meeting,
- 5.3.3 Management Board
- 5.3.3 Democracy and Student Voice Framework bodies,
- 5.3.4 Advocacy Officer Team.

Article 6. Referendum

6.1 Referendum Authority

6.1.1 A referendum of the members of MISU shall be the supreme authority on all matters relating to the governance of MISU.

6.1.2 A referendum shall be the ultimate determinant of Union structure.

6.1.3 A referendum shall be held by MISU at the request of any of the following:

6.1.3.1 Bodies established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework, at quorum or,

6.1.3.2 The Advocacy Officer Team, at quorum or,

6.1.3.3 A petition which has been signed by a threshold of the membership of MISU as determined in Schedule 2 and submitted to the President.

6.1.4 Prior to the holding of a referendum, the motion will be debated by the Advocacy Officer Team and relevant governance bodies.

6.1.5 The proposer of a referendum shall set out the wording of the motion.

6.1.6 Legal advice should be sought where deemed necessary on proposed amendments to the constitution.

6.1.7 A referendum shall be conducted in accordance with procedures set out in Schedule 2.

6.1.8 Decisions of referendum are binding on all Union bodies, employees and agents.

6.1.9 The President shall ensure the implementation of decisions made by referendum.

6.1.10 The details of all referenda held shall be recorded in Schedule 3.

6.2 MISU Policies

6.2.1 MISU shall have a series of policies which shall run in conjunction with this constitution.

6.2.2 Policies shall not be in breach of the constitution.

6.2.3 In the event of conflict between this constitution and any policy, this constitution shall have precedence and be deemed to apply.

6.2.4 The President shall be responsible for the implementation of Union policies.

6.2.5 The procedures for policy development, review and amendment are set out in Schedule 4.

Article 7. General Meetings

7.1 Union General Meetings

7.1.1 The Union General Meeting (UGM) shall be a forum for member engagement with MISU governance.

7.1.2 The UGM may discuss matters of Union business and make recommendations to the Advocacy Officer Team and relevant governance bodies.

7.1.3 The procedures for Union General Meetings are set out in Schedule 5.

7.2 Annual General Meeting

7.2.1 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of MISU shall be held at the end of each Academic Year.

7.2.2 The AGM shall receive reports from the Advocacy Officer Team, student representatives, and the Management Board.

7.2.3 The procedures for the Annual General Meeting are set out in Schedule 5.

7.3 Emergency General Meeting

7.3.1 An Emergency General Meeting (EGM) may be called by the Advocacy Officer Team or by petition of members as set out in Schedule 5.

7.3.2 The procedures for Emergency General Meetings are set out in Schedule 5.

Article 8. Management Board

8.1 Establishment

There shall be a Management Board to provide governance oversight and strategic direction for MISU.

8.2 Purpose and Authority

The Management Board shall:

- 8.2.1** Exercise strategic oversight of MISU's operations, governance, and financial management;
- 8.2.2** Support and advise the Advocacy Officer Team in fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities;
- 8.2.3** Monitor compliance with legal, regulatory, and constitutional obligations;
- 8.2.4** Oversee MISU's long-term sustainability through strategic planning, risk management, and resource stewardship;
- 8.2.5** Exercise such executive functions in accordance with Schedule 6.

8.3 Relationship to Other Governance Bodies

- 8.3.1** The Management Board shall be accountable to the membership
- 8.3.2** The Advocacy Officer Team shall report regularly to the Management Board on their activities and performance.
- 8.3.3** The Management Board shall report to into the appropriate democratic processes as outlined in Schedule 6

8.4 Composition, Procedures, and Powers

The composition, meeting procedures, terms of office, and detailed powers of the Management Board shall be set out in Schedule 6.

Article 9. Democracy and Student Voice Framework

9.1 MISU shall establish and maintain a comprehensive Democracy and Student Voice Framework designed to ensure genuine democratic participation, effective representation, and meaningful accountability.

9.2 Democratic and Student Voice Framework Operational Procedures are detailed in Schedule 7.

9.3 Principles of the Framework

The Democracy and Student Voice Framework shall be guided by the following principles:

9.3.1 Accessibility: Democratic participation shall be accessible to all students regardless of their available time, location, or previous engagement with the Union.

9.3.2 Inclusivity: The framework shall actively include voices from all student demographics, particularly those traditionally excluded from democratic participation.

9.3.3 Responsiveness: Democratic structures shall be responsive to changing student needs and capable of adaptation without constitutional amendment.

9.3.4 Accountability: Clear mechanisms shall exist to hold student leaders and representatives accountable for their performance and delivery.

9.3.5 Empowerment: Students shall be empowered to lead change on issues that matter to them, supported by appropriate infrastructure and resources.

9.4 Democratic Methodologies

9.4.1 MISU shall employ a comprehensive mix of democratic methodologies appropriate to the changing needs and circumstances of the student body.

9.4.2 Democratic methodologies may include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Direct election of representatives,
- (ii) Random selection (sortition) for governance and accountability bodies,
- (iii) Digital participation platforms and polling mechanisms,
- (iv) Deliberative forums and conferences,
- (v) Petition and campaign mechanisms,
- (vi) Community organising approaches,
- (vii) Such other methodologies as may prove effective in achieving the objectives of this constitution.

9.5 Accountability Mechanisms

9.5.1 MISU shall establish clear and effective mechanisms to hold the Advocacy Officer Team, student representatives, and the Union as a whole accountable for their performance and delivery of objectives.

9.5.2 Accountability mechanisms shall include periodic review by students selected to scrutinise performance, assess effectiveness, and make recommendations for improvement.

9.5.3 Accountability processes shall be transparent, evidence-based, and result in public reporting of findings and recommendations.

9.5.4 The Advocacy Officer Team and relevant Union bodies shall be required to respond formally to accountability recommendations within timeframes established in the Schedules.

9.6 Governance and Constitutional Oversight

9.6.1 MISU shall establish mechanisms for deliberation on constitutional and procedural matters, including the amendment of Schedules and the review of governance structures.

9.6.2 Such mechanisms may utilise diverse selection methods including but not limited to sortition to ensure broad and legitimate representation in governance decisions.

9.6.3 Bodies established for governance oversight shall have authority to amend the Schedules of this constitution in accordance with procedures set out therein.

9.7 Community Engagement and Organising

9.7.1 MISU shall employ community organising techniques and methodologies to build meaningful connections with students, surface their priorities, and support student-led action on issues of importance.

9.7.2 MISU may employ trained individuals to conduct relationship-building, listening activities, and support for student-led campaigns and action squads.

9.7.3 Community organising approaches shall prioritize direct connection with students, particularly those who face barriers to traditional participation, and shall emphasize student leadership and empowerment.

9.8 Academic Representation

9.8.1 MISU shall establish systems to engage students in their learning experience and ensure authentic student voice in academic quality, governance, and strategic institutional committees.

9.8.2 Academic representation shall be structured to provide meaningful student input at appropriate levels of institutional governance including but not limited to faculty-level and strategic-level forums.

9.8.3 Students engaged in academic representation shall receive appropriate support, training, and resources to fulfil their role effectively.

9.8.4 Academic representatives shall provide evidence and feedback to the Advocacy Officer Team to inform institutional advocacy on teaching, learning, and student experience matters.

9.9 Participation Channels

9.9.1 MISU shall provide and maintain accessible channels through which all members can surface issues, discuss priorities, and mobilize around matters of importance to the student community.

9.9.2 Participation channels shall include digital platforms enabling students to propose ideas, support initiatives, and engage in discussion regardless of time or location constraints.

9.9.3 Issues surfaced through participation channels shall be assessed for genuine energy and momentum, ensuring both majority concerns and issues affecting specific communities receive appropriate attention and response.

9.9.4 MISU shall provide transparent responses to issues raised through participation channels and shall facilitate appropriate action where genuine student engagement is demonstrated.

9.10 Implementation and Review

9.10.1 The specific structures, procedures, and operational details of the Democracy and Student Voice Framework shall be set out in the Schedules to this constitution.

9.10.2 The framework shall be subject to regular review to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with the principles and objectives of this constitution.

9.10.3 Amendments to the operational elements of the framework may be made through the Schedules in accordance with the procedures set out therein, without requiring constitutional amendment.

9.10.4 The Advocacy Officer Team shall report regularly on the operation and effectiveness of the Democracy and Student Voice Framework.

Article 10. Advocacy Officer Team

10.1 There shall be an Advocacy Officer Team elected by the members of the Union in accordance with Article 14.

10.2 The Advocacy Officer Team shall be responsible for representing student interests, advocating on behalf of the student body, and implementing the decisions made by referendum and relevant governance bodies.

10.3 Composition

The Advocacy Officer Team shall comprise:

10.3.1 President (full-time),

10.3.2 Advocacy Officer (part-time),

10.3.3 Advocacy Officer (part-time).

10.4 Responsibilities

The Advocacy Officer Team shall:

10.4.1 Represent student interests on institutional and external committees and forums,

10.4.2 Advocate for students with college management and staff,

10.4.3 Champion student-led campaigns and action squads identified through democratic participation channels,

10.4.4 Ensure that the student voice is to the forefront of college decisions,

10.4.5 Implement decisions made by referendum and relevant governance bodies,

10.4.6 Protect and uphold the terms of this constitution.

10.5 President

10.5.1 The President shall be the principal representative and spokesperson of MISU.

10.5.2 The President shall be a full-time employee of MISU during the term of their office.

10.5.3 The President shall become a Director of MISU Commercial Services DAC on commencement of term of office and resign on the conclusion of their officership.

10.5.4 Detailed responsibilities are set out in Schedule 8.

10.6 Advocacy Officers

10.6.1 Advocacy Officers shall be part-time employees of MISU during the term of their office.

10.6.2 Advocacy Officers shall support the President in representing student interests and advocating on behalf of the student body.

10.6.3 Detailed responsibilities are set out in Schedule 8.

10.7 Collective Principles

10.7.1 The principle of collective responsibility underpins all decisions of the Advocacy Officer Team.

10.7.2 All Advocacy Officers shall act reasonably and prudently in all matters and in the best interests of MISU and the student body.

10.7.3 All Advocacy Officers shall be accountable through mechanisms established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework and ultimately to the membership.

10.7.4 The Advocacy Officer Team shall remain impartial during MISU elections and referenda.

10.7.5 Term dates, eligibility criteria, and other operational matters are set out in Schedule 8.

Article 11. Amendments

11.1 A referendum shall be the only method of amending the Articles of this constitution.

11.2 The Schedules of this constitution may be amended in accordance with procedures set out in the Schedules.

11.3 Only the Advocacy Officer Team, bodies established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework, or a petition of members may propose amendments to the Articles of the constitution.

Article 12. Accountability and Discipline

12.1 Any person who holds an official Union position and has made a complaint, or has a complaint made against them is subject to MISU Disciplinary Procedures.

12.2 Accountability mechanisms established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework may bring a motion of no confidence in a member of the Advocacy Officer Team or other official positions.

12.3 A vote of no confidence that is carried shall trigger procedures as set out in Schedule 9.

12.4 MISU Disciplinary Procedures are set out in Schedule 9.

Article 13. Indemnity

Every elected representative of the Union, appointee or member of staff of the Union shall be indemnified out of the assets of the Union against all and any losses or liability, which they may sustain or incur in or about the execution of their office or otherwise in relation hereto.

Article 14. Elections

14.1 Elections shall be held for positions on the Advocacy Officer Team in accordance with procedures set out in Schedule 10.

14.2 All elections shall be conducted by secret ballot using the Single Transferable Vote system.

14.3 A Returning Officer and Electoral Committee shall be responsible for the conduct of all elections and referenda.

14.4 The appointment, authority, and procedures for elections are set out in Schedule 10.

Article 15. Interpretation

15.1 In the event of a dispute as to interpretation of any part of this constitution, the ruling of the President shall be sought.

15.2 In the event of a challenge to the President's ruling, the matter shall be reviewed by the Advocacy Officer Team and referred to relevant governance bodies for final determination.

Article 16. Autonomy

16.1 The Union is an autonomous organisation and shall not be affiliated to any organisation whose conditions of membership may affect the autonomy of the Union.

16.2 During all MISU Elections, Officers shall maintain the autonomy of the Union.

Article 17. Affiliations

17.1 Where the Union wish to affiliate to a body which directly levies a membership fee on members of the Union, the decision shall be taken only by referendum.

17.2 Relevant governance bodies may approve membership of organisations that do not require an affiliation fee, which shall aid the Union in the pursuance of its objectives.

17.3 Details of all affiliations shall be recorded in Schedule 11.

Article 18. Finance

18.1 The finances of the Union shall be managed in accordance with appropriate financial controls and procedures.

18.2 The MISU accounts shall be audited at the end of each financial year.

18.3 The President and the General Manager shall publish a full and accurate statement of the accounts at the end of each financial year.

18.4 Detailed financial procedures are set out in Schedule 12.

Article 19. General Manager

19.1 The General Manager is the most senior member of staff and has the responsibility of providing elected officers with professional advice, managerial expertise and support.

19.2 The role and responsibilities of the General Manager are set out in Schedule 13.

Article 20. Standing Orders

20.1 All Union General Meetings, meetings of the Advocacy Officer Team, and meetings of bodies established under the Democracy and Student Voice Framework shall be conducted in accordance with Standing Orders.

20.2 Detailed Standing Orders for meetings are set out in Schedule 14.

END OF CONSTITUTION

Schedules Referenced in this Constitution:

- Schedule 1: Honorary Membership Procedures
- Schedule 2: Referendum Procedures
- Schedule 3: Record of Referenda
- Schedule 4: Policy Development and Review Procedures
- Schedule 5: General Meeting Procedures
- Schedule 6: Management Advisory Board Terms of Reference
- Schedule 7: Democracy and Student Voice Framework Operational Procedures
- Schedule 8: Advocacy Officer Roles and Responsibilities
- Schedule 9: Disciplinary and Accountability Procedures
- Schedule 10: Electoral Procedures
- Schedule 11: Record of Affiliations
- Schedule 12: Financial Procedures
- Schedule 13: General Manager Role and Responsibilities
- Schedule 14: Standing Orders for Meetings