**UCC Societies Policies, Procedure, & Operational Rules**

*Approved by Senate 26/3/2023*

| **Table of Contents**  **SECTION ONE: UCC SOCIETIES EXECUTIVE POLICY**   |  | **Introduction** | | --- | --- | |  | **Recognition of Societies** | |  | **Finance** | |  | **UCC Societies Portal** | |  | **Society Events** | |  | **Postering** | |  | **Branding** | |  | **GDPR, Alcohol Promotion & Sponsorship, & Child Protection** | |  | **GDPR, Alcohol Policy, & Child Protection Breach Sanctions** | |  | **Health & Safety** | |  | **Emergency Guidelines Policy** | |  | **Bullying and Harassment Policy** | |  | **Complaints Procedure** | |  | **The Hub** | |  | **AGMs & EGMs** | |  | **Sub-Committees** | | **16.** | **Plastic-Free UCC** | | **Appendix:**   1. **Schedule of Allowances** 2. **New Society Application Forms** 3. **UCC Societies Branding Document** 4. **UCC Alcohol Policy** | |   **SECTION TWO: UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK POLICY IN RELATION TO UCC SOCIETIES** |
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*Section 1*

**UCC Societies Executive Policy**

1. **Introduction**

UCC Societies is the governing body of all UCC Societies. As per the Societies Constitution the Societies Executive, as the representative body for societies and their committees, is responsible for the drafting of policy for ‘the good running of Societies’. From March 2014, policies that have been drafted by the Societies’ Executive are required to be approved by the Societies’ Senate. For ease of access and in the spirit of transparency all policies, procedures and operational rules shall be added to this document. It is envisioned that this document will be amended and added to over time. Any motions passed by Senate will also be added into this policy book. To gain a full understanding of the policies and procedures of UCC Societies this document should be consulted in tandem with the Constitution, Strategic Plan and Schedule of Allowances.

1. **Recognition of Societies**

*2.1. Registered Societies*

Registered Societies must operate within the policy of UCC Societies.

As per the UCC Societies Constitution, registered Societies are entitled to poster in the university within UCC Societies’ guidelines, have the right to book rooms within the procedures of the relevant offices of UCC, have the right to hold events on-campus and to represent the society off-campus.

Registered Societies must maintain consistent communication with the Societies Executive. The Societies Executive are empowered to terminate a Society if the Society has refused to communicate or acknowledge the Executive as the regulatory body for UCC Societies.

Each society is subject to a Mid-Year Review. This Mid-Year Review is conducted by the President in conjunction with the officer that represents the society’s repping group on the Executive (Rep.). This review includes a review of a Society’s record of attendance at mandatory trainings, Senate, and further includes how the Society has interacted and communicated with the Societies Executive, and if there have been any breaches of UCC Societies policy. See 2.3.1 for details of the Mid-Year Review failure processes and procedures.

*2.2. New Society Applications*

New Society applications are managed by the New Societies Portfolio, which is assigned by the President to an OCM elected at the AGM. On appointment, the officer manages the portfolio of new societies alongside the President.

UCC Societies Executive accepts applications for new Societies twice annually for a respective period of three months minimum. These application periods will open at the discretion of the President in conjunction with the New Societies Officer. Information regarding the application process can be found [here](https://www.ucc.ie/en/societies/committeeresources/newsocietyapplication/). As outlined on the form each application must include a proposed constitution, answers to all the questions listed in the application form, and the collection of 200 student signatures. The collection of these student signatures must be done so through a form available for collection at the Societies Office and this form must be returned to this office at the close of business each day. Finished applications must be sent to the New Societies Officer at [newsocieties@uccsocieties.ie](mailto:newsocieties@uccsocieties.ie).

Each application is considered by the Societies Executive.

Applications will be rejected if:

* The remit outlined in the application is covered by an existing Society. A full list of the current Societies can be found on societies.ucc.ie.
* The remit of the Society is limited to a single issue campaign (e.g. Yes to Referendum X Society)

Applications may also be rejected at the discretion of the Executive and in this case, feedback detailing the reason for this rejection will be provided to the applicant. The opportunity to re-apply will be available to applicants twice - once immediately after rejection, and then once in the subsequent academic term. Applicants are encouraged to liaise with the New Societies Officer to ensure that their application is as strong as possible on re-application.

*2.2.1 Probationary Period*

Each New Society is on probation for a 2 year period after which its status shall be reviewed. Failure of the Mid Year Review during this period will result in the prospect of disbandment at the end of the year.

*2.3. Disbandment*

The Societies Executive can disband a Society if they have refused to communicate or acknowledge the Executive as the regulatory body for UCC Societies. Societies may also be disbanded in the case of serious or repeated misconduct.

Disbanded societies who want to reapply for registered status must apply through the New Society application process.

*2.3.1. Mid-Year Review*

The Mid-Year Review is conducted each year after Semester One. It is a review of each Society’s activity, engagement and conduct in a variety of areas. Some of these areas include but are not limited to: attendance at mandatory trainings and Senates, engagement with their Executive Representative, compliance with rules, regulations and guidelines, and engagement with UCC Societies events. The President will conduct this review in collaboration with the Executive. Any failing Societies will be invited to meet and review their result and, if necessary, develop a plan to address any issues. Failure to respond to this request will result in the Society being put forward for a vote of disbandment at an Executive Meeting at the end of the term.

1. **Finance**

The Societies Executive distributes monies allocated by the University to Societies through the Finance Committee comprised of the President, Executive Finance Officer and Societies Officer. Each Society is provided with a bank account and access to an online finance portal. End-of-year accounts must be completed by office, and then ratified by the finance committee and society itself. This Financial Report should be included in each society’s Crossover Document.

Note: Monies provided to Political Party Societies is limited as per the guidelines from the Standards in Public Office Commission.

All policies in relation to Societies and Finance can be found on the UCC Societies website.

1. **UCC Societies Portal:**

The portal is the mechanism for Societies to organise themselves, their events and their finances. All committee members must be added into the portal after every AGM, EGM, and election by interview. Only Society committee members may have access to the Portal.

Societies manage all finances on this and must log their expenditure and income over the year. For further detail on portal finances, please refer to our Finance Policy and Training.

1. **Society Events**

All UCC Societies events are subject to UCC Rules and Regulations. All students should be able to attend a society’s event without fear of bullying or harassment. All speakers, facilitators and participants at society events must follow the UCC Societies Bullying and Discrimination Policy. Under no circumstances should abusive, personal, or aggressive comments be made at a society event.

The following are the rules that pertain to event organisation:

* Risk Assessments must be completed and approved before a room can be booked or an event publicised.
* Rooms should be left the way they were found.
* Room bookings must be submitted at least 48 hours in advance of an event.
* Mystery tours are not allowed.
* For Balls and functions one Security staff is required per 100 guests up to 300 attendees and two required per 100 guests thereafter, or according to the hotel contract. Security staff must be booked at least two weeks in advance of the event.
* Maximum two free drinks per person for any on-campus function.
* Maximum one free drink per person for any off campus events.
* Organisers of Society events such as Balls should ensure that the sale, distribution and consumption of alcohol at these events is conducive to the low risk consumption of alcohol by participants.

*5.1. Society Trips Off-Campus/Abroad*

When on a trip away, it is important to remember that you are representing both UCC and your society. As such, all of the rules laid out in this policy should be followed.

*5.2 Balls and large-scale events*

All Societies organising a ball must liaise with the President at the beginning of the term. They must provide dates and location of ticket sales, information of any promotional events and the Ball itself.

Societies organising events like markets or events on campus, that include vendors, must follow the UCC Casual Traders on Campus Policy.

Societies liaising with high-profile guests must consult the [Protocol for VIP Visit to UCC](https://www.ucc.ie/en/marketing-brand/services/events/).

1. **Postering**

Advertising is key for promoting a Society. Printing facilities for Societies activities are provided in the Hub. Other signage includes the digital poster boards in the office, and near the Quad. The following are the rules that pertain to postering and ads:

* Abuses of the printing service will result in a €50 fine for the Society.
* Societies shall not poster over another Society’s poster. However, if a poster is out of date you may remove it to make space.
* Each poster must clearly show the Society’s name and title of the event. A sponsor’s name shall not be bigger than that of the Society’s.
* Only A4 or A5 posters are allowed.
* A maximum of 10 posters per event are allowed.

Posters must be removed maximum one week after an event takes place. If a poster is not removed in this timeframe, the society in question will have to pay a €50 fine. After three offences, the Societies Office will not stamp the society’s posters for the duration of one semester.

1. **Branding**

Societies must make clear on their promotional material including logo and social media accounts that they are a registered Society and must adhere to the following format of their name: UCC X Society or the equivalent name in the working language of the society.

When branding any item in relation to societies using either the UCC crest, the UCC Societies logo or the UCC Sport logo for sporting events, the correct logo must be used. Any of these logos must not be altered in any way. The correct logos needed for branding are available from the Societies President (UCC Crest / UCC Societies Logo) and the Clubs President (UCC Sport Logo).

1. **GDPR, Alcohol Promotion & Sponsorship, & Child Protection**

*8.1. GDPR*

Societies are only allowed to use the mailing lists which are created within the Societies Office or are created under the advisement of the President or a member of staff. A breach in GDPR, i.e. a leak of identifiable details must be logged with the Societies Officer, who will then report it to university authorities. If a breach is logged, penalties will apply which will be decided by the Societies Executive.

*8.2. Alcohol Promotion & Sponsorship*

The following points have been drawn from the UCC Alcohol Policy.

* Societies must not advertise drink deals or use alcohol as an incentive to attend an event.
* Societies must not promote consumption of alcohol whether through:

a) direct alcohol promotion/advertisement

b) allusion to harmful alcoholic consumption or

c) the usage of language/imagery deemed by the Societies Executive to be encouraging alcohol consumption.

* Societies are not allowed to receive sponsorship from alcohol companies / brands / producers.
* Societies advertising of alcohol is limited to the advertising of brand names of beers, stout, spirits or the name of the manufacturers e.g. Jameson Film Fest (if unsure about these points please contact the Societies Executive).
* No Pub Crawls to be advertised by societies.
* Mystery Tours are banned.

*8.3 Child Protection*

Event health and safety regulations apply with external events as well, and a risk assessment must be produced. All those conducting outreach activities involving children and teeneagers under the age of 18 years must have completed the child protection training provided by Tusla. This training covers the volunteer as long as an individual who is Garda Vetted is present for the duration of the workshop. The Garda Vetted personnel who are with the children and teenagers must be present at all times.

Approval for photography must be sought prior to the event if photographs are to be taken.

1. **GDPR, Alcohol Policy and Child Protection Breach Sanctions**

In the event of a breach in either the GDPR Policy, Alcohol Promotion & Sponsorship Policies, or Child Protection Guidelines, the following sanctions can be imposed by a vote at a meeting of the Societies Executive:

| First Offence - One of the following three options:   * 10% of Society’s Current Balance * 10% of Society’s allocated Societies Executive Funding * 1 week suspension from the Societies Portal |
| --- |
| Second Offence - One of the following three options:   * 25% of Society’s Current Balance * 25% of Society’s allocated Societies Executive Funding * 2 week suspension from the Societies Portal |
| Third Offence   * The Society will be put on a Period of Restricted Activity until the end of the semester and will not be permitted to hold events * The involved volunteers will be prohibited from school outreach and other similar activities for the remainder of the academic term |

An A4 letter appealing the sanction may be sent within 48 hours of receipt of notification of the sanction to president@uccsocieties.ie. This will then be brought to the attention of the Independent Appeals Board.

All fines will be donated to the Raise & Give Week Charities.

1. **Health and Safety**

All societies as well as the Societies Executive are expected to maintain a high level of health and safety at all society events, including off campus events such as trips, balls etc. All events, both on and off campus, must be risk assessed in accordance with the health and safety policies.’ All health and safety policies including risk assessments are available on the societies portal under ‘Admin Docs’ and the UCC Societies website at societies.ucc.ie/about/constitutionandpolicies/.

1. **Emergency Guidelines Policy**

In response to any state of emergency, guidelines may be implemented by UCC and/or the Irish Government which may restrict the activities of Societies in certain capacities. These restrictions (i.e. no in-person events, limited numbers of attendees, etc.) will be communicated to all societies via email from either the Societies Officer or the Societies President. All societies are required to adhere to these guidelines in their entirety for the safety and well-being of committees, members and the population in general.

If a Society is found to be in breach of any rules implemented in the manner outlined above, a report will be filed with the relevant University authorities and one of the following penalties can be applied at the discretion of the Societies Executive:

* Fine: 10% of Society’s Current Balance **OR** 10% of Funding granted by the Societies Executive
* Suspension of access to the Societies Portal for a period of 2 weeks

1. **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

This policy outlines the definitions of behavior that UCC Societies views as discriminatory and unacceptable. This policy also outlines how to create a safe and friendly environment in all societies activities. Finally, UCC Societies complaints mechanism and the process for disciplinary action are outlined.

UCC Societies Notes:

* All students have the right to enjoy societies without fear of bullying or harassment of any sort.
* That UCC Societies has a duty to all societies’ members to create a safe, caring and inclusive environment where all students are treated equally.
* All University policies in relation to bullying and harassment such as the Student Charter, Duty of Respect and Right to Dignity Policy, and the Student Rules must be adhered to.
* All definitions and rules herein apply to all Societies and the Societies Executive.

Definitions:

* Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted conduct related to any discriminatory grounds, if the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The discrimination can be marital status, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, race, family status, membership of the Traveller community and family status (this list is not exhaustive).
* Common harassment behavior can be the following but is not limited to; unwelcome physical contact, inappropriate looks, comments or suggestions, interfering with or damage to property, threats or extortion, comments, gestures, jokes or displaying or circulating offensive material, hostile attitudes, practices or structures which discriminate against an individual or group of persons.
* Sexual harassment is defined as any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, if the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.
* Common sexual harassment behavior includes, but is not limited to; verbal or physical advances, requesting sexual favors, asking about someone’s sexual preferences, fantasies or activities, asking someone about their sexual orientation in an aggressive manner, asking someone their gender identity in an aggressive manner, repeatedly asking for a date after someone has expressed lack of interest, unwelcome patting, hugging or touching someone’s body, hair or clothing, making comments, jokes, sexual innuendo, or displaying or circulating offensive and/or pornographic material, making disparaging remarks to someone about their gender or body.
* Bullying is defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which can reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behavior described in this definition may be an affront to a person's dignity but as a once off incident is not considered bullying.
* Common bullying behavior includes but is not limited to; unreasonably blocking someone’s progress or advancement, persistent picking on someone, manipulation of someone’s reputation, manipulating the nature of someone’s work or ability of someone to do their work, social exclusion or isolation, unwarranted or constant criticism, preventing someone from speaking, shouting, public reprimands, rages or insults, unwanted physical contact, physical abuse or threats of abuse to an individual or an individual’s property, undermining an individual’s work or self-esteem, verbal abuse/insults, intimidation, aggression, humiliation and blame for things beyond the person’s control.

1. **Complaints Procedure:**

In the event a society member would like to make a complaint against another society member, a member of the Societies Executive or a society within UCC, the following procedure will apply:

At the first instance, the complainant should contact their Society Executive Representative, Societies President or in some instances Societies Officer where applicable to discuss the alleged complaint with them briefly and informally.

*11.1 Resolution*

If required, the complainant may be asked to fill out the UCC Societies Complaint form. Once signed by the complainant matters will then be discussed in full with the Societies President and Societies Officer.

It should be noted that UCC Societies can only deal with complaints of breach of societies rules, policies and procedures.

Any documentation gathered by UCC Societies during the consideration of the complaint, including the original complaint form may be forwarded to Campus Watch if appropriate. This may not preclude an informal resolution to the complaint but may invoke a formal resolution process.

Note: The discretion to forward the complaint to Campus Watch may be exercised by the Societies President or Societies Officer, where it may be alleged that a student has breached the UCC student rules.

*11.2 Confidentiality:*

Statements, letters and other communications shall be confidential to those involved in the procedure to the greatest extent possible, compliant with entitlement of the Complainant and Respondent to the full disclosure to them of all relevant documents. Complaints that are received into an email account shall only be forwarded to relevant parties, such as the Societies Officer and the Societies President, or Campus Watch.

1. **The Hub**

The Hub is a friendly and safe environment that enables people to carry out their society work. It is everyone’s responsibility to make sure that there is a positive atmosphere in The Hub. This is particularly important during times when people are stressed. Examples of inappropriate behaviour would be:

* Any of the previously mentioned behaviour covered under definitions.
* Discussion of inter-committee or inter-society problems; these are issues that should be discussed in private and not in the Hub. The exception to this would be discussing it with the President or Executive Representative in a private meeting.
* The criticism of election manifestos.
* The use of discriminatory language including but not limited to: sexist language, racist language, homophobic language, xenophobic language and transphobic language.
* Criticism and/or the undermining of other societies' events.
* It is important to note that the Hub is a strictly apolitical space and any method of campaigning done in this space for a seat on any student representation body is not allowed under this definition; this includes but is not limited to the Societies Executive, Clubs Executive, or any body within the Students’ Union.

1. **AGMs & EGMs**

Each Society is required to hold an AGM in the second term for the purpose of electing officials and reporting on activities. The following are the rules that pertain to AGMs and EGMs:

* An Executive Rep. must be present at an AGM/EGM for it to be valid. Executive Reps are responsible for offering suitable dates and must give reasonable notice of these.
* Please provide the Rep with a list of roles available and amendments at least three weeks in advance of the AGM, and at least two weeks in advance of the EGM.
* The following societies must have completed a finance meeting with the Societies Officer or Societies President prior to the end of the academic year:

1. Charitable status / Charitable Societies
2. Political societies registered as branches of political parties
3. Otherwise if requested

* Each Society must then present a Finance Report to your AGM so that all members know the current financial position of the Society.
* All available positions on the committee and notice of constitutional amendments must be advertised by poster/social media and/or email for two weeks in advance of the AGM, and for one week in advance of an EGM.
* After the AGM, each Society must add the new committee members to the portal and to the UCC Society Committee Members Noticeboard.
* Any candidate running for a position within a committee can not be travelling abroad for their Erasmus year / on placement or studying abroad the following year for the period of one semester or longer. .
* The key roles outlined in the Societies Constitution must be elected at the Societies AGM or EGM.
* The Society’s constitution must be uploaded to the portal within a week after any amendments are made.

1. **Sub-Committees**

Sub-committees are groups set up to work on a particular remit, subject, or project.

* At least one member of the society committee must sit on the sub-committee to ensure that their work is in line with the work of the society.
* Sub-committee members cannot be registered on the committee portal unless they are a member of the main committee society.
* Sub-committees have to be approved by the Societies Executive and society chairperson upon creation to ensure that they are regulated and follow UCC Societies policy. These sub-committees will be reviewed as part of the Mid-Year Review and may be disbanded by the Societies Executive if they breach the policies outlined by this document.
* It is recommended that societies do not have more than 3 subcommittees.
* Sub Committees are permitted to have social media accounts, however there must be a clear declaration of their Sub Committee status and which Society they are affiliated with.
* The only body allowed to describe themselves as a Society is the registered Society itself. Sub-Committees and working groups are not permitted to call themselves a Society in any circumstances.

1. **Plastic Free Policy**

The policy calls on the university to remove the following single-use plastic items by 2023.

The items covered by this policy include:

- Single-Use beverage containers i.e. coffee cups, drinks cups etc.

- Single-Use salad containers/lunch boxes

- Single-Use plastic cutlery

- Single-Use plastic bottles (e.g. for water/ soft drinks)

- Plastic Cutlery & Plastic Packaging (eg- Sweet Tubs/Sandwiches etc)"

This means that the single-use plastic items listed above are not to be distributed by anyone at UCC, including by Societies or at society events.