



**National Student  
Engagement Programme**  
Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta  
na Mac Léinn

# Governance and Student Representation Toolkit





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# Glossary

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
NStEP	National Student Engagement Programme
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
NUS –USI	National Union of Students Northern Ireland
ESU	European Students' Union
SU	Students' Union
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IUA	Irish Universities Association
THEA	Technological Higher Education Authority
HECA	Higher Education Colleges Association
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
NFTL	National Forum for Teaching and Learning
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
ISSU	Irish Second-Level Students' Union
ISSE	Irish Survey of Student Engagement
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
IoT	Institute of Technology
TU	Technological University
DAB	Designated Awarding Body
HEI	Higher Education Institution
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
GB	Governing Body
AC	Academic Council
T&L	Teaching and Learning
R&D	Research and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
QE	Quality Enhancement
SLE	Student Learning Experience
EDI	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
HoF	Head of Faculty
HoD	Head of Department
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations

<b>ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>ICOS</b>	Irish Council for International Students
<b>NAIN</b>	National Academic Integrity Network
<b>PATH</b>	Programme for Access to Higher Education
<b>VITAL</b>	Valuing Ireland's Teaching and Learning
<b>SUSI</b>	Student Universal Support Ireland is Ireland's national awarding authority for further and higher education grants
<b>SAF</b>	Student Assistance Fund provides financial support to students who are in significant financial difficulty and whose participation in college would be at risk without such support
<b>Access Office</b>	Provides support for non-traditional students, such as financially
<b>Assistive Technology (AT)</b>	Assistive Technology is an umbrella term for any technology that helps with a task. Most AT Services provides training, information, and support to students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties
<b>Disability Support Service</b>	Aims to promote inclusion, advocacy, and active participation in college life for students with disabilities and/or mental health conditions
<b>Careers Office</b>	Offers advice, support, and information in relation to career choice and planning
<b>Heath Centre</b>	Provides a full medical and nursing service to all students in the institution



ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
<b>Student Counselling</b>	Therapeutic and educational services respond to the personal, psychological, social, and academic needs and concerns of students
<b>Student Learning Support</b>	Offers academic and study support, organisation, time management and self-care tips
<b>VLE</b>	Virtual Learning Environment (e.g., Blackboard, Moodle)
<b>Springboard+</b>	Springboard + is a Government initiative offering free and heavily subsidised courses at certificate, degree, and masters level leading to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy.
<b>CORU Ireland</b>	CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health and social care regulator
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	A Strategic Plan (usually 5 years in length) sets out a framework of priorities and objectives for the HEI, its divisions, and departments
<b>Athena SWAN</b>	The Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within Higher Education and research
<b>CINNTE Review</b>	The QQI CINNTE review cycle evaluates the effectiveness of institution wide quality assurance procedures for the purposes of establishing, ascertaining, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the education, training, research, and related services that a HEI provides

# Institutional Staff

In order to engage with the governance structures in your own institution, you need to be aware of them and have a basic understanding of their roles and how they operate. There are a number of common staff members and departments within higher education institutions. This section will introduce you to these common structures and roles, and provide you with descriptions of their functions and how they relate to your third level educational experience.

Please keep in mind that each institution's approach is unique, and this document is a general example intended to support student representatives.



## President of the Institution

The primary duties and responsibilities of the President include developing the institution's vision and mission for the future, and ensuring the implementation of the institution's strategic aims, objectives and related policies to support the institution's mission. They are responsible for leading the advancement of institution, maintaining a culture of excellence and innovation across all areas of the institution, and enhancing the reputation of the institution. The President works in collaboration with the Governing Body, staff, Students' Union, students and alumni. This role may also be called Chancellor, Dean or Provost – it depends on the individual institution.

## Registrar

The Registrar has overall responsibility for academic governance and compliance in the institution, as well as some elements of academic operations – specifically the management of student examination, graduation and other activities. A focus of the role is the effective management of the Registrar's Office which includes responsibility for academic regulations, academic quality and standards, academic year planning, academic records and exams and graduation management. The Quality Office reports directly to the Registrar.



## Quality Office

The role of the Quality Office is to ensure that the institution is aligned to national and international standards and regulations for quality, and supports the engagement of staff, students and stakeholders in quality assurance and quality enhancement activity. Its purpose is to ensure that quality is integrated within institutional strategy and embedded in institutional culture and behaviours. Its objective is to assure and enhance the quality and reputation of the institutes's programmes and research.

## Estates & Facilities

The Estates and Facilities department are responsible for the maintenance of the institution's facilities and amenities. There are many tasks within their remit including (but not limited to): janitorial services, security, energy supply, utilities infrastructure, and maintenance of the institution's grounds. This department also provides facilities support and a wide-range of technical and engineering services.

## Faculties & Departments

Faculties are divisions within institutions comprising of a subject area or a group of related subject areas. Faculties are typically further divided into schools or departments, but not always. An academic department is a division of a faculty devoted to a particular academic discipline. For example, an institution may have a Faculty of Arts, which is composed of Departments of: Film & Television, Animation, Fine Art etc.

Each programme typically has a Programme Coordinator, (usually a senior member of academic staff), who assists other lecturers in the planning and coordination of programme activities. The Programme Coordinators works closely with and report to the Head of the Department (HoD). The HoD has overall responsibility for leading and managing the department, supported by relevant academic and administrative management teams. Heads of Department work closely with and reports to the Head of Faculty (HoF). The HoF has overall responsibility for the departments within the faculty and provides academic and administrative leadership to the departments. Heads of Faculty report to the President of the Institution.

## Student Support Services

Students may need support with a wide range of issues throughout their third level journey: medical problems, a mental health difficulty, managing a disability, financial support, career planning or simply settling in at third level. Student Support Services (also known as a Student Experience Team) have multiple supports services available across the academic year.

Each institution's supports vary, but most include some form of the following:

- Access Office
- Careers Office
- Assistive Technology
- Disability Support
- Health Centre
- Student Counselling
- Student Learning Supports

## Students' Union (SU)

The Students' Union represents and supports all the students in the institution. It is run autonomously and separately from the institute, by a team of sabbatical (full-time) and part-time officers. These student officers are elected by the student population. Its functions include representing the student body at an academic level, offering advice on welfare, finances and education. Most SUs organise awareness campaigns, entertainment and social events, as well as fundraise for charity. They usually also facilitate the running of clubs and societies on campus, and a Council or Senate of elected class representatives.

Smaller third level institutions may not have an established Students' Union.

# Committees

There are a number of committees within higher education institutions, with varying roles and activities. NStEP has compiled a few of the most common committees in HEIs, descriptions of their functions and potential members. Please keep in mind that each institution's committee(s) and approach is unique, and this document is a general example intended to support student representatives.

## Common Committees

- Governing Body
- Academic Council
- Teaching & Learning Committee
- Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee



## **What is a Governing Body?**

It is a group that manages or controls the activities of an organisation, such as a higher education institution. Its membership generally consists of an external Chairperson, secretary, the institution's President/Provost, Registrar, academic staff representatives, external representatives, Students' Union officers and student representatives.

## **What is Academic Council?**

Academic Council is the primary internal authority responsible for academic affairs within a higher education institution, for example curriculum, education provision and academic policies. Its membership generally consists of the institution's President/Provost, Registrar, Heads of Faculty, other academic staff representatives, Students' Union officers and student representatives.

## **What is Teaching & Learning Committee?**

A Teaching and Learning Committee is generally a sub-committee of an institution's Academic Council. The role of the Teaching and Learning Committee is to make recommendations to Academic Council on matters of strategy and policy in relation to Teaching and Learning in order to enhance teaching, learning and assessment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and to oversee, on behalf of Academic Council, the development, implementation, and review of the education strategy for the institution, within the overall framework of the institution's respective strategic plan.



## **What is Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee?**

A Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee is generally a sub-committee of an institution's Academic Council. The role of a Quality Assurance and/or Enhancement Committee is to support the institution's mission and strategy for excellence in learning, research, and related services through developing and embedding a culture of quality enhancement based on the outcomes of robust expert peer review and informed by ongoing analysis of key quality indicators.

## **What is the Research & Development Committee?**

A Research & Development Committee is generally a sub-committee of an institution's Academic Council. The role of a Research and Development Committee is to oversee and support the institution's strategy and policy to support and enhance the institution's research, innovation, and external research engagements. It is responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of research performance.

# Committee Agenda Example

This document is an example agenda of a meeting of an institution's Governing Body. At each section there are notes (in italics) outlining and explaining what each section consists of. Please keep in mind that each institution's committee s) and approach is unique, and this document is a general example intended to support student representatives.



# Governing Body Meeting Agenda EXAMPLE

## Board Room/MS Teams

### 12PM XX/XX/XXXX

#### **Adoption of the Agenda**

*Before the meeting can continue, the agenda must be adopted (approved) by the member of the committee. This involves the agenda being proposed and seconded. This is where 'Any Other Business' (AOB) can be added to the agenda, at the discretion of the Chairperson.*

*(See the Committee Minutes Example).*

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

*Conflicts of interest can occur in meetings where members may be in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity as committee members.*

#### **Adoption of Minutes from Meeting of XX/XX/XXXX**

*These are the minutes of the previous meeting of the Governing Body/committee. If there are any issues with the minutes (e.g., something was recorded inaccurately), they can be raised here. These need to be proposed and seconded.*

#### **Matters Arising**

*Matters arising are actions from previous meetings and are noted with the person responsible for each action given.*

## **Correspondence**

*These are any communications the committee received since the last meeting of the committee.*

## **Items of Information**

### **7.1 Example Item**

*This section consists of agenda items that the committee members are to be informed of. This includes any related incidents of note such as recent awards, upcoming events, or recent announcements by the Government, etc. These do not need to be proposed or seconded.*

## **Items for Discussion**

*This agenda item deals with items for discussion and approval. These vary from committee to committee based on their scope and remit. Some items for example include policies to be approved, discussions surrounding planning for upcoming events, approval of appointments of external examiners to the institution, or other issues being faced by the institution. These need to be proposed and seconded.*

## **Any Other Business (AOB)**

*Matters not listed on the agenda of the meeting, raised after the items on the agenda have been discussed.*

# Committee Minutes Example

This document is an example of minutes from a meeting of an institution's Governing Body. At each section there are notes (in italics) outlining and explaining what each section consists of. Please keep in mind that each institution's committee(s) and approach is unique, and this document is a general example intended to support student representatives.



# Minutes of the Governing Body

## Meeting Example – XX/XX/XXXX

**Present:** Institution President, Governing Body Chairperson, Governing Body internal and external members, Student Union members and student members.

**Apologies:** N/A

**Absent without Apology:** N/A

**In Attendance:** Secretary to the Governing Body, Recording Secretary to the Governing Body.

The meeting took place in the Board Room/MS Teams of 'X Institution'. Attendance for the meeting was monitored throughout the meeting by the Secretary to the Governing Body, and the Recording Secretary to the Governing Body. The meeting commenced at XX:XXPM and concluded at XX:XXPM.

The meeting was chaired by [Chairperson].

### 1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted as circulated. [See the Committee Agenda Example  
Proposed: GB Member Seconded: GB Member

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### 2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were reported regarding items for discussion on the agenda for this meeting.

*Conflicts of interest can occur in meetings where members may be in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity as committee members.*

### **3. Adoption of Minutes from Meeting of XX/XX/XXXX (including for Publication)**

The Minutes of the Meeting of XX/XX/XXXX were approved  
(including approval for publication).

Proposed: GB Member Seconded: GB Member

*These are the minutes of the previous meeting of the Governing Body/committee.*

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### **4. Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

*Matters arising are actions from previous meetings and are noted with the person responsible for each action given.*

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### **5. Correspondence**

No correspondence.

*These are any communications the committee received since the last meeting of the committee.*

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### **6. Technical Approvals**

#### **6.1. Bank Accounts**

No changes to 'X Institution' Bank Accounts.

#### **6.2. Property Rentals**

No rentals for approval at this meeting.

#### **6.3. HR Appointments**

No HR Appointments for approval at this meeting.

*This section deals with items for approval, for example: changes or action taken with regard to the institution's bank accounts/treasury, rental properties, or employment appointments. Each item must be proposed and seconded by a member of the Governing Body.*

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## **7. Governing Body Committees and Academic Council (aka Items for Information)**

### **7.1. EDI Committee – Minutes of the meeting XX/XX/XXXX**

Circulation of the minutes of the EDI Committee Meeting of XX/XX/XXXX, were noted by the Governing Body. An overview of matters discussed was provided by the Chairperson of the Committee.

### **7.2. Academic Council – Minutes of the meeting XX/XX/XXXX**

Circulation of the Minutes of the Academic Council Meeting of XX/XX/XXXX was noted by the Governing Body, and a report on matters discussed by Academic Council at the meeting was given by the President.

*Governing Body is the highest committee within a higher education institution with a number of sub-committees under it. Discussions of these sub-committee meeting minutes are also recorded here. This includes any related incidents of note such as recent awards, or recent announcements by the Government. These do not need to be proposed or seconded.*

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## **8. Governing Body Resolutions (aka Items for Discussion)**

### **8.1. The Governing Body Approves/Requires [Item X]**

This agenda item deals with items for discussion and approval, for example: Strategic Plans for the higher education institution, institution Annual Report, policies to be approved, approval of appointments of new employees to the institution. These need to be proposed and seconded.

Proposed: GB Member

Seconded: GB Member



## 9. President's Briefing

### [President/Chancellor/Dean/Provost of Institution]

Circulation of the President's Briefing to Governing Body was noted and a number of key points from the Briefing were highlighted by the President.

*This agenda item deals with items of note, for example: past events of note, upcoming events, strategic plan updates, funding updates etc. This is an opportunity for committee members to ask questions to the institution President directly. This agenda item is specific to Governing Body. The equivalent in other committees may be 'Items for Information'.*

#### 9.1. Financial Update

This agenda item updates the committee members on any financial changes since the last meeting of the committee. It is also an opportunity for committee members to ask questions regarding the financial update.

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## 10. Any Other Business (AOB)

Matters not listed on the agenda of the meeting, raised after the items on the agenda have been discussed.

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## 11. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Implications

This agenda item notes the EDI implications of any of the agenda items discussed at the meeting.

The next meeting of the Governing Body will take place on the XX/XX/XXXX at XX:XXPM.

Signed:

Date:

(Chairperson's signature)

# Student Representative Diary

These diary templates were created with you in mind. **Make them work for you!**

Use and edit them to suit your own organisation style. Remember they are only a starting guide point.

Print, draw, write and screenshot as needed.

## Need extra support?

Don't be afraid to reach out to the NStEP team!

Visit the '**Student Portal**' on [studentengagement.ie/student-training](https://studentengagement.ie/student-training) for other resources, online training modules, and to sign up to our newsletter.

## Need advice?

You can AskTeamNStEP by visiting [studentengagement.ie/askteamnstep/](https://studentengagement.ie/askteamnstep/) or emailing [nstepdevelopment@usi.ie](mailto:nstepdevelopment@usi.ie)



# Student Representative Diary

Name:

Representative for :

## Meeting Notes Template

**Meeting title:**

**Meeting date and time:**

**Meeting location:**

**Meeting called by:**

**Attendees:**

**Facilitator:**

(Include email if known)

**Note keeper:**

(Include email if known)

**Topic one:**

**Presenter:**

**Topic one:**

**Presenter:**

**Topic one:**

**Presenter:**

**Further notes:**

**Actions to be taken:**

**Next meeting (if applicable):**

## Meeting Log

Meeting	Date Raised	Agenda Items of Note	Actions to be taken	Notes
	___/___/20__			
	___/___/20__			
	___/___/20__			



## National Student Engagement Programme

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn



nstep@usi.ie



studentengagement.ie



@NStEP.ie

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The National Student Engagement Programme is a partnership between



Dearbhú Cáilíochta  
agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann  
Quality and  
Qualifications Ireland



Union of Students in Ireland  
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn



HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY  
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS



