

Voluntary Services Abroad Society constitution

Article 1 Voluntary Services Abroad

The name of the Society shall be the Voluntary Services Abroad Society, National University of Ireland, Galway, hereinafter referred to as “the Society or VSA”.

Article 2 Aims of the Society

The aims of the Society shall be:

1. To provide supplies & skills to healthcare & related facilities in developing countries & to fundraise to achieve that goal.
2. To provide all NUI, Galway students who fulfill the criteria laid out by the society committee with the opportunity to volunteer in developing countries.
3. To provide our overseas volunteers with fundraising & logistical support as deemed necessary by the society committee (*see section 4*).

Article 3 Membership

- 3.1 All students and members of staff of the University shall be eligible to become members of the Society.
- 3.2 Any eligible person shall become a member of the Society on signing their name to the official membership list of the Society.
- 3.3 Students wishing to travel overseas with VSA will need to satisfy eligibility criteria as laid out by the society committee.

Article 4 The Committee

- 4.1 A committee shall conduct the business of the Society.
- 4.2 The committee of the Society shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting, or, if necessary, at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 4.3 The committee shall consist of the following members:- the Auditor; the Vice-Auditor; the Treasurer; the Secretary; the Public Relations Officer; Webmaster; Correspondence officer; Volunteering officer & Student liaison officer. Bag packing officers, Event organizers & ordinary members may attend committee meetings as required. All members of the committee shall be required to be members of the Society.

4.4 All positions excluding Auditor, Vice-auditor, Secretary & Treasurer may be co-opted, by majority vote of the committee, provided no objections are raised by the society members, in which case an EGM must be held.

4.5 Committee Positions –

4.5.1 **Auditor**

The Auditor shall have overall responsibility for the affairs of the Society. He/She shall chair all meetings of the Society, save where decided otherwise by the committee or where otherwise provided for in this constitution.

4.5.2 **Vice-Auditor**

The Vice-Auditor shall assume the duties of the Auditor should the Auditor be absent or unable to fulfill his/her duties.

4.5.3 **Treasurer**

The Treasurer will manage the financial affairs of the Society, in consultation with the Auditor and vice-auditor. He/She will maintain the financial records of the Society. He/She will prepare and present to the Society and the University the end of year accounts and treasurers report for the Society.

4.5.4 **Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep the non-financial records of the Society, including the official membership list, and manage the administrative correspondence of the Society and submitting the end of year report.

4.5.5 **Public Relations Officer**

The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for advertising the meetings and events of the Society.

4.5.6 **Correspondence officer:**

The correspondence officer will deal with all correspondence related to fundraising & other correspondence as delegated by the secretary.

4.5.7 **Webmaster:**

The webmaster will manage the society's website, email & online donation system. He/she is also responsible for ensuring that use of online facilities complies with the university rules & regulations & for policing & moderating any galleries or message boards on the society's website.

4.5.8 **Volunteering officer:**

The volunteering officer shall be responsible for coordinating those wishing to travel overseas with VSA & to ensure that they are furnished & comply fully with VSA's "*Code of conduct for overseas volunteers*". He/she will also be responsible for ensuring whatever pre-travel arrangements are deemed necessary by the committee are made.

4.5.9 Student Liaison Officer:

The student liaison officer will be responsible for communicating VSA's activities to the wider student body and within the School of Medicine.

4.6 Committee Meetings

4.6.1 Meetings of the committee shall be held at least monthly during the academic year. Attendance & voting rights will be as outlined in paragraph 4.3

4.6.2 The quorum for a meeting of the committee shall be four committee members.

4.6.3 Meetings of the committee shall be convened by the Auditor, Vice-auditor or Secretary. At least two days notice of a committee meeting shall be given by the Auditor, Vice-auditor or Secretary to the members of the committee.

4.6.4 Motions at committee meetings should be proposed by a committee member & seconded by another committee member

4.6.5 Passing or rejecting a motion requires a simple majority of the committee members present (except matters pertaining to finance which require a two-thirds majority of the members present and motions as outlined in article 12.2 which require a unanimous vote.), where votes are deadlocked on any motion, the Auditor will have the casting vote.

4.7 Term of Office of the Committee

The committee shall hold office from the 1st July subsequent to their election until the 30th June of the following year; however the outgoing committee will remain responsible for matters pertaining to volunteers traveling under their term of office, for the agreed duration of their placement.

Article 5 General Meetings

5.1 Annual General Meeting

5.1.1 The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall take place in the second semester of the academic year, at a time to be determined by the committee of the Society.

5.1.2 No less than seven days notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given. The date and time of the A.G.M. shall be notified to the University and communicated to the society members & other interested parties via email or other means.

5.2 Extraordinary General Meetings

5.2.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society may be convened to:

(i) Hold an election to fill a vacancy on the committee, should one arise, in cases where co-option is either not possible or is objected to by a society member;

- (ii) Consider a proposal to amend this constitution or any other governing instrument of the Society;
- (iii) Address any other circumstance not provided for in this constitution.

5.2.2. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be convened:

- (i) By majority decision of the committee; or
- (ii) On foot of a submission to the committee of the Society of a petition signed by not less than ten members of the Society.

5.2.3 No less than ten days notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be given. The date and time of the E.G.M. shall be notified to the University and communicated to the society members & other interested parties via email or other means.

Article 6 Election of the Committee

6.1 The committee of the Society shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

6.2 The Auditor shall act as returning officer for the elections. Where the Auditor intends to be a candidate in any election, a returning officer, who is not a candidate in any election, shall be appointed by the committee.

6.3 All members of the Society shall be eligible for election to the committee.

6.4 Candidates for each position on the committee of the Society must be proposed and seconded by members of the Society at the A.G.M.

6.5 All members of the Society shall be entitled to vote in the election of the committee.

6.6 The election of members of the committee shall take place by secret ballot at the A.G.M. Where the votes obtained by any candidate exceed the votes obtained by any other candidate for that position, he/she shall be deemed elected to that position.

Article 7 Resignations from the Committee

7.1 The resignation of any member of the committee shall be instituted by a letter of resignation to the Secretary of the Society. In the case of the resignation of the Secretary, resignation may be instituted by a letter of resignation to the Auditor.

Article 8 Management of Finance

8.1 The finances of the Society shall be managed by the Auditor & Treasurer of the Society.

.2 No member of the committee of the Society shall receive remuneration from the Society, or use their office for personal financial gain

- .3 All matters pertaining to distribution of funds to overseas volunteers for the purposes of aid work are to be decided by a two thirds majority decision of the society committee, their decision is final.

Article 9 Amendments to the Constitution

- 9.1 Amendments to this constitution may be made at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society.
- 9.2 Such amendments to this constitution as may be approved by an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society shall require the formal approval of the University before taking effect.

Article 10 Dissolution of the Society

- 10.1 The Society may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of its membership at a General Meeting. The Society may also be dissolved by decision of the USC. The Society shall fall into abeyance should it fail to validly elect a committee for two successive years.
- 10.2 On dissolution of the Society, its assets shall become the property of the University.

Article 11: Relationship with the College of Medicine & Health Sciences:

11.1 VSA recognises its traditional relationship with the College of Medicine & Health Sciences (hereafter referred to as "*the faculty*")

11.2 VSA recognises the role it plays in providing students entering their final medical year with elective opportunities in developing countries as part of the medical curriculum. All matters pertaining to academic credit for this elective period, however are a matter for the faculty & the individual student and not VSA.

11.3 The faculty shall nominate several members of staff, the college's "*VSA advisory group*" to facilitate & provide guidance to the VSA committee as required throughout their term of office.

Article 12: Overseas Volunteers:

12.1 All students wishing to travel overseas with VSA must apply to the committee by a date specified by the committee.

12.2 In exceptional circumstances where the participation of any individual would, in the unanimous opinion of the committee, cause VSA to be brought into disrepute, a overseas placement under the auspices of VSA will not be permitted.

12.3 All VSA members on placement abroad will be required to raise a minimum amount for the charity, which will be decided by the committee at the start of the academic year.

12.4 VSA members on placement abroad must fund their own flights, accommodation & travel vaccinations.

12.5 VSA members on placement abroad must account fully for all VSA money spent while overseas, cash donations are to be strongly discouraged.

12.6 Medical, nursing & health science student volunteers, in particular, must act within their level of competency & must work under supervision at all times. If at any time the student feels that they are acting outside their level of competence or that they are not being adequately supervised, it is their responsibility to take appropriate action up to & including ending their placement immediately. In all such cases the society committee must be informed as soon as practicable.

12.7 Before traveling, all overseas volunteers must read, sign & agree to be bound by the society's "*Code of conduct for overseas volunteers*" document. Any misconduct must be reported to the society committee & in cases of gross misconduct to the appropriate school within the university.

12.8 All overseas volunteers will participate in all pre-travel preparations as laid out by the society committee, in the event that individual students make their own arrangements, this must be communicated to the committee in advance & proof provided of same.

Written by: Tadhg Sullivan (Auditor 2009/10)

Passed by committee: 11/09/2009 (Amendments to draft passed on 24/09/09)

Ratified by EGM: 24/09/2009

Approved by U.S.C.: 7/10/2009

For VSA: Tadhg Sullivan