

NALA Student Subcommittee Terms of Reference



National Adult Literacy Agency

Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

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Introduction and Review

These Terms of Reference (TOR) describe what the NALA Student Subcommittee (SSC) is about. An appendix at the end gives further information for members of the SSC but does not formally form part of these TOR.

A review of the TOR will be put on the agenda of the SSC at least every two years. The information in the Appendix may be updated by NALA, as necessary.

Overall Responsibility

NALA's Board gives responsibility to the SSC to gather and discuss adult literacy student issues and to feedback those issues to the Board. NALA wants to build awareness of the importance of literacy for a more inclusive Ireland. The SSC was set up in 2005 and is an important way NALA hears directly from adult literacy students.

Composition and Attendance

The SSC is a group made up of up to fourteen students who give their time on a voluntary basis.

Where possible, at least one student will be from NALA's Board. If there are no students on NALA's Board, another member of the Board must join the SSC.

Students on the SSC must be either a:

- current adult literacy student or
- former adult literacy student who wishes to promote adult literacy issues and represent students.

NALA will try to ensure there is a good mix of current and past students on the SSC.

The SSC nominates a person to be the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the SSC.

Their names are then sent to the Board for noting.

Any NALA Board member may attend a SSC meeting, including those who are not members of the subcommittee. The Chairperson of NALA's Board must be allowed to be a member of the SSC if requested.

The quorum (the number of SSC Members that must be present for a meeting to go ahead) is five. One of the five present must be the Chairperson or the ViceChairperson.

An appointed NALA Staff Member attends all meetings. Other NALA Staff members may attend meetings on occasion and when agreed by the Chairperson.

A representative from the Adult Literacy Organiser's Association (ALOA) attends meetings to give advice. They are not considered a member of the subcommittee.

They feedback agreed student issues to the ALOA.

Governance and Reporting

The Student Subcommittee may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper. It generally meets 7 times per year but must meet at least 5 times per calendar year.

Members of the SSC must declare if they have any conflicts of interest, either real, perceived or potential, with any of the matters on the agenda at the start of the meeting or as soon as these conflicts become apparent.

Questions arising at any meeting of the SSC shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members present. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the subcommittee shall have a casting (second) vote.

The NALA Board member on the SSC reports back to the NALA Board. If there is more than one member of the SSC on the Board, the subcommittee must agree which of its members will bring the report. They present the minutes and bring any recommendations or suggestions for actions to the Board meetings.

A designated NALA staff member will be responsible for the administration of the SSC. They designated NALA staff member takes the minutes and ensures they are circulated to the SSC and to NALA's Board for their meeting.

Minutes of each SSC meeting will be submitted to each subsequent Board meeting for information.

Once approved by the SSC, the minutes must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings were held, or by the chairperson of the next meeting.

Main Duties

The Student Subcommittee gathers and discusses adult literacy student issues and feeds back those issues to the NALA Board. The main duties are to:

- attend each of the meetings.
- identify, and discuss, adult literacy student issues. Issues can be from people's own experience and from consulting with students in their area.
- review the issues that have come up together at meetings.
- advise and make recommendations to NALA's Board.

Each student on the subcommittee has the role to:

- agree these Terms of Reference.
- read minutes of meetings before the meeting.
- inform the Chairperson if something is unclear.
- suggest changes to the minutes (which are called amendments) if something is missing, incorrect or not clear.
- agree the minutes of each meeting. This means that you think they are a fair representation of that meeting.
- respect decisions already made by the subcommittee and respect confidentiality.
- bring any feedback to meetings and use the meetings to discuss any problems.
- inform the designated NALA staff member or the Chairperson if you cannot make a meeting. If you miss two meetings in a row or three meetings in a year you may
- be asked to give up your position on the Student Subcommittee depending on the

reason for missing the meetings.

- guide and monitor the NALA Student Days and the NALA Student Development Fund.
- represent adult literacy students' issues and experiences (if asked by NALA and it suits you timewise). This could be with outside organisations and the media and will involve linking in with other members of NALA staff.

Length of Term

Students serve on the SSC for three years. Students then have the option of serving a further three years. After six years students retire.

There is one exception to this. If a student puts their name forward for election as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and is successful they can serve for three years in that position.

They can also go forward for a second term as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson if they had only served one three year term before becoming Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson. Such a student would then have served a total of nine years on the SSC. After that they must retire.

Where it is agreed that the Chairperson would serve one or two years rather than three years (to have a rotating chairperson) the original Chairperson can remain on for the remainder of their three year term.

Version Control

Version	Approved by Board	Date
1	Yes	October 2018
2	Yes	27 June 2024*

*Document can, and may be, plain English reviewed without requiring further Board approval.

Appendix

Where meetings are held

Meetings are held either in NALA's Office in Ranelagh or online using Zoom.

The address is:

NALA
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6
Telephone: 01 412 7900

Appointed NALA Staff Member

The current contact person for NALA's Student Subcommittee is NALA's Literacy Student and Development Officer: Margaret Murray mmurray@nala.ie
01 412 7928

Training for the Sub-committee

NALA will arrange training to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Student Subcommittee where necessary to help them fulfil their roles.

Connecting with other students

Subcommittee Members attending adult literacy centres are expected to let students in their centre know about the Subcommittee. They should listen and bring issues forward to meetings. They should also consult with student committees in the centres where they are in place.

How decisions are made

Decisions should be made by general agreement after matters are discussed. Where a agreement cannot be reached and a decision is pressing, decisions will made by an overall majority. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the subcommittee shall have a casting (second) vote. Any sensitive decisions can be passed on to the Board of NALA if necessary. NALA's Literacy Student and

Development Officer and the ALOA representative do not have a vote.

Sample agenda for meetings:

1. Welcome, note who is present and apologies received.
2. Any Conflicts of Interest?
3. Approving the minutes:
4. Amendments (changes required) to the minutes.
5. Agree the minutes of the last meeting are correct
6. Matters arising – is there anything in the minutes that was to be followed up?
7. Introduce new people and thank people leaving.
8. Student issues from around the country
9. Update on events and plans
10. Agree what student issues are to be brought to the NALA Board
11. Any other business (AOB)
12. Look to see how people are getting on, on the Subcommittee
13. Date, time and location of next meeting.

How students will work together at meetings:

- Ensure one person talks at a time.
- Keep focused on the work as outlined in the Terms of Reference.
- Work through the agenda at meetings (the Chairperson leads this). Any new items brought up at the meeting to Any Other Business (AOB) at the end of the meeting.
- Discuss issues arising from students' views gathered.
- Respect other people on the SSC.
- Talk to the person directly if their behaviour is making you feel uncomfortable. If you feel you cannot do this, let the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Literacy Student and Development Officer know. They will help you with what to do next.
- Keep the unique culture of fun and camaraderie that exists.
- Agree what issues and views will be shared with the Board.
- Note the achievements at the end of each year (review) and any lessons learned.

Role of the SSC in the NALA Student Days

The SSC guides and monitors the NALAs Student Days by:

- Reviewing previous student days.

- Agreeing dates for the next year and suggesting locations and venues.
- Giving ideas for the agenda of the days. Ideas also come from NALA's Chief Executive Officer, NALA Staff, Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs), NALA members and evaluation forms from the previous student days. Agendas fit with NALA's Strategic Plan and compliment the Further Education and Training Strategy and Adult Literacy for Life Strategy. NALA's Chief Executive Officer gives the final approval on the agenda for student days.
- Hosting and helping out on the days with support from NALA Staff. Where possible NALA will work towards students hosting, co-hosting or speaking at workshops at the student days and will arrange training, as necessary. Decisions on who does what at the workshops are driven by how best we might hear students' views.
- Referring all media queries to NALA's Communications Team.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson ensures:

- That a quorum of five students is in place before starting a meeting.
- Members are asked for amendments to the draft minutes.
- The minutes are approved.
- Matters arising are discussed.
- Students get a chance to add Any Other Business items to the agenda.
- The agenda is followed.
- Sensitive issues that come up are noticed and everyone is clear on leaving the meeting what can be said outside the meeting about the issue.
- There is agreement about what will be brought to the NALA Board meeting.
- The date is set and the agenda agreed for the next meeting.
- The Vice-Chairperson helps the Chairperson and stands in for them if necessary.

Role of the Literacy Student and Development Officer

The Literacy Student and Development Officer is the link person between NALA Staff and the Subcommittee and they support the Student Subcommittee by:

- Taking minutes and circulating draft minutes of meetings at least one week before the next meeting.
- Keeping a secure record of all minutes, agendas and documents submitted to the

SSC for their consideration.

- Identifying vacancies on the SSC as they arise.
- Contacting possible new members to fill any vacancies and ensure new members are inducted.
- Managing the student development budget for NALA (including Student Days, Student Development Fund, the SSC and other planned events, as required).
- Explaining to students how expenses are worked out.
- Signing off on the venue and refreshments for meetings.
- Signing off on dates for the student days and dates relating to the student fund.
- Following up on issues raised by students at meetings.
- Writing reports on the student days, student fund and issues raised by students.
- Carrying out regular reviews of the Subcommittee.

Expenses

NALA provides expenses so students are not out of pocket. SSC members are not paid but NALA has set rates for expenses. These are the same rates that apply to NALA Staff, Board, and other Subcommittees. Students joining the SSC will be provided with details of the expense policy and how to make an expense claim.

Getting involved in NALA

On retiring from the Student Subcommittee, there is the option of continued involvement in other NALA voluntary work outside of NALA's Student Subcommittee, for example:

- Other Subcommittees of NALA's Board
- Working groups with NALA Staff
- Literacy awareness training with NALA Staff
- Manning a NALA stand at awareness raising events such as the Ploughing Championship
- Speaking or chairing NALA events
- Representing student issues at other organisation's events.

In any work outside of the Student Subcommittee, NALA Staff will discuss expenses for the event with students before they get involved.

On retiring students will be given the opportunity to take part in an exit interview. This

will give students the chance to share their experience of the Student Subcommittee and to give NALA feedback.

Provided the students are Members of NALA, they have the option of putting their names forward for election onto NALA's Board. Decisions about the Board are taken by Members of NALA NALA's Annual General Meeting.

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We work to support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs to take part fully in society and to have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA does this by raising awareness of the importance of literacy, doing research and sharing good practice. We also provide online learning courses and a tutoring service to adults. We lobby for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

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Ranelagh, Dublin 6

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Registered Charity Number: 20020965

CHY (Charity) Number: 8506



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