

Terms of Reference for NALA Student Sub-Committee

**Agreed by the NALA Board
in October 2018**

Terms of Reference for the Student Sub-Committee

Introduction

These Terms of Reference describe what the Student Sub-Committee is about. An appendix at the end gives further information.

Overall responsibility

NALA's Board delegates responsibility to the NALA Student Sub-Committee 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 Student Sub-committee was set up in 2005 and is an important way NALA hears directly from adult literacy students.

Composition and reporting

The Student Sub-Committee is a group made up of fourteen students who give their time on a voluntary basis and meet seven times a year. At least one student will be from NALA's Board, and be appointed by the Board.

Students on the Student Sub-Committee must be individual members of NALA (either free individual members or have paid €25 for individual membership). They must also be either a:

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

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

The Student Sub-committee nominates a person to be the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Student Subcommittee. Their names are then sent to the Board for approval.

A NALA Board member may attend a meeting, including those who are not members of the Student Sub-Committee.

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For meetings, the quorum (the number of people present for a meeting to go ahead) is five members of the Sub-Committee present. One of the five present must be the chairperson or the vice-chairperson.

NALA's Student and Membership Officer attends meetings, writes draft minutes and circulates minutes to the Student Sub-committee and to NALA's Board for their meeting.

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 in an advisory capacity (not considered a member of the Sub-committee). They feedback agreed student issues to the ALOA.

The student from NALA's Board appointed onto the Student Sub-committee reports to the NALA Board. They bring recommendations and actions to the Board.

Main duties

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

- Attend seven meetings a year.
- 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 sub-committee has the role to:

- Agree these Terms of Reference.
- Read minutes of meetings before the meeting.
- Inform the chairperson if something is unclear.

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- Suggest changes to the minutes (which are called amendments) if need be where 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 Student Sub-committee and respect confidentiality.
- Bring any feedback to meetings and use the meetings to discuss any problems.
- Inform the Student and Membership Officer or the Chairperson if cannot make a meeting (you must have a good reason). If you miss two meetings in a row or three meetings a year you give up your position on the Student Sub-Committee.
- Guide and monitor the NALA Student Days and the NALA Student Development Fundⁱ.
- 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 with NALA's Communication Officer.

Length of term

Students serve on the Student Sub-Committee for two years. Students have the option of serving a further two years. After four 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 two years in that position. They can also go forward for a second term as chairperson or vice chairperson and if successful can serve a further two years. Such a student would then have served a total of eight years. After that they must retire.

Where it is agreed that the chairperson would serve one year rather than two years (to have a rotating chairperson) the original chairperson can remain on for the second year. As described above they can then go forward for a second term (if successful they would serve the eight years).

On retiring from the Student Sub-committee, there is the option of continued involvement in other NALA voluntary work outside of NALA's Student Sub-Committee.

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The Student and Membership Officer will discuss areas of interest with the student. Students may become involved in other work outside of the Student Sub-committee, 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 when requested;
- Speaking or chairing NALA events;
- Representing student issues at outside organisation's events;

In any work outside of the Student Sub-Committee, 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 Sub-committee and to give NALA feedback.

Ideas suggested by students at Student Sub-committee meetings that are outside the scope of the Sub-committee will be noted in minutes brought to the NALA Board.

Students have the option of putting their names forward for election onto NALA's Board. Decisions about the Board are taken by members at NALA's Annual General Meeting.

Review of these Terms of Reference

A review of the Terms of Reference will be put on the agenda of the Sub-committee once a year.

Appendix

Expenses

NALA provides expenses so students are not out of pocket. Student Sub-Committee members are not paid but NALA has set rates for expenses. These are the same rates that apply to NALA Staff, Board and other Sub-committees. In relation to expenses:

- Students fill in an expenses claim form and send it with receipts to the Student and Membership Officer who manages student expenses.
- Where possible students must use public transport. NALA reimburses travel at public transport rates. The exception is if public transport rates are more expensive.
- Upcoming possible expenses must first be agreed with the Student and Membership Officer who will let the student know if the expense can be covered.
- The Student and Membership Officer signs off on expenses. Expenses are then sent to the Finance Manager.
- To receive your expenses in the quickest time you can provide your bank details to NALA and we pay expenses directly. Otherwise cheques are signed on the 25th of the month.

Where meetings are held

Meetings are held in NALA's Office in Ranelagh. The address is:

NALA
Sandford Lodge
Sandford Close
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

Telephone: 01 412 7900

Contact person

The contact person for NALA's Student Sub-Committee is the Student and Membership Officer, NALA - Margaret Murray, email, mmurray@nala.ie and direct line: 01 412 7928.

Having a mix of students on the Sub-committee

NALA's Student and Membership Officer will ensure that there is a variety of students with different backgrounds on the Sub-committee:

- Students who have been on for a while and new students
- Students of different ages;
- Male and female students;
- Students from different parts of Ireland;
- Students improving literacy in adult literacy centres, through distance learning and in different programmes.

Training for the Sub-committee

NALA will provide training to the chairperson and vice chairperson of the Student Sub-committee so they can fulfil their role.

Connecting with other students

Students attending adult literacy centres on the Sub-committee are expected to let students in their centre know about the Sub-Committee. Also to listen and bring issues forward to meetings. They should also consult with student committees where in place.

How decisions are made

Decisions are made on a consensus basis after matters are discussed. Any controversial decisions are passed on to the Board of NALA. Where a consensus cannot be reached and a decision is pressing, decisions will be made by an overall majority. NALA's Student and Membership Officer and the ALOA representative do not have a vote.

Sample agenda for meetings:

1. Welcome, note who is present and apologies received.
2. Passing the minutes:
 - Amendments (changes required) to the minutes.
 - Agree the minutes of the last meeting are correct (propose and second minutes);
 - Matters arising – is there anything in the minutes that was to be followed up?

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3. Introduce new people and thank people leaving.
4. Student issues from around the country;
5. Update on events and plans;
6. Agree what student issues are to be brought to the NALA Board;
7. Any other business (AOB);
8. Reflection – see how people are getting on, on the Sub-committee;
9. Date, time and agenda of next meeting.

How students will work together at meetings:

- Ensure one person talks at a time as much as is possible.
- 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 Sub-committee.
- 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 Student and Membership 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 are to be shared with the Board.
- Note the achievements at the end of each year (review) and any lessons learned.

Role of the Sub-committee in the NALA Student Days

The Student Sub-committee 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. NALA's Chief Executive Officer gives the final sign off on the agenda for student days.

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- Chairing and facilitating the days with support from the Student and Membership Officer, the Communications Officer and other NALA Staff. Where possible NALA will work towards students facilitating or co-facilitating workshops at the student days and will provide training as necessary. Decisions on who facilitates workshops is driven by how best we might hear students' views.
- Referring all media queries to NALA's Communications Officer - Patrick Gleeson, pgleeson@nala.ie and 01 412 7916. Patrick manages all publicity relating to the student days, including who will take part in interviews.

Role of the Sub-committee in the NALA Student Development Fund

The Student Sub-committee guides and monitors the Student Development Fund by:

- Suggesting topics for student feedback.
- One student assessing applications and deciding who gets funding.
- Sharing any feedback received about the fund.

Recruiting new people to the Student Sub-committee

When NALA is looking for new people to join the Student Sub-committee they will:

- ✓ Put a notice in our monthly e-zine (email) to members.
- ✓ Email student members and send a letter to members who do not have email.
- ✓ Email ALOs, distance learning tutors and put a notice on the NALA website.
- ✓ Inform those attending the NALA Student Days.

For a student thinking of joining

If a student is thinking of joining, they need to:

- Be a NALA member (individual free member or individual paying €25);
- Contact the Student and Membership Officer to discuss it;
- Meet criteria of what the Sub-Committee needs at the time (mix of people);
- Be prepared to read a little about NALA's work;
- Be willing to come to one meeting before joining to see what it is about;
- Show they understand what it involved;

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- Agree after a meeting that they want to join.

Before being accepted onto the Student Sub-Committee

The Student and Membership Officer will discuss the following with the student:

- ✓ Their experience of returning to education, and which centre (if any) they attended.
- ✓ The type of learning they are engaged in and what level they are working towards.
- ✓ Experience of committees and any other experiences (media involvement, campaigns) that might be relevant.
- ✓ Whether they are willing to listen and gather student views.
- ✓ Whether they have time to get involved.
- ✓ If they have particular interests. For example health literacy, plain English or awareness raising...

With the above information the Student and Membership Officer will create a “Profile” (what we have on file about the student) and send a copy to the student. Once agreed with the student, the Student and Membership Officer will share it with the Communications Officer. Students will let NALA know if their profile changes significantly.

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 passed.
- ✓ 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 Student and Membership Officer

The Student and Membership Officer is the link person between NALA Staff and the Sub-Committee and they support the Student Sub-Committee by:

- ✓ Filling vacancies on the Student Sub-Committee as they arise.
 - ✓ Circulating draft minutes of meetings at least one week before the next meeting.
 - ✓ Contacting possible new members and ensure new members are inducted.
 - ✓ Managing the student development budget for NALA (including Student Days, Student Development Fund, the Subcommittee and other planned events).
 - ✓ 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 an annual review of the Sub-Committee.
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