

A large, white, sans-serif font text 'STUDENT CHARTER' is centered within a green rectangular banner at the bottom of the page. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a busy university hallway with students walking and talking.

STUDENT CHARTER

1 Introduction

Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo) aims to provide educational opportunities to the maximum sustainable extent through high quality teaching, research and development. IT Sligo is a regional Higher Education Institution with a national dimension and international perspectives. IT Sligo has a particular duty to support the development of its region in economic, social and cultural terms.

Recognising the history and traditions of its region, IT Sligo is founded on moral and ethical values and the principles of equality, justice and academic freedom.

IT Sligo is committed, through a partnership of management, staff and students, to ensuring that its activities are conducted in a fair and equitable manner, which is conducive to good working relations on campus and an efficient and effective academic environment. This Student Charter, which sets out the rights and obligations of students, has been prepared and is implemented in that spirit. IT Sligo is committed to providing you, the student, with the best possible experience in higher education.

2 Scope

The Student Charter applies to all registered students and to officers of the Students' Union. The Charter also applies to registered students of IT Sligo while participating in work experience programmes outside IT Sligo when such experience is a required part of their programme. The Charter also applies to registered students of IT Sligo on all activities associated with IT Sligo, within or outside IT Sligo.

The Student Charter is available on the college web (www.itsligo.ie) to all students and all staff at IT Sligo and to any other person upon request.

The Student Charter sets out:

- The Rights of Students
- IT Sligo's Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedure

3 Rights and Values

A student has the following rights:

- 3.1 The right to expect from IT Sligo, tuition of a professional standard on the programme of study for which they are registered and adequate educational and support facilities consistent with the resources available to IT Sligo.

- 3.2 The right to study in an atmosphere free of harassment and intimidation, and that promotes personal integrity and dignity.
- 3.3 The right to fair and just procedures, including appropriate appeals procedures, in all matters involving possible breaches of the IT Sligo Student Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 The right to be treated as a responsible adult member of a third-level institution, to be able to represent personal views in a reasonable manner and to be treated with normal standards of courtesy by all other members of IT Sligo.
- 3.5 The right to be recognised by IT Sligo authorities in a partnership approach to the administration of IT Sligo through open and constructive consultation with students and their representatives, as members of the “college” created by the Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992.
- 3.6 The right to have two student members, one male and one female, on the Governing Body of IT Sligo.
- 3.7 Where student representatives are not included on Programme Boards, the student body is represented on Staff/Student Liaison Groups for every programme of study.
- 3.8 The right to be treated equally irrespective of gender.
- 3.9 The statutory rights conferred by the data protection and freedom of information legislation.

4 Standards of Service

Summarised below are the standards of service which IT Sligo will strive to achieve for all students, having regard to its available resources, as well as the responsibilities which students are expected to undertake as members of IT Sligo.

4.1 IT Sligo aims to:

- 4.1.1 Publish comprehensive and accurate information about our activities, procedures and regulations;
- 4.1.2 Operate a fair and efficient admissions procedure;
- 4.1.3 Provide a suitable environment within which teaching and learning can take place;
- 4.1.4 Offer appropriate student support services;

- 4.1.5 Provide for student participation in IT Sligo's decision-making process;
- 4.1.6 Operate appeals and complaints procedures which are both fair and easily accessed.

4.2 A student is expected to:

- 4.2.1 Be informed about and comply with IT Sligo's regulations and procedures relating to students;
- 4.2.2 Treat all staff and students in a way which is non-discriminatory and respects difference.
- 4.2.3 Attend lectures, practical sessions, tutorials and submit all course work as required, apply yourself to your studies and abide by deadlines set for the submission of work;
- 4.2.4 Respect and treat with dignity all staff, other students, visitors to IT Sligo and members of the local community, and to respect IT Sligo property;
- 4.2.5 Pay all fees required by IT Sligo as they become due.

5 Code of Conduct

- 5.1 IT Sligo respects third-level students as responsible adults. Accordingly, it expects that each student of IT Sligo will behave on campus, and on activities off-campus under the aegis of IT Sligo, in a mature, reasonable and honest manner which protects the good name of IT Sligo, meets the requirements of his/her programme of study, has due regard to the rights of others and does not adversely affect the conduct of IT Sligo business and its good name.
- 5.2 IT Sligo accepts that social activity is part of student life. While self-discipline will be expected and encouraged, failure to meet the normal standards expected by society may result in sanctions up to and including suspension and exclusion from the education provided by IT Sligo.

The following specific provisions shall apply without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing.

- 5.3 Students should note that on signing the IT Sligo Registration Form they are agreeing to comply with the policies, regulations and disciplinary procedures of IT Sligo and that they:
 - i) Affirm that they have read and agree to be bound by all IT Sligo Regulations including the Computer Use Policy, Examination Regulations and the Student Code of Conduct;

- ii) Submit to IT Sligo's Disciplinary Procedure should a complaint be made against them;
- 5.4 Only students who are validly registered may be admitted to classes. Registration is valid up to a maximum of one year at a time.
- 5.5 Students shall at all times obey the lawful instructions of IT Sligo staff.
- 5.6 Students shall carry their Student Card (which is issued to each student at the time of registration) at all times while on IT Sligo property. IT Sligo reserves the right to charge for the replacement of lost cards.
- 5.7 Student Cards shall be produced upon request by any members of IT Sligo staff on campus.
- 5.8 Persons unable to show evidence of registration may be required to leave IT Sligo grounds.
- 5.9 Students shall refrain from conduct liable to infringe the rights of others.
- 5.10 Students shall respect IT Sligo property at all times. Students may be held liable for the cost of repair or replacement of IT Sligo property damaged by them.
- 5.11 Students shall respect the property and persons of all members of the campus community and visitors to the campus.
- 5.12 Unauthorised entry to IT Sligo or to a restricted area within IT Sligo or use of its facilities is prohibited.
- 5.13 Students shall pay the appropriate IT Sligo fees and charges prescribed for each year in advance of registration or must satisfy IT Sligo that the appropriate payments will be made on their behalf within such a period as IT Sligo may allow. Fees are non-refundable unless otherwise specifically provided.
- 5.14 Students shall keep the Registrar's Office informed of their current address while registered as students.
- 5.15 Students shall comply with the academic discipline laid down for their programme, including the requirements of attendance and assessments and examinations as laid down by the School or Department. The right to continue on a programme of study depends upon satisfactory enrolment, the maintenance of satisfactory attendance, the level of academic performance and satisfactory conduct.
- 5.16 Students shall comply with the Assessment Regulations outlined in Chapter 3 of IT Sligo's Quality Assurance Manual. All decisions of the Board of Examiners are subject to IT Sligo's procedures on rechecks, reviews and appeals. Students may have Disciplinary Procedures initiated against them in

respect of an alleged breach of the Assessment Regulations.

- 5.17 Students shall comply with all safety regulations that may be in force at the time, including those laid down at School/Department level and those governing the buildings and facilities such as laboratories, workshops and library.
- 5.18 IT Sligo is a No Smoking area. Smoking is not permitted within IT Sligo buildings, in the interest of health and safety and to avoid general discomfort to others.
- 5.19 The display of posters is subject to the approval of the Registrar's Office or Students' Union Office. Posters and notices concerning student social activities may only be displayed on the appropriate notice boards.
- 5.20 Vehicles and bicycles must be parked in authorised places and are parked at owner's risk.
- 5.21 IT Sligo does not accept responsibility for any loss of student property, whether or not such property was left in lockers or cupboards. Students should report any such loss to IT Sligo authorities.
- 5.22 IT Sligo's jurisdiction under this Code is not limited to its own property.

6 Disciplinary Procedures

The Student Charter assumes that students will comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct on a voluntary basis through the exercise of mature self-discipline. Should it become necessary to invoke disciplinary procedures the following procedures will apply.

Breaches of specific academic regulations may be dealt with under procedures set out in those regulations.

The Registrar will manage the disciplinary procedures and is responsible for making decisions related to the complaint. The Student Support Services Officer is responsible for administering the disciplinary procedures.

6.1 Complaint

6.1.1 A complaint regarding a student may be made by a member of staff, a student, or any member of the public and may be in relation to behaviour both on and off campus. The Gardaí may also refer a complaint to IT Sligo.

All complaints must be received by the Student Support Services Officer at least 6 weeks prior to the commencement of the Summer Examinations.

6.1.2 Complaints may be made formally or informally. Where a student raises an

issue in relation to another student, the Student Support Services Officer may encourage the student to raise the matter with their Head of Department informally as a first step. The Head of Department may work to address the informal complaint and may also inform the student that they may raise the matter through the formal complaints procedure. The Head of Department may advise the student of the formal complaints procedure and its process. The following procedures refer only to the formal complaints procedure.

- 6.1.3** The designated person to receive such formal complaints shall be the Student Support Services Officer. The Student Support Services Officer will request the Complainant to submit the complaint in writing in the form appended hereto (form SC1), and will explain to them the process by which this written complaint will be considered including the fact that this written complaint will be copied to the respondent. The Disciplinary Committee will not be convened to deal with verbal complaints or written complaints not submitted in the prescribed form. All written complaints will be the subject of a preliminary examination by the Registrar, Student Support Services Officer and the Head of the Department most closely associated with the student who is the subject of the complaint. The final decision to refer a complaint to the Disciplinary Committee rests with the Registrar (or his/her nominee).
- 6.1.4** Where the alleged offence is considered by the Registrar (or his/her nominee) and the Head of the Department to be minor, the matter will be addressed directly by the Head of Department. After investigating the matter and interviewing the student, the Head of Department may issue a Letter to clear the student of the allegation, issue a verbal or written warning to the said student, or refer the matter back to the Disciplinary Committee.
- 6.1.5** If the Registrar (or his/her nominee) and the Head of Department consider that the complaint is not minor in nature, they shall recommend to the Registrar that the complaint is referred directly to the Disciplinary Committee.
- 6.1.6** Where the circumstances warrant it, the Registrar, in consultation with the Student Support Services Officer and the Head of Department, may suspend a student pending the completion of inquiries and without prejudice to the outcome of the disciplinary procedure.
- 6.1.7** Nothing in this Charter shall prevent the Institute from referring matters to the Gardaí where it considered this to be appropriate. In such instances, and where a Garda investigation is initiated, the Institute will suspend any internal investigation until the Garda investigation is concluded.

6.2 Composition of the Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee shall be constituted annually with not less than 10 members as follows:

- 6.2.1 At least 7 nominations made by the Academic Council, to include the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson;
- 6.2.2 Student nominations by the executive body of the Students' Union, up to a maximum of 3 students.

6.3 Protocol for Operation of the Disciplinary Committee

6.3.1. The student will be informed in writing of the details of the complaint that has been referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

6.3.2 A meeting of a Sub-Committee of the Disciplinary Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson or in his/her absence by the Vice-Chairperson. Three members of the Disciplinary Committee shall constitute a quorum. At this meeting the complaint will be considered and the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall make one of the following Decisions:

6.3.2.(i) Decide that the complaint has no basis or relates to a matter beyond the scope of the Student Charter and decline to deal any further with it or confirm that the matter has been resolved.

6.3.2 (ii) Decide to refer the issue to mediation. The agreement of both the Complainant and the Respondent must be obtained for this.

6.3.2 (iii) Decide to convene a hearing of the Disciplinary Tribunal to deal with the complaint.

6.3.2(iv) Decide to refer the matter back to the relevant Head of Department and request that the Head of Department deal with the matter through the informal disciplinary procedure, in the first instance (on the basis of consistency of approach Institute wide).

6.4 Mediation

Where mediation may be appropriate, the Disciplinary Sub-Committee shall nominate a mediator. This mediator shall not have been involved in the matter thus far. The mediation process shall be confidential to those involved and shall be without prejudice to any subsequent hearing, in the event that the mediation process is unsuccessful. Any concessions or admissions made within the mediation framework shall not be used in evidence at the hearing.

6.5 Disciplinary Tribunal

6.5.1 Should the Disciplinary Sub-Committee decide to convene a hearing, a Disciplinary Tribunal shall be convened from the Disciplinary Committee not to include those members of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee who considered the complaint at the initial stage and not to include the mediator, should one have been engaged.

6.5.2 For the hearing, no less than three members of the Disciplinary Committee,

to include two staff members and 1 student, shall be convened as the Disciplinary Tribunal.

- 6.5.3 The Disciplinary Tribunal shall decide whether the hearing will be conducted by way of written submissions or an oral hearing. In any case, the student who is the subject of the complaint is entitled to insist on an oral hearing. For the avoidance of doubt, if a Disciplinary Tribunal initially decides to proceed by way of written submissions, it may thereafter decide to convene an oral hearing if it considers it appropriate or necessary to do so.
- 6.5.4 A notice shall then be sent by registered post to the student's home address and last known term address. This notice shall:
- i) Detail the complaint; and furnish copies of all relevant documents, witness statements, correspondence and any other evidence;
 - ii) Advise the student that a hearing of the Disciplinary Tribunal has been convened;
 - iii) Specify the date and time of the hearing, giving the student at least 10 days notice of same;
 - iv) Specify whether the hearing shall be by way of written submissions or an oral hearing and confirm that the student is entitled to insist on an oral hearing and must give reasonable notice to the Disciplinary Tribunal should they wish to exercise this option.
 - v) Advise the student that he or she may be accompanied at the hearing by, for example, another student or a member of staff or a member of the Students' Union and request confirmation not less than two working days before the hearing of the identity of the student's representative.
 - vi) Advise the student that, at an oral hearing, he/she may call witnesses and if the matter is to be dealt with by way of written submissions, the student may enter witness statements. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange for the attendance at an oral hearing of witnesses on his/her behalf or to procure certified witness statements on his/her behalf for submission to the Disciplinary Tribunal.
 - vii) Make the student aware that witnesses cannot be compelled to attend.
- 6.5.5 At the Disciplinary Tribunal hearing, the complaint shall be set out by a member of the Disciplinary Committee who was part of the original consideration of the complaint (established under section 6.3.2) or by another officer of IT Sligo. The Complainant shall be given an opportunity to give evidence with regard to the complaint and any other supporting witnesses shall be heard.
- 6.5.6 The Respondent shall then be given an opportunity to present their

evidence and that of any witnesses they may wish to call. The Respondent will be required to provide the Disciplinary Tribunal with advance notice of the number and identity of the witness(es).

6.5.7 The Disciplinary Tribunal may adjourn any hearing from time to time as necessary for the efficient and proper discharge of its obligations.

6.6 Outcome

At or following the conclusion of the hearing, the Disciplinary Tribunal will make its decision, based only on the evidence presented to it. The Disciplinary Tribunal will decide whether the complaint has been upheld and, if so, may decide to apply a suitable penalty. The Disciplinary Tribunal will notify the Respondent, the Registrar, the President of IT Sligo, and the relevant Head of Department of their decision within 28 days of the conclusion of the hearing or as soon as is practicable thereafter. The Respondent will be notified by registered post of the decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal.

6.7 Penalties

The Disciplinary Tribunal may impose one or more of the following penalties:

- i) The imposition of a Written Warning or a Final Written Warning.
- ii) Removal of privileges and/or facilities at IT Sligo for a stated period of time at the discretion of the Disciplinary Tribunal.
- iii) An order that the student pay compensation in relation to any loss or damage resulting from their behaviour.
- iv) A fine not exceeding €1,000.
- v) Suspension from IT Sligo for a stated period of time.
- vi) Expulsion from IT Sligo.
- vii) Such other sanctions as maybe deemed appropriate by the Disciplinary Tribunal.

6.8 Right of Appeal

6.8.1 The Respondent may appeal a decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal within 10 days of the decision being notified to him or her. The appeal must be in writing and must be lodged with the President of IT Sligo, who will make a decision or appoint a nominee to make a decision based on a transcript of the evidence presented and the documents considered at the hearing. An appeal may be made against the decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal or the severity of the penalty imposed. The Respondent will be able to make a written submission, which may include statements from others.

6.8.2 The President (or his/her nominee) may:

- i) Uphold the decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal.
- ii) Uphold the decision but impose a penalty of less severity.
- iii) Uphold the decision and impose a penalty of greater severity.
- iv) Overturn the decision of the Disciplinary Tribunal and make such consequential decision(s) as the President (or his/her nominee) considers appropriate.

6.8.3 All decisions of the President (or his/her nominee) in these matters this will be final and binding.

6.9 Interpretation

If any doubt or ambiguity with regard to the interpretation of or the exercise of any power or function arises under these Disciplinary Procedures, a ruling of the President thereon will determine the issue.

NOTE 1: Where a disciplinary action results in the imposition of a sanction against a student, that fact will be noted on the student's record and may be taken into account by IT Sligo in responding to requests for character references if such is deemed relevant and appropriate.

NOTE 2: This Procedure may be reviewed from time to time and the most current version will be available on the website at www.itsligo.ie.



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