

REFERENDUM NOTIFICATION

BY ORDER OF THE RETURNING OFFICER (on 27 February 2026)

The Students' Union has received a valid Petition for a Referendum to be held in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Students' Union. The number of petition signatures received exceeded the 2.5% Student membership threshold required to call a Referendum.

The full Rules and Regulations for the referendum are available from the Returning Officer (su.voice@qub.ac.uk) and are on the Students' Union website. (www.q-su.org)

The Students' Union will provide printed and online publicity to one group of students in support of the referendum and to one group of students opposed to the referendum.

Any student interested in leading these campaigns must contact the Students' Union Returning Officer (su.voice@qub.ac.uk) by 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday 4 March 2026 with soft copies of any print materials they wish to use in the Referendum campaign. Details of permitted print materials are available in the Referendum Rules.

The referendum shall take place, by a secret ballot on Q-SU.org, of all student members, from 8.00 a.m. on Tuesday 10 March 2026 to 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 19 March 2025, to determine the opinion of the membership on the following proposal:

Language Rights in Queen's University Belfast

Do you support the full proposal titled **Language Rights in Queen's University Belfast**, from which the Students' Union will advocate:

- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that gives the Irish Language equal status to the English Language as an official language of the University.
- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that implements a bilingual corporate identity for the University and Students' Union, to include: official bilingual name and official bilingual logo for the University.
- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that implements physical bilingual signage in English and Irish throughout campus.
- For improved services for Irish-speaking students, which may include: official university forms available in Irish, administration services available through Irish, graduation certificates available in Irish.

Language Rights in Queen's University Belfast

In summary, if students vote in favour of the proposal, the Students' Union will advocate:

- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that gives the Irish Language equal status to the English Language as an official language of the University.
- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that implements a bilingual corporate identity for the University and Students' Union, to include: official bilingual name and official bilingual logo for the University.
- That QUB adopts an Irish Language Policy that implements physical bilingual signage in English and Irish throughout campus.
- For improved services for Irish-speaking students, which may include: official university forms available in Irish, administration services available through Irish, graduation certificates available in Irish.

Full Proposal: Language Rights in Queen's University Belfast

Background

- Queen's University Belfast removed bilingual signage (Irish & English) from the Students' Union in 1997 after the Fair Employment Commission stated "they were incompatible with a neutral working environment". The University has failed to reinstate the bilingual signage in the subsequent 29 years since.
- Article 78J (1) of The Identity and Languages (North of Ireland) Act 2022 provides recognition of the Irish Language as an official language of the north of Ireland.
- Queen's University Belfast does not currently give equal recognition to the Irish Language alongside the English Language despite the two languages having official status in the north of Ireland.
- Queen's University Belfast has refused to comment on whether it plans to implement an Irish Language Policy or implement bilingual signage.
- Members of QUB senior management, namely the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Global Engagement, have stated that the promotion of the Irish Language "[is a key policy of this University](#)".
- There has been an increased demand for Irish Language classes in the QUB Language Centre in recent years, as well as a 227% increase (2020-2025) in the number of students studying Irish.
- Queen's University Belfast has made major progress in promoting the Irish Language in recent years. Namely through the introduction of An Scéim Chónaithe, an Irish-speaking accommodation scheme, as well as through the introduction of an Oifigeach Tacaíochta Teanga (Irish Language Support Officer).
- An Cumann Gaelach, founded in 1906, is the third oldest society on campus. The society is responsible for promoting the Irish Language on campus through the provision of cultural events, Irish classes and advocating for language rights for Irish speakers.

The Students' Union supports:

- Student-led Irish language advocacy, the promotion of the Irish language by students, and the introduction of legal protections for Irish language speakers.
- The implementation of the commitments made in the St. Andrew's Agreement (2006), the New Decade New Approach (2020) agreement and the Identity and Language (North of Ireland) Act 2022, and the inclusion of the higher education institutions - such as The Queen's University Belfast - in the definition of 'public authorities' on whom the Act applies.
- The proper resourcing and provision of formal Irish language education by Queen's such as degree programmes and Gaeltacht courses.
- The proper resourcing and provision of informal Irish language education by Queen's by means of educational programmes, events and classes.

The Students' Union recognises:

- That the Irish Language is a minority language protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which the British Government ratified in 2001.
- Implementation of an Irish Language Policy would advance QUB's commitments to providing a "welcoming, inclusive and harmonious environment for all students, staff and visitors".
- International Best Standards, which include bilingual corporate identity and bilingual signage provision, regarding minority languages such as Irish, Scots Gaelic and Welsh are already practiced by universities across Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The implementation of an Irish Language Policy will allow QUB to align with its counterparts across Ireland and the United Kingdom.
- That language visibility is a key element of minority language promotion in line with internationally accepted best standards.
- That a monolingual, English-only campus does not allow for the promotion of good relations and neglects the promotion of the Irish Language as a living language used daily by members of the University community.

The Students' Union agrees:

- That the Union put pressure on the University Senate and senior management to agree to develop and implement a comprehensive Irish Language Policy to include a bilingual corporate identity for the University and Students' Union, as well as campus-wide physical bilingual signage.
- That the Union, through its Executive Management Committee, put pressure on the University Senate and University Management Board to formally recognise Irish and English equally as official languages of the University.
- That the Union, through its Executive Management Committee, request the immediate reinstatement of bilingual signage in the Students' Union.

Leagan Gaeilge (Irish Language Version)

Ceartha Teanga ar Ollscoil na Banríona

Má vótáiltear ar son an mholta, molfaidh Aontas na Mac Léinn:

- Go nglacfaidh an Ollscoil le agus go gcuirfidh siad polasaí Gaeilge i bhfeidhm a chuireann an Ghaeilge agus an Béarla ar chomhleibhéal mar theangacha oifigiúla na hOllscoile.
- Go nglacfaidh an Ollscoil le polasaí Gaeilge a chuireann féiniúlacht chorparáideach dhátheangach i bhfeidhm, le hainm agus lógó dátheangach san áireamh.
- Go nglacfaidh an Ollscoil le polasaí Gaeilge a chuireann comharthaíocht dhátheangach, sa Ghaeilge agus sa Bhéarla, i bhfeidhm.
- Go gcuirfear seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge ar fáil agus go mbeidh na seirbhísí a leanas ar fáil i nGaeilge: foirmeacha oifigiúla na hOllscoile, seirbhísí riaracháin, na teastais ollscoile.

An Moladh: Ceartha Teanga ar Ollscoil na Banríona

Cúlra an Mholta

- Bhain an Ollscoil comharthaíocht dhátheangach ó bhallaí Aontas na Mac Léinn in 1997 nuaid a bhí sé ráite ag an gCoimisiún um Fhostaíocht Chothrom nach raibh siad “oiriúnach do thimpeallacht oibre neodraí”. Theip ar an Ollscoil an chomharthaíocht a chuir ar ais sa 29 bliain a leanas.
- Tugann Alt 78J (1) den Acht Féiniúlacht is Teanga (TnÉ) 2022 aitheantas don Ghaeilge mar theanga oifigiúil an stáit.
- San am i láthair, ní thugann an Ollscoil aitheantas don Ghaeilge le hais an Bhéarla, d’aineoinn an stádas oifigiúil atá ag an dhá theanga sa stát.
- Dhiúltaigh an Ollscoil ráiteas a thabhairt ar a cuid pleananna do pholasaí Gaeilge nó do chomharthaíocht dhátheangach.
- Dar le ball bhainistíocht shinsearach na hOllscoile, an Leas-Sainsailéir um Choraíocht Dhomhanda, [is polasaí lárnach na hOllscoile](#) é cur chun cinn na Gaeilge.
- Tá méadú ar éileamh ranganna Gaeilge in Ionad Teanga na hOllscoile agus tá borradh mór (227%) ar líon na ndaltaí Gaeilge idir 2020-2025.
- Ní bheag an dul chun cinn atá déanta leis an Ollscoil sna blianta beaga anuas maidir leis an Ghaeilge. Aithnítear an Scéim Chónatihe Ghaeilge agus post an Oifigigh Gaeilge mar ghnéithe den dul chun cinn sin.
- Is é An Cumann Gaelach, a bunaíodh in 1906, an tríú sóchaí is sine ar champas. Cuireann an cumann an Ghaeilge chun cinn trí ranganna Gaeilge, imeachtaí cultúrtha agus feachtasaíocht.

Tacaíonn an tAontas le:

- Feachtasaíocht don Ghaeilge faoi stiúir na mac léinn, cur chun cinn na Gaeilge ar champas, tabhairt isteach reachtaíochta a thugann aitheantas agus cosaint don Ghaeilge.
- Na coimítmint a glacadh i gComhaontú Cill Rímhinn (2006), i gComhaontú Athrú na Linne (2020), agus an tAcht Féiniúlacht ‘s Teanga (TnÉ) 2022 a chur i bhfeidhm, agus

ionchuimsiú na hinstiúidí tríú leibhéal - amhail Ollscoil na Banríona - i sainmhíniú na n-údarás poiblí, a bhaineann an tAcht leo.

- Acmhainní agus soláthar cuí d'oidreachas foirmiúil Gaeilge in Ollscoil na Banríona ar nós clár chéime agus cúrsaí Gaeltachta.
- Acmhainní agus soláthar cuí do oidreachas neamhfhoirmiúil Gaeilge in Ollscoil na Banríona, tríd chláir oidreachais, imeachtaí agus ranganna.

Aithníonn an tAontas:

- Gur teanga mhionlaithe í an Gaeilge atá faoi chosaint faoin gCáirt Eorpach do Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh a dhaingnigh Rialtas na Breataine in 2001.
- Go gcuirfeadh cur i bhfeidhm Polasaí Gaeilge le coimínt OnaB chun “timpeallacht fháilteach, chuimsitheach agus chomhchuí a sholáthar do gach mac léinn, ball foirne agus cuairteoir.
- Tá na Caighdeáin Idirnaisiúnta is Fearr, lena n-airítear féiniúlacht chorparáideach dhátheangach agus soláthar comharthaíochta dátheangaí, maidir le teangacha mhionlaithe ar nós na Gaeilge, na Gàidhlig agus na Breataine, á chleachtadh cheana féin ag ollscoileanna ar fud na hÉireann, na hAlban agus na Breataine bige. Cuirfidh chur i bhfeidhm Polasaí Gaeilge Ollscoil na Banríona ar chomhchéim lena chomhghleacaithe ar fud na hÉireann agus na Ríochta Aontaithe.
- Gur gné ríthabachtach é de chur chun cinn na dteangacha mhionlaithe é an infheictheacht, agus go bhfuil seo i gcomhréir le deacleachtas idirnaisiúnta.
- Nach chuireann campas aonteangach le Béarla amháin deis ar fáil chun dea-chaidreamh a thógáil nó a chur chun cinn agus go ndéanann sé faillí ar chur chun cinn na Gaeilge mar theanga bheo bhríomhar a úsáideann baill de phobal na hOllscoile go laethúil.

Aontaíonn an tAontas:

- Go gcuireann an tAontas brú ar Sheanad na hOllscoile agus ar bhainistíocht shinsireach na hOllscoile chun pholasaí cuimsitheach Gaeilge a dheimhniú, a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm, le féiniúlacht chorparáideach dhátheangach don Ollscoil agus le comharthaíocht dhátheangach ar fud an champais san áireamh.
- Go gcuireann an tAontas, tríd an Coiste Bainistíochta, brú ar Sheanad na hOllscoile agus ar bhord bainistíochta na hOllscoile an Ghaeilge a aithint taobh leis an Bhéarla mar theangacha oifigiúla na hOllscoile.
- Go ndéanann an tAontas, tríd an Coiste Bainistíochta, iarratas chun an chomharthaíocht dhátheangach a chur ar ais ar bhallaí an Aontais go práinneach.

REFERENDUM NOTIFICATION

BY ORDER OF THE RETURNING OFFICER (on 27 February 2026)

Constitutional Amendments

Proposed amendments to the Student's Union Constitution were approved at the Statutory Meeting of the of the Student's Union Council held on Tuesday 20 January 2026.

These amendments require ratification by the Student Members of the Students' Union.

Referendum Details

In accordance with the Rules, this official notification shall be treated as comparable to the receipt of a signed referendum petition from the membership and shall be used to calculate the date of the Referendum.

The full Rules and Regulations for the referendum are available from the Returning Officer (su.voice@qub.ac.uk) and are on the Students' Union website. (www.q-su.org)

The referendum shall take place, by a secret ballot on Q-SU.org, of all student members, from 8.00 a.m. on Tuesday 10 March 2026 to 8.00 p.m. on Thursday 19 March 2025, to determine the opinion of the membership on the amendments outlined in the minute excerpts below.

The amendments shall be collated and put as follows:

“Do you support the proposal to amend the Rules of the Union and the operation of SU Clubs and Societies so that conflicts of interest must be considered when students apply to establish a new Club or Society?”

YES

NO

Excerpt from the Minutes of the Tuesday 20 January 2026 Statutory Meeting of the Students' Union Council

5. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS/RULE AMENDMENTS

The Council considered the following amendment:

INSERT INTO RULE 8 (CLUBS AND SOCIETIES), SECTION 2 (PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNITION OF A CLUB OR SOCIETY) THE FOLLOWING CLAUSES AND RENUMBER EXISTING CLAUSES ACCORDINGLY:

Any Student Member making an application for recognition of a Club or Society must declare any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest, direct or indirect, relating to the application. The Council, or sub-committee of Council, when considering an application for recognition:

- shall consider any declared conflict of interest and any other relevant available information suggesting any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest;
- make a determination on the Student Member's involvement in the recognition process; and
- may invalidate an application from a Student Member if recognition could feasibly result in direct or indirect pecuniary benefit to the Student Member.

The proposals were debated and put to vote.

The constitutional amendments were carried.

The Council approved an enabling motion to authorise the Clerk of Council to composite the amendments approved at the meeting such that invalid references were removed from the text of the Constitution.

The Council approved a further enabling motion to authorise consideration of the proposed amendments by the Student Membership by Referendum.