



ELECTION PROCEDURES

TITLE:	BYE LAW THREE
OWNER:	MARK FRANCOS (GPC)
APPROVED:	STUDENT COUNCIL (02/11/22)

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**SECTION ONE:
THE RETURNING OFFICER**

- 1.1 The Returning Officer shall act in accordance with the Rules and Regulations contained within the Articles of Association, Standing Orders and Appendices.
- 1.2 The Returning Officer for the Student Officer elections will be appointed from the staff of NUS UK, whilst the Deputy Returning Officer(s) will be a Senior Staff member of the Union and shall be approved by Student Council, or Student Executive in its absence.
- 1.3 With the exception of Student Officer elections, the Students' Union President will act as the Returning Officer, or appoint an appropriate replacement.
- 1.4 Deputy Returning Officer/s may be appointed by the Returning Officer and shall act as the recognised point of contact relating to the conduct of an election in the absence of the Returning Officer.
- 1.5 It shall be the duty of the Returning Officer and their deputies to ensure that these regulations are complied with by all candidates and others taking part in elections. The Governance and Policy Coordinator shall report to the Returning Officer or their deputies any relevant information on conduct of candidates, the poll or practical issues as they arise.
- 1.6 The Returning Officer and their Deputies may disqualify or penalise candidates who breach any of the regulations within this Bye-law, the elections Code of Conduct or the Election Rules.
- 1.7 The Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer/s shall be unable to propose or in any way support or vote for any candidate.
- 1.8 The deadline for complaints being made, regarding the conduct of an election (other than the conduct of the count), must be made in writing to the Returning Officer no later than three hours after voting closes.
- 1.9 Any complaints regarding the conduct of the count must be made in writing to the Returning Officer no later than 17:00 on the day after the announcement of the result.
- 1.10 Requests for a new election may only be made by the candidates.
- 1.11 It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to ensure that all candidates are eligible to run for election.
- 1.12 In the event of any dispute in relation to the validity of the vote or the conduct of the election the Returning Officer's decision is final and cannot be over-ruled within the bounds of the Articles of Association, Standing Orders and Appendices. If requested by Student Council, the Returning Officer shall submit a report for their consideration, setting out the grounds of complaint, and their reason for either upholding or rejecting it.
- 1.13 The Student Council shall be entitled to review whether the Returning Officer has complied with the Regulations. If the Student Council find by 50% +1 that the Returning Officer had complied with the Regulations, the Student Council will not interfere with the Returning Officers decision.
- 1.14 If the Student Council find that there has been a serious material non-compliance with the Regulations by the Returning Officer, the Student Council may in its discretion vote by 50% +1 to stipulate that a new election shall be held.

SECTION TWO: TIMETABLE FOR ELECTIONS

- 2.1 The dates of elections and a Bye-law convening the closing of nominations and provisions for the candidates question time, shall be drawn up by the Returning Officer and approved by the Student Executive.
- 2.2 The Returning Officer shall be appointed at least two weeks before nominations are due to open.
- 2.3 Nominations for Student Officer positions shall open no later than the second week of the second semester.
- 2.4 All other elections within the Students' shall open at the discretion of the Returning Officer, in accordance with the Bye-laws
- 2.5 Excluding Student Officer positions, in the event of a position not being filled, where time permits, further elections shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Returning Officer.
- 2.6 Nominations shall remain open for a period of at least ten university days for Student Officer elections and five university days for all other elections.
- 2.7 A candidates meeting shall be held, in good time, after the close of nominations for Student Officer elections and at the discretion of the Returning Officer for all other elections.
- 2.8 A list of all those candidates validly nominated for each post, along with their election statement will be displayed on the election website, or relevant location, for the consideration of potential voters.

SECTION THREE: NOMINATIONS

- 3.1 Nominations and manifestos shall be in the format requested or shall otherwise be deemed invalid by the Returning Officer.
- 3.2 The submission of a nomination will be issued only when notice of an election is given. Each nomination which is issued for an election shall only be valid for that election.
- 3.3 Each nomination shall contain the name of one candidate only, together with the names of proposers – at least thirty in the case of overall positions within Student Officer elections and at least fifteen in the case of site-based positions within Student Officer elections.
- 3.4 Each nomination must contain the candidates name as listed on their student I.D. card.
- 3.5 Each nomination will contain an agreement for the Conduct of Candidates during the election campaigns. Each candidate will be required to agree to abide by the rules laid down for the conduct of elections.
- 3.6 Each nomination shall be submitted in accordance with the rules laid out by the Returning Officer, as written within the Election Code of Conduct.
- 3.7 All of the proposers must be qualified electors for that post.
- 3.8 No full member of the Students' Union may propose more than one candidate for any one office during that specific election.

SECTION FOUR: CANDIDATES PUBLICITY

- 4.1 For Student Officer positions the amount of printing allocated for each candidate standing for an overall position will be £45, for all other Student Officer positions it is £20. Each candidate will be provided with a price list and they will be able to create their own printing allocations up to these limits. All material shall include UUSU branding to make it identifiable as part of UUSU processes. In addition UUSU will provide a Campaigning Pack that may include additional digital and physical campaign resources.
- 4.2 In addition to this Bye-law, all candidates and their respective teams will be subject to current Code of Conduct, which will be widely circulated during the nomination period.
- 4.3 Candidates will be required to sign the Code of Conduct to prove they have received and agree to be bound by these rules.
- 4.4 The amount each candidate spends on additional material should not exceed £120 for overall candidates and £80 for site position candidates. What is considered additional material will be at the discretion of the Returning Officer and the receipt for all externally produced materials will be requested alongside the material for inspection by the Returning Officer or their deputy prior to use.
- 4.5 Any complaints regarding overspending should be brought to the attention of the Returning Officer who may ask candidates to produce receipts for their additional spend.
- 4.6 Any infringement of these rules could result in elimination from the election, as determined by the Returning Officer.

SECTION FIVE: USE OF EQUIPMENT OR PREMISES

- 5.1 As far as possible the Returning Officer and their Deputies shall ensure that all candidates shall have equal access to Student Union facilities during the election period.
- 5.2 Use of the following is prohibited by a candidate unless authorised specifically in writing by the Returning Officer:
 - i. Any Student Union vehicle;
 - ii. Tannoy system/s;
 - iii. Lighting, sound or loud hailing equipment;
 - iv. Student Union electronic/computer equipment.
- 5.3 Where space permits, Student Union offices may be used to hold a candidate's material, however, this must not unfairly advantage one candidate over another and must be available to all candidates.

SECTION SIX: CANDIDATES QUESTION TIME

- 6.1 Candidates Question Time shall be held for all Student Officer elections.
- 6.2 Attendance of candidates shall be obligatory. If the candidate has made no efforts to inform the Returning Officer of their absence the Returning Officer may take punitive measures against said candidate.

- 6.3 Extenuating circumstances for non-attendance must be submitted in advance of each meeting and the Returning Officer's decision will be final as to whether or not these are accepted. If the reason is not considered valid, the Returning Officer may take punitive measures against said candidate.
- 6.4 The format of the question time sessions shall be at the discretion of the Returning Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Returning Officer(s). The format must be prepared and agreed in good time to give candidates sufficient notice.

SECTION SEVEN: CONDUCT OF THE POLL

- 7.1 The Students Union will provide information of candidates nominated in accessible areas in each campus from the close of nominations until the close of poll.
- 7.2 Candidates will be advised that 'hard selling' or seeking to manipulate the conduct of the poll by proxy voting, forcing students to vote or any other behaviour that is deemed by the Returning Officer or their deputies to be engaging in foul play will face disqualification from the election. This also applies to social media behaviour.

SECTION EIGHT: THE METHOD OF VOTING

- 8.1 Voting in elections shall be by secret ballot and under alternative transferable vote (ATV) system (when only one candidate is to be elected) OR the single transferable vote (STV) system (when more than one candidate is to be elected).

When a voter is completing their paper ballot of online vote, they must:

- a) Place a figure "1" or an "X" opposite the name of the candidate of their first preference;
- b) In addition, place the figure "2" and "3" or "2", "3" and "4", and so on opposite the names of other candidates in the order of their preference.

When voters are completing this through an online election, there will be a drop down box that will prompt the voter of the preference they can vote, as described above.

- 8.2 In any dispute as to the validity of a vote the decision of the Returning Officer shall be final.

SECTION NINE: ELIGIBILITY

- 9.1 Any full member of the Students' Union who are deemed by the University as being in good academic standing is eligible for nomination, to propose candidates and to vote in elections, provided that they are a member of the constituency for which that election is being held. Members of the Student Executive who are seeking to contest the election will be provided with adequate login details to facilitate nominations and voting. The Returning Officer shall be the final arbiter for eligibility disputes.

SECTION TEN: GENERAL

- 10.1 The Student Officers shall remain in office for a term of one year, commencing in accordance with the Bye-laws.
- 10.2 The term of office may be shorter or longer on a transitional basis to coincide with an alteration of the year start or end.
- 10.3 A Student Officer can serve for a maximum of three years as a Student Officer, of which no more than two shall be in the same position.
- 10.4 For the avoidance of doubt, Student Officer terms of office may be either consecutive or non-consecutive.
- 10.5 All Student Officer elections shall provide the opportunity to vote for the Re-Opening of Nominations (R.O.N.).
- 10.6 No individual may be nominated nor hold more than one Student Executive position office simultaneously.
- 10.7 In the event of the number of candidates for any other Student Union election being equal to or less than the number of vacancies, the said candidates will automatically become elected to that position.
- 10.8 Successful candidates shall take up and hold office in accordance with relevant Byelaws.
- 10.9 Successful candidates shall be required to sign a Contract of Employment which will be provided by the Director of HR and Campus Operations before taking up Office.
- 10.10 An elected Student Officer must commence the duties and responsibilities set out in their Contract of Employment within two weeks of the start date as listed in the Articles of Association of the UUSU. Failure to comply with this Regulation, without the prior written approval of the Trustee Board will result in the election being declared void, and a new election for the post being called at the beginning of the Autumn semester.

SECTION ELEVEN: ELECTRONIC VOTING

- 11.1 The Students' Union will arrange for electronic voting for all appropriate elections and such arrangements shall be in line with the general provisions of this Bye-law.

SECTION TWELVE: COUNT

- 12.1 The counting of votes shall follow the process outlined in Schedule 1, Sections 47-56 of the Local Elections (NI) Order 1985.
- 12.2 Results of elections shall be communicated to candidates at the earliest opportunity and made available to members within 24 hours.