

stand!



national union of students

Zone Committee Elections

All the activities, briefings, reports and training that you see at Zone Conference will have been led by the Zone Vice President and the Zone Committee. These committees consist of elected students and co-opted members of union staff who have an interest in the Zone's work – and you could be one of them.

If you are a student, then at the conference you'll have the chance to stand for election to the Zone committee. This guide offers you some reasons why you may want to stand, what you should know about being on a zone committee and also some things you might want to do to get elected.

Zone Committees

To help divide the work of the National Union there are 5 NUS "Zones", each of which deals with a different portfolio of work. These portfolios are Further Education, Higher Education, Society and Citizenship, Union Development and Welfare. The Zones are led by a committee and report to the National Executive Council on the work they do; as noted in the constitution:

1. Each zone will have a coordinating committee consisting of the following members:
2. The Vice President (Full Time Officer) for that Zone who will act as the Chairperson
3. The National President (Ex Officio)
4. Five individual members elected by and at the Zone Conference, where except for the FE Zone Committee and the HE Zone Committee at least one of which must be from the FE Sector. In the case of the FE and HE committees all of the six individual members must be from the relevant sector.
5. Non voting representatives of Nations, NUS-USI, Social Policy Campaigns and Liberation Campaigns as the Zone committee sees fit. One individual member elected by and at Zone Conference, who shall also act as the NEC member for that zone.
6. Up to three co-opted members at the invitation of the committee who will be non voting and may not be individual student members of the National Union.
7. Zone committees will regulate their proceedings as they see fit save that they must meet at least 4 (four) times per year. They will report their work to the National Executive Council.

This means that a zone committee member will:

- Help the Vice President decide what the priorities for the Zone are
- Feedback on work done during the year and monitor policies from National Conference
- Help steer what the Zone works on next
- Ensure that the wider membership are consulted on what is going on

This will be done through a series of meetings and discussions. If elected you will get support from NUS staff to make sure you can involve yourself in this without personal expense to you and that your experience is a positive one.

Why would I stand?

The only prerequisites for standing for election to Zone committee are that you are a student and that you are passionate about the work that the Zone is doing. You will want to make a difference to the lives of your fellow students and to make sure that their leaders are working on the right things. You'll want to listen to what others say and with them come up with ideas for NUS to implement across the United Kingdom. In short – you'll want to offer ideas, promote students and offer guidance to the National Vice-Presidents.

How do I stand?

The election rules are set by the NUS Chief Returning Officer, Matt Robinson. There are 6 positions on each zone committee that are available for election.

Nomination | Nominations will open during the opening plenary of each event. Nominations will close at 6pm on day one of each event. Candidates not intending to attend at day one of the event may obtain a nomination for from elections@nus.org.uk. Forms submitted in this circumstance must reach NUS HQ in London by 5pm on Friday 21st October 2011. Those seeking to stand in the election must obtain five nominations from at least five constituent member unions.

Publication of nominations | All received nominations will be published in a prominent place aon the first night of each event. Anyone wishing to object to the nomination of a candidate on the grounds of eligibility or for any other reason will be able to do direct to the Returning Officer and Deputy until 8.00am on the second day of each event.

Manifestos | All candidates in attendance at the event will be able to book to use NUS computers to design a manifesto which will be no larger than a single MS PowerPoint Slide and will be reproduced by NUS in time for the election to an A5 size. Anyone not intending to attend at day one of the event may submit camera ready artwork with their nomination form to NUS HQ in London by 5pm on Friday 21st October 2011. No other printed campaign material shall be allowed for these elections.

Question Time | There will be a question time between 9.00am and 11.00am on the second day/morning of each event. Candidates must attend in person. Failure to do so will result in automatic withdrawal from the election.

Balloting | Ballot papers will be issued on a one ballot per union basis at registration. No replacements will be given. Ballots will be collected by the returning officer or their deputy following the question time for each election.

Count | The count for each election shall take place in the Adelphi Hotel Liverpool in a room notified by the returning officer or their deputy. Each candidate may send one observer to attend at the count.

Questions | Anyone with questions about this election may contact us at elections@nus.org.uk.

If you have any questions you should contact the election representatives present at the conference who will be made clear to you or contact us at elections@nus.org.uk.

How does voting work?

NUS, and most students' unions, use a transferable vote system for their elections. This means that you don't just vote for one candidate, instead you vote for all of them giving different preferences. You vote #1 for your first choice, #2 for your second and so on. The candidate with the least votes, or who gets enough to be elected, is taken out and their votes are transferred to the next (i.e. if your #1 candidate got the least votes and was removed, the vote would go to the #2 candidate).

Although relatively complicated to count, what this means for candidates is that it is worth trying to get everyone to vote for you. This is because even if you aren't their #1 choice their vote could still be worthwhile.

How do I get people to vote for me?

The manifestos you produce and the speeches you do will help, but the main way you will get votes is by talking to other delegates. Find out what they care about and what they want to see. Explain your background and how you want the Zone to develop. Remember that you are representing all students and students' unions, not just your own and so you'll want to reflect this in what you do and say.

Remember that unions only have one vote and that it is the students, not the staff, who have a say in who gets elected – so use your time wisely.

How should I prepare?

Think carefully about why you are running and pick your most important points. This will normally be no more than 3. You can use these as the basis for your manifesto and speech. You should practise what you plan to say in your speech beforehand, and remember that you always speak faster when you are nervous.

What happens if I get elected?

There will be a big round of applause in the immediate aftermath, but you will be contacted soon after the end of the Zone Conference by the people in NUS who are there to support volunteers. They will give you some key dates and information that you should read through so you can quickly get involved in the work that you ran to do.

What happens if I don't get elected?

Zone committee is just one of a great many opportunities that are available for students to get involved in the student movement. NUS always need campaigners and activists, contributors to our online and print publications and representatives for our other democratic groups. Your students' union will also need students to be involved for their campaign work as well as representatives and people to take part in running their union. As such, even if you don't get elected you should stay involved and use the passion that made you run in the first place.