

Chief Returning Officer – Role Profile

NUS is seeking to appoint a Chief Returning Officer (CRO) with overall responsibility for encouraging participation in elections, ensuring free and fair elections at NUS and providing the means for voters to make well informed decisions.

This is an exciting year to join us as CRO. As part of our ambitions to Reform and open up our Democracy we have an ambition of bringing all of our elections online and to engage more voters digitally.

The role of the CRO is to ensure that NUS meet these strategic aims for the running NUS elections. The postholder will be supported by a Deputy Returning Officer who will be responsible for the delivery of elections as well as a team of Returning Officers (ROs) charged with delivering individual elections.

The CRO position is not to deliver elections themselves, but to lead ROs to do this and to act as an independent adjudicator in election matters.

The key responsibilities of the CRO are:

Participation

- Work with NUS staff on promotion of elections, setting objectives and targets to guide our communications work
- Engaging under-represented groups in NUS elections
- Championing digital participation in NUS Democracy and utilising electronic voting to drive participation in elections.
- Monitoring diversity of elections candidates and reporting on this to National Conference.

Free and Fair Elections

- Setting election Regulations for all NUS elections in line with NUS UK's Articles and Rules
- Interpret the NUS UK Articles and Rules in relation to elections and be the key interpreter in this respect
- Be the final, independent, point of appeal for all election complaints
- In exceptional circumstances, intervening where necessary to order recounts or nullify election votes if an election has not been conducted in line with Articles, Rules and Regulations.
- Ensuring well informed, consistent and evidence based decisions are made across the RO team
- Ensuring all complaints are formally logged and regularly reviewed
- Reporting back on elections to the NUS Board and preparing a report to National Conference

Informed Decisions by Voters

- Ensure DRO is providing relevant material and information to voters around candidates so they can make informed decisions

Person Specification

The position of CRO would suit a senior leader in a third sector body or Students' Union, with a track record of returning or supporting the delivery of elections.

Essential qualities

- In depth knowledge of Single Transferable Vote (STV) and Alternative Vote (AV) elections
- Experience of students' unions or similar democratic membership organisations

- Understanding of elections conducted via electronic voting
- Flexibility to work in a Transition Year environment where significant changes are being made to democratic structures
- Experience of overseeing elections at a high level either as Returning Officer or as staff lead
- Confidence to interpret NUS's Articles and Rules, to set Regulations and make Rulings
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to build strong working relationships with NUS staff and volunteers
- You will have an outstanding reputation for personal integrity and upholding the highest standards in fairness and impartiality.
- Commitment to equality and diversity

Desirable qualities

- An understanding of NUS Democracy
- Experience of using UnionCloud to administer elections
- An interest in students/the education sector and a willingness to learn

What we Offer

The chance to work with a variety of different people from different walks of life and make a real difference to students lives.

- Comprehensive induction and ongoing training
- A handover period with the current postholder
- A key staff contact to provide support
- A great opportunity to develop your existing skills and to gain new ones
- Meet like-minded people and work in a team
- Reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses

Expectations

The role is primarily there to lead and support the DRO and ROs to deliver elections and act as the final point of appeal. Therefore most contact would be remotely via phone, email or video conference.

Most contact would take place during the months of January to May where elections are taking place (though this could change with future democratic calendars). Whilst elections are taking place and particularly where these are being held at events we would expect the postholder to be easily reached via phone/email to allow for final rulings to be made and appeals considered.

In addition all Returning Officers will be expected to attend induction and training sessions including:

- Creating Equity at Work training
- Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia awareness

Recruitment Process

This position is appointed by the NUS UK Board and ratified by UK Conference. We want to ensure we get the right candidate and that this volunteering position is right for the successful postholder.

If you're interested in the role, but have further questions please feel free to email democracy@nus.org.uk to either ask questions or schedule a call with a member of the team to discuss further.

If you would like to apply for the role please email your CV and a brief Cover Letter to democracy@nus.org.uk by 30 August 2019

The panel will then shortlist and invited shortlisted candidates to interview. The aim of the interview process is to discuss the role further in a relaxed, informal setting to let candidates know about the position, answer questions and find out more about you as a candidate. Interviews will be held week commencing 5 September 2019

The successful candidate will have their appointment confirmed by the Board. This will need to be ratified by UK Conference so the candidate can serve beyond this year.

The Panel is made up of:

- Zamzam Ibrahim, NUS National President
- Yousef El-Tawil, Student Director on NUS UK Board
- Thomas McNeil, External Director on NUS UK Board
- Uzma Arif-Fryer, SU Staff member

Equal Opportunities Statement

We're committed to equality of opportunity for all. We welcome interest from individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender, or disability.