

## Zone Conferences Election Rules

The Chief Returning Officer has set out the following rules for the Zones Conferences. It should be noted that these rules are the property of the Chief Returning Officer and their designates and they alone will be the interpreter of them.

### 1 Positions available

- 1.1 Eight (8) FE places on the FE Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.2 Two (2) FE places on the Union Development Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.3 Two (2) FE places on the Society and Citizenship Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.4 Two (2) FE places on the Welfare Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.5 One (1) FE Zone Place on the NEC.
- 1.6 Eight (8) HE places on the HE Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.7 One (1) HE Zone Place on the NEC.
- 1.8 Six (6) places on the Union Development Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.9 One (1) Union Development Zone Place on the NEC open to women only.
- 1.10 Six (6) places on the Society and Citizenship Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.11 One (1) Society and Citizenship Zone Place on the NEC open to women only.
- 1.12 Six (6) places on the Welfare Zone Committee where at least 50% shall be women.
- 1.13 One (1) Welfare Zone Place on the NEC.

### 2 Who can stand for the positions

- 2.1 Any person will be eligible for election to the post of individual committee member, if at close of nominations that person is an individual student member of the National Union, subject to Rule 801.
- 2.2 An individual student member as defined in NUS Article 16 and Rule 801 for the avoidance of doubt is defined as a student aged over 16 or sabbatical officer from an affiliated students' union or an NUS Committee. This means that any person who has graduated, or has finished their term of office at an affiliated students' union or is an NUS FTO is not eligible to stand in the election.
- 2.3 For HE Zone Committee and HE NEC Place the individual member must be from the HE sector.
- 2.4 For FE Zone Committee, FE NEC Place and the reserved FE places on each of the Welfare, Society and Citizenship and Union Development Zone Committee the individual member must be from the FE sector.
- 2.5 Of the 8 positions on each Zone Committee at least 50% of the places (rounded down) to be allocated to self-defining women.
- 2.6 Rule 104 states that in the event that the previously elected Vice President is not a self-defining woman this position shall be reserved for a self-defining woman therefore the NEC place for Union Development and Society and Citizenship shall only be open to candidates who are self-defining women.
- 2.7 The nomination form will ask for everyone to declare whether they are from the FE sector and whether they define as a women. Only candidates that do this will be counted in the FE and women only counts.

### 3 How to become a candidate

- 3.1 To become a candidate you must fill in the nomination form online. You will be asked to declare your eligibility and give proof of this in one of the methods outlined in the

guidance. You will also be asked to declare whether you are from FE and whether you are a self-defining woman.

3.2 You must be nominated by at least one (1) individual member. They will be asked to declare their eligibility and give proof of this in one of the methods outlined in the guidance.

3.3 You will be asked to submit a photo, biography and supporting statement on who you are and why you're standing for the position. These are optional but you are strongly encouraged to submit them.

3.4 Nominations close at 18:00 on the first day of the zone conference.

#### **4 How to find out about the candidates and vote**

4.1 The candidates shall be announced on NUS Connect shortly after close of nominations, after the Returning Officer has confirmed they have the required number of nominations.

4.2 Each candidate's submitted written profile on who they are and why they are standing (if they have submitted this along with nominations) will be displayed on NUS Connect.

4.3 Any member of NUS may object to the eligibility of candidates or their nominators. To challenge eligibility you must notify the returning officer via [governanceteam@nus.org.uk](mailto:governanceteam@nus.org.uk) or in person no later than 9:00 on Day 2 of the Zone Conference.

4.4 All candidates in all positions will be given the opportunity to deliver an election speech at the Zone Conference. This will be a 1 minute speech.

4.5 Each constituent member shall have one (1) vote. The Higher Education zone shall be reserved solely to Higher Education delegates to vote and Further Education zone shall be reserved solely to Further Education delegates to vote.

4.6 The ballot paper shall be issued to the named Student Officer delegate who registered for that Zone and where there are more than one Student Officer to the lead Officer.

4.7 Polling shall open following the candidates speeches and close at the end of the scheduled session for that election as outlined in the timeline in this guidance.

#### **5 Election count and results**

5.1 The election count shall be by single transferable vote.

5.2 Each candidate may send up to one (1) observer to the count but cannot attend the count themselves.

5.3 The results shall be announced on NUS Connect immediately following the count.

#### **6 Conduct and campaigning**

6.1 Candidates are reminded that as members of NUS they are subject to the NUS Code of Conduct which is available online or from [governanceteam@nus.org.uk](mailto:governanceteam@nus.org.uk) and a breach of this code by a candidate or their supporters may lead to disqualification, as may any breach of these rules.

6.2 The code of conduct sets out the protocol to be followed given any breach of discipline. A breach of discipline can include (but is not limited to, threatening or harassing any other person, assaulting any other person, damaging any property, acting in contravention of the NUS Equal Opportunities Policies; acting without due regard for the safety of others, acting with dishonesty or with intent to defraud and infringement of equal opportunities, safe space, safeguarding, no platform or staff.

6.3 The Returning Officer has the right, at any point, to suspend a candidate to be investigated under the Code of Conduct which may cause them to be withdrawn from the election.

**6.4 Expenditure** | Candidates are encouraged to think creatively of ways to campaign without spending any money especially given nominations open and close of the same day but should a candidate wish to spend money on their campaign they may not spend more than £30 in total. Campaign materials are anything that promote your candidature or discourages others from voting for your opponents. These include, but are not limited to, flyers, posters, banners, T-shirts and bags. Candidates may be asked to produce receipts of their expenditure and may be asked to ensure that any good/services received are available to all candidates and not only a result of special relationships with suppliers, (for example: A friend owns a printing firm and gives you 500 leaflets for free. You would have to declare a cost equivalent to 500 leaflets at a local commercial rate within your expenditure). A breach of this rule (as any other rules) could result in your disqualification from the election.

**6.5 Emails and Social Media** | The use of any official NUS email list to gain nominations or advertise one candidate over another is strictly prohibited. This includes any official email networks or social networking groups and events both formal and informal that students use for another purpose, for example to discuss a type of student activity, community or political grouping. Individual emails and the general use of social networking sites and message boards is considered word of mouth communication, and beyond the need to be respectful of their opponents, candidates are free to use these as they see fit.

**6.6 Leaflets** | Leaflets may be distributed to delegates at any point over the conference, but not on conference floor or in the area designated for ballot boxes. Leaflet distributors may be asked to disperse from an area by the Chief Returning officer or asked to desist entirely if their actions cause the event to become inaccessible.

**6.7 Diversity monitoring** | The Chief Returning Officer wants to ensure that these election processes are as open as possible to the full diversity of our membership. If your nomination is successful you will be contacted to fill in an optional Diversity Monitoring Form.

## Appendix 1 – Election Rules

These are the rules which are in place for all elections from the NUS Articles and Rules. They are to be read in conjunction with the election rules as agreed by the returning officer in any given election.

### NUS RULES | Elections

#### 600 Application

601 These rules will apply for all elections to positions in NUS except where these rules are varied in the schedules for Nations, Liberation Campaigns or Student Sections. These rules may also be further defined in schedules for Nations, Liberation Campaigns or Student Sections. Variations or further definitions shall require approval of the Chief Returning Officer.

#### 602 Chief Returning Officer

603 The Chief Returning Officer will report annually to the National Conference on elections held under the auspices of these rules. They will keep under review measures to enable and maximise participation in elections and measures to restrict activity of candidates and campaigns to ensure fairness and make recommendations to this effect in their Annual Report to the National Conference.

604 The Chief Returning Officer in conjunction with their deputies will have the power to interpret all election regulations and issue rulings and

interpretations to this effect to all members and appointed election officials.

605 **The Chief Returning Officer (RO)**

610 The Chief Returning Officer shall, for each election or appropriate set of elections, appoint one of their deputies or any other person to act as the Returning Officer.

611 The RO will:

- a. Be the interpreter of the Elections Rules for that election, subject to any rulings from the CRO.
- b. Appoint (and dismiss if necessary) election officials to ensure the good conduct and administration of the elections.
- c. Ensure oversight of the count and declare the results of the elections.
- d. Set rules, regulations and guidelines other than these election rules to govern the conduct of the election.
- e. Seek legal advice by referring the matter to the Board if he/she believes that statements made or the contents of publicity could leave NUS open to legal action.
- f. Rule out of order any statement or the content of any publicity, which in their view is in breach of the constitution, the law or any other appropriate rules and guidelines.
- g. Be empowered to issue warnings to candidates or remove candidates from the election at any point in accordance with these election rules and any rules and regulations issued under the above provision
- h. Be empowered to order recounts, or declare election processes null and void.
- i. Deliver, or ensure the delivery of, appropriate support and guidance to all election candidates.
- j. Make available information to potential candidates for each election outlining relevant rules and procedures.

615 **Complaints**

616 For each election the RO is the ultimate official competent to deal with complaints regarding the conduct of candidates, their supporters and campaigns, and the administration of elections.

617 Complaints regarding the conduct of an RO must be sent to the CRO and cannot affect the outcome of an election unless National Conference rules that it should using the removal from office procedures

620 **The Process of Elections**

621 Eligibility

- i. Eligibility for elected office shall be restricted as follows and may be further restricted in the relevant rules.
- ii. Individual student membership shall mean Article 16.1 (Students of a Constituent Member aged 16 or over) and 16.3 (the Sabbatical Officers of Constituent Members, including NUS FTOs)

- iii. Individual committee membership shall mean Article 16.2 (the Committee Members as defined at 143.1) and 16.4 (sabbatical convenors of NUS Area Organisations)
  - iv. Candidates for all full time officer positions and for membership of any of the principal committees of the Nations, Sections, Zones and Liberation campaigns must be individual student members at the close of nominations for the position;
  - v. Candidates for all other positions must be individual student members or individual committee members at the close of nominations for the position;
- 622 For each election or set of elections the RO will produce an election timetable, which will outline:
- a. The process for nomination
  - b. Arrangements for the publication of accepted nominations
  - c. Arrangements for objections to the eligibility of candidates
  - d. Details for the submission of manifestos (if appropriate)
  - e. Details of a question time (if appropriate)
  - f. Arrangements for the ballot
  - g. Arrangements for the count
- 623 The RO will produce details of the arrangements for balloting and for complaints procedures, and ensure that they are publicised to all constituent members or delegates as appropriate.
- 624 The RO will ensure that any additional details, or amendments to the arrangements, are publicised to all constituent members or delegates as appropriate in a timely fashion.
- 625 Nominations**
- 626 Nomination forms will be available to all constituent members or delegates as appropriate.
- 627 It will be the responsibility of nominees to ensure that nomination forms are completed accurately and submitted before the deadline.
- 628 All nomination forms will require a minimum number of individual member proposers from minimum number of different constituent members as outlined in the annual schedule of elections published by the CRO each September. In setting the numbers, the CRO will pay due regard to the need to balance ease of involvement with demonstrating support; and consistency on the previous year.
- a) Candidates for the Vice President (Further Education) position may only be nominated by individual members of NUS who are individual members under article 16.2 or 16.4, or by individual members under article 16.1 or 16.3 if they are in particular a student or sabbatical officer at a further education constituent member, or a student studying a further education course at a higher education constituent member. Candidates for the Vice President (Higher Education) position may only be nominated by individual members of NUS who are individual members under article 16.2 or 16.4, or by individual members under article 16.1 or 16.3 if they are in particular a student or sabbatical officer at a higher education constituent member, or a student studying a higher education course at a further education constituent member.
- 629 The RO will have the sole responsibility for declaring a submitted nomination form valid.

- 630 In the event of two or more candidates having the same proposer in an election for a single position, the RO may allow up to twenty-four (24) hours for the candidates to find fresh proposers.
- 631 When the RO is satisfied, all valid nominations will be confirmed with the candidates and published.
- 632 Any candidate completing as nomination form for Full Time Office will also be required sign to accept any terms and conditions of employment relating to the post at the point of nomination

**635 Manifestos**

- 636 Where appropriate manifestos must be submitted by the date laid down in the election timetable and must comply with any format requirements stipulated by the RO.
- 637 The RO will ensure that manifestos are made available to voters.

**640 Campaign Publicity**

- 641 Where appropriate the RO may stipulate an amount that candidates may spend on their own election campaign.
- 642 The RO may draw up regulations for the conduct of candidates' campaigns. Any breach of these regulations could lead to disqualification from the election.

**645 Question Time**

- 646 The RO may arrange a question time for the candidates in an election.

**650 Withdrawal**

- 651 Any candidate may withdraw from an election at any point before the start of the count by informing the RO.
- 652 If a candidate withdraws during the ballot, or after a point at which the ballots cannot be amended, the RO will ensure that voters' next preferences are counted.

**655 Voting**

- 656 The RO will ensure that eligible delegates at a given event are enabled to vote.
- 657 The RO will decide the method of voting and publicise it appropriately.
- 658 The voters will be able to express preferences for as few or as many candidates as they wish in any election.
- 659 Ballots will bear the chosen name of each candidate, the position being contested, and any declared affiliations of each candidate
- 660 The order of names on the ballot will be decided alphabetically by surname.
- 661 There will be a facility for voting for "Re Open Nominations". For the purpose of counting the votes, 're-open nominations' box shall be treated as if a candidate. This means that re-open nomination may be excluded and the votes transferred in accordance with the rules. Voters can express a preference for a candidate after re-open nominations. In elections with one vacancy to be filled, the counting shall be alternative vote system. If the 're-opens nominations' candidate is elected, the returning officer shall declare the vacancy unfilled. In elections with more than one vacancy the counting shall be by the single transferable vote system. If at any stage of the count 're-open nominations' candidate gains the required number of votes to be elected, it shall be deemed to have been elected and any surplus

and any further votes, transferred to a further 're-open nominations' candidate. This stage shall be repeated as often as required. The returning officer shall declare unfilled the number of vacancies equal to the number of 'reopen nominations' candidates deemed to have been elected, if any.

662 Voting will be by secret ballot.