

Student Voice Guide to Elections: NUS Conferences 2017-18

October 2017

Contents	Page No.
1. Introduction	4
2. Responsibility for the Guide	5
3. Returning Officer	5
4. Election and Conference Dates	5
5. What is the National Union of Students	6
6. Positions available	7-8
7. How to self-define using the Guild website	8
8. Policy Making at NUS Conferences	9
9. Notice of Elections	9
10. Nominations Process	9-11
10.1 Manifestos & Written Statements	
10.2 Re-Open Nominations	
11. Guild Support	11-13
11.1 Elections support for disabled students	
12. Election Candidate Training & Events	13
13. Campaigning	13-14
13.1 Locations/Estates Guidance	
13.2 Developing your Election Platform	
14. Campaigning Materials	15
14.1 Printing	
14.2 Noise	
14.3 List of Freely Available Items	
14.4 Emails/Electronic Messaging	
15. Nicknames	15
16. Supporters	16
17. Budgets and Scrutiny of accounts	16
18. Election Complaint Procedure	17
19. Appeals Process	17
20. Guild Membership Discipline and Appeals Policy	17-18
21. Voting	18
22. Paper Ballot Procedure	18-19
23. Results	19
Appendix A Elections FAQ	20

Appendix B
Election Regulations

21-24

Appendix C
Bye Law 8 - Elections

25-26



1. Introduction from the Guild President

Being an NUS delegate is a really great way to feed into conversation and student representation on a national level and to drive the direction of you and everyone that follows.

At conference, you'll have the opportunity to vote for the next national leaders and to set priority and policy for the year ahead. It's also a great way to enhance your communication, presentation and debating skills and it could even put you in contact with future colleagues or employers.

NUS conferences are a great way to get the issues you care about debated on the national stage. As a collective, the National Union of Students has the ear of Government and policy makers.

From the anti-apartheid movement to LGBTQ liberation, students and the NUS have been at the forefront of momentous change for nearly 100 years. Running to be an NUS delegate is an opportunity for you to be part of this change. Whether you want to mark the path for the next year, or if you're looking at making a longer lasting change and want to get involved with the NUS then delegate elections are for you!

This guide will give you all the information you need to run a successful election campaign. If you need any further assistance contact the Student Voice Team on the Ground Floor of the Guild or email: elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

Good Luck!

Ellie Keiller

Guild President

2016-18

2. Responsibility of the Guide

The Student Voice Office shall be responsible for the review and seeking approval of these guidelines.

3. Returning Officer

The Returning Officer is the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham, or nominee. The nominated Returning Officer for this election will be the Representation and Resources Officer 2017/18.

The Returning Officer is responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and has final interpretation of the Election Regulations.

4. Election Schedule and Conference Dates

Election	Noms. Open	Noms. Close	Noms. reopen for unfilled positions	Training	Campaigning & Voting	Results (via email)
NUS Conference Delegate	Monday 2 nd October 10am	Friday 13 th October 12pm	16 th October, 12pm – 18 th October, 4pm	19 th October, 6pm	Monday 23 rd October, 10am - Friday 27 th October, 4pm	Monday 30 th October

You can nominate yourself for a position from the opening date provided above by visiting www.guildofstudents.com/elections and submitting your nomination online.

Conference Dates:

The dates for each Conference are provided below:

NUS National Conference (8 posts)	27 th – 29 th March 2018
Black Students' Conference (1 post)	12 th – 13 th May 2018
LGBT+ Students Conference (2 posts)	7 th – 8 th March 2018
Trans Students Conference (1 post)	6 th March 2018
Disabled Students Conference (1 post)	10 th – 11 th April 2018
Women's Conference (2 posts)	1 st – 3 rd May 2018
International Students Conference (2 posts)	27 th February 2018
Mature and Part Time Students Conference (1 post)	TBC
Postgraduate Students Conference (2 posts)	TBC

Further information will be provided on locations when this has been made available.

5. What is the National Union of Students?

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the largest democratic student organisation in Europe working to represent students on a national level, lobbying the Government and universities on a wide-range of issues including tuition fees and teaching standards. It has achieved a number of notable successes over its 88 year history including securing an exemption from paying Council Tax for students.

Each year, the NUS hosts liberation and section conferences where delegates can decide on policy or campaigns relating to that specific area. Each of the sections is autonomous and is overseen by the Officer(s) with responsibility for that section.

Here are some examples of campaigns that have been run by NUS liberation and section movements:

Equality in Education

The NUS is working hard to reduce the BME attainment gap – the national gap between degree attainment of white students and their BME counterparts. They are campaigning to introduce inclusive curricula and work with students' unions to develop BME student leadership networks within an individual union.

Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention

The NUS has sought to raise awareness of the mental health issues faced by students at university, brought about by student debt, homesickness etc. This year, the NUS Disabled Students campaign launched the Suicide Prevention Guide – a best practice guide for Students' Unions.

Tackling 'Lad' Culture

This year, the NUS Women's Campaign worked on a strategy to tackle lad culture within Students' Unions – attitudes of sexism and misogyny at some universities. Case studies have been developed with the assistance of unions across the UK; this best practice guidance is designed to make sure that students' unions are an open, inclusive and safe environment for all students.

6. Positions Available

This year, the NUS National Conference will be taking place in Glasgow in March 2018. As the Conference is earlier than last year, elections for the National Conference Delegate will be taking place in Term 1.

Delegates to the NUS Liberation and section conferences will be elected via a cross-campus ballot. This will promote awareness of the work of liberation and section conferences to the wider student population at the University of Birmingham. For some of these conferences, additional self-definition criteria will apply to standing and voting. This has been indicated, where applicable.

The dates of the conferences have been provided in an earlier section of this guide. Before nominating yourself it is advised that you check that you are able to attend. Some dates

have not been provided by the NUS, we will communicate these to students as soon as possible.

A full list of positions up for election is provided below:

National Conference Delegate (8 positions available)

This year's National Conference will be taking place in Glasgow in March. All delegates will therefore be elected in Term 1.

Policy passed at last year's conference included a commitment to include Tampons and Sanitary products into the NUS purchasing consortium, the introduction of a culturally competent Mental Health Framework, similar to the Green Impact Award.

National Conference is a really good opportunity to network from delegates from other Unions and share ideas.

Any registered student can nominate themselves for this role. In line with NUS policy, 50% (rounded down) of the delegation must be self-defining women; this is to ensure the delegation is gender balanced.

Black Students' Conference Delegate (1 position available)

Policy set at last year's Conference included support for the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign, policy that works to overcome the BME attainment gap and create course curricular from more diverse cultural perspectives and campaigns against Government policies like the PREVENT agenda which is said to disproportionately affect BME people.

The term 'Black' is used to refer to African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean students and those who self-define as Black.

Disabled Students' Conference Delegate (1 position available)

Policy discussed at last year's conference included the continued opposition towards cuts of the Disabled Students' Allowances – that can be vital to continued participation in education.

Before nominating yourself for this position, you will need to make sure you self-define as someone who has a disability – this can include, but is not limited to physical conditions, mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia.

International Students' Conference Delegate (2 positions available)

The NUS has recently been campaigning against Xenophobia that may be experienced by students on campus. It has also produced guidance for international students renting accommodation in the UK – who may be affected by the need to find a Guarantor and proposed changes to the Immigration Bill.

To stand for this role, it is expected that you are an international student. This means you must be ordinarily resident in a country outside the UK.

LGBT+ Students' Conference Delegate (2 positions available, one of which must be reserved for a self-defining woman or non-binary student, who also defines as LGBT+)

Policy discussed at last year conference included a commitment to lobby the Government, specifically the Home Office for a more humane approach to dealing with asylum claims by individuals from countries where homosexuality is illegal.

Before nominating yourself for this role, you will need to self-define as someone who is either: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Trans.

Mature and Part-Time Students Conference Delegate (1 position available)

Mature and Part-Time Students Conference have discussed the impacts on Mature and Part-Time Students of the Higher Education White Paper; including the issue of access to funding by Mature and Part-Time Students.

Candidates for this position are expected to be either a mature student, aged 21 or over at the beginning of their undergraduate course, or aged 25 or over at the beginning of their postgraduate course, or a part-time student.

Postgraduate Students' Conference Delegate (2 positions available)

Postgraduate Conference have discussed aspects of the Higher Education White Paper and its implications for Postgraduate students including the availability of Postgraduate loans and how Postgrad courses will be rated by their students. Please note that during the conference for the purposes of elections, voting is done on a One Union, One Vote basis.

Candidates for this position are expected to be a postgraduate student – this can be either Taught or Research programmes.

Trans Students' Conference Delegate (1 position available)

The Trans Student Conference has recently debated motions on Supporting SU Officers to tackle Transphobia on campus; the introduction of a gender neutral toilet and changing room policy at all Higher and Further Education Institutions.

Before nominating yourself for this position, you need to make sure you self-define as a person who is Trans.

Women's Conference Delegate (2 open place positions available)

The Women's Conference have discussed policy on body positivity, expressed support for expanding Zero Tolerance Policies in Students' Unions and growing the representation of women in Union democratic structures.

Before nominating yourself for this position, you need to make sure you self-define as a woman or someone who is non-binary.

7. How to self-define using the Guild Website

For some of the positions listed above, you will need to self-define as a member of that community to nominate yourself and vote in these elections. This will need to be updated every year. You can self-define into as many groups as you think apply to you. Just follow these simple steps:

- Log into the Guild website via the my.bham portal using your university email address

- Click on the 'My Guild' button in the top left hand corner of the website
- Click on the Self-Define button under the "Tell us about you" heading
- Tick the boxes that apply to you
- Click on 'update'

8. Policy Making at NUS Conferences

Policy is passed at NUS Conferences in the form of Motions. Each Union is entitled to submit a specific number of motions; each must be on different subjects. Each motion will have a word count that has been set by the NUS. Further information on this is provided later on in this Guide.

Motions have a specific format, which is as follows:

Conference Believes – This provides the background to the motion – it should be factual and discuss why you came to write the motion

Conference Further Believes – This section should provide further information on the motivations behind writing the motion. This is an opportunity to convince people why they should vote for the motion you are proposing. This section is optional, but can be added if necessary

Conference Resolves – This section should set out the actions you wish to happen as a result of this motion being passed. This can include, but is not limited to: mandating an Officer to look at this issue and report back; campaigning and lobbying of other organisations - i.e. National or Local Government.

8.1. Motions and Word Count

The precise number of motions a union is allowed to submit to conference and the word count for motions will vary depending on the specific conference. Full details of this will be provided in NUS Delegate training which will take place following the conclusion of the election.

9. Notice of Elections

The Guild shall aim to give at least 1 weeks' notice of an election wherever possible.

Such notices shall state:

- The date(s) and times of ballot
- The earliest and latest times of receipt of nomination
- The substance of any regulations governing the election
- The type and number of vacancies

10. Nominations Process

The Guild shall aim to provide 10 working days nomination period wherever possible. Please refer to the election schedule (section 4) for more information. Nominations should be submitted online at www.guildofstudents.com/elections.

When nominating yourself, you will need to be logged into the Guild website via the my.bham portal.

When on the elections page, click on the position you wish to nominate yourself for making sure you have checked you meet the requirements for that post.

You will be asked to provide your contact information.

This is also where you can upload your written statement, although you do not have to do this at the time of submitting a nomination. However, you must submit your manifesto and written statement before the close of nominations.

After your nomination has been submitted, you will be contacted by the Student Voice Team and asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

By submitting a nomination form the student is giving permission for the Guild of Students to:

- Include their name in publicity and press releases for the Elections
- Display their manifesto/written statement in publicity for the Elections
- Display their name and contact details on its website should they be successfully elected
- Forward their name, email address and Student ID Number to the University to verify that the information they provided is correct
- Use the contact details provided to contact them regarding any other Guild of Students business.

Students who submit a nomination form should receive receipt of acknowledgement. If nomination forms are submitted electronically this can be in the form of an email confirmation/automated response from a website submission.

All nominations should be confirmed with the candidates within 48 hours after the close of nominations for that election. A list of confirmed candidates is then published by the Guild of Students (normally online).

10.1 Manifestos & Written Statements

All candidates in all elections should submit a written statement and in some cases a visual manifesto. Student Voice shall set the guidelines for these (word limit, image size, etc.). These must be submitted by close of nominations for that election.

The following manifesto requirements are set for the NUS Delegate Elections:

Election	Written Statement	Visual Manifesto
NUS Delegate Elections	YES - 200 words max	NO

10.1.1 Visual Manifestos

You are not required to submit a Visual Manifesto for the NUS Delegate Elections.

10.1.2 Written Statements

A Written Statement should be used to declare why a candidate is running for a position, what they hope to achieve if elected, detail their main policies and why students should vote for them. Depending on the position there is a word limit on Written Statements (please refer to section 7.1). To assist with writing a written statement, candidates can use the following questions as a guide:

- What do you want to achieve in this role to benefit your constituents?
- What has inspired you to run for this role?
- What do you think is the NUS Conference's key function and why?

10.2 Re-Opening Nominations

If no nominations are received for a position by the close of nominations, nominations can be reopened for that position normally for at least three working days.

11. Guild Support

The Guild of Students wants to ensure that all students can stand in the elections. Therefore the Guild offers the following support to all candidates running in elections:

- The Guild shall provide an Elections Budget so no candidate is out of pocket.
- The Guild shall provide a full, comprehensive training schedule to all candidates to prepare them for the elections to follow.
- The Guild shall enforce strict election rules and regulations to ensure that no candidate has an unfair advantage (please refer to Appendix A & B).
- The Guild offers support to candidates with disabilities via its Elections support for disabled students' policy (detailed below).

Candidates, where possible, will have the opportunity to complete a post-election questionnaire at the conclusion of the elections where feedback is welcomed and suggestions for future support of candidates can be given.

11.1 Elections support for disabled students

Introduction

The purpose of this process is to make Guild elections more accessible to disabled students by offering the support of a member of student staff to assist in election activities.

Scope

This policy relates to Guild of Students elections including but not limited to Officer Team, Assessment Group, Chair of Officer Question Time, Residents' Associations and NUS Delegate

Elections, and any other election deemed appropriate by Representation & Resources Officer or nominee.

Purpose

The objective of this policy is to ensure that candidates with disabilities receive practical support during campaigning periods so that no candidate, as far as is reasonably possible, is disadvantaged during the campaigning process due to their disability.

Request Process

If a candidate with a disability feels they will require additional support during the set campaigning period they must state this as soon as is reasonably possible following their nomination. This will give Student Voice enough time to make sure arrangements can be put in place. . Please note any requests made after the nominations deadline may not be accepted, however, Student Voice shall endeavour to make every effort to put in place the relevant and reasonable arrangements once a request has been submitted.

Candidates must complete an Additional Election Support Request form (which is available online or can be requested from Student Voice department by emailing elections@guild.bham.ac.uk). If a candidate finds it difficult to use a computer as a result of a disability, then requests can be made in person. In such cases written records of the meeting will be kept, and followed up with the candidate.

When completing the Additional Election Support Request form, candidates will be asked to provide information about their disability and how they might use the support to stand in the election.

All information submitted shall be kept confidential and stored in accordance with Guild of Students' data protection policy.

Student Voice shall then contact the candidate to clarify what support is required and confirm the exact details of the work to be carried out. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the information is provided by the agreed deadline. In cases where information is provided after the deadline, we will aim to meet requests but this is not guaranteed,

Student Staff Support Process

The candidate will be contacted by Student Voice to ascertain preferred dates/times for the student staff support as well as to confirm the duties which will be carried out remain the same as those confirmed in the initial request form. This will then form a rota which will be emailed to all student staff.

The support may not be offered as one period of time, but may be various times depending on the candidate's needs and/or student staff availability. Support will be offered in no less than 1 hour time slots.

To ensure candidates gain the maximum benefit from the support offered, a detailed schedule of tasks shall be agreed with the candidate and student staff member prior to any work commencing via a rota.

Student Staff Training

Student Staff shall receive training from the Guild of Students prior to any work commencing. This shall consist of;

- Guild of Students overview
 - Election Rules and Regulations
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Diversity training
 - Briefing on how to complete a time sheet, staff attire and what duties the student staff members may be asked to complete
- Student Staff Support - Responsibilities*

Student Staff will have the following responsibilities:

- Student Staff may campaign on the candidates' behalf by carrying out pre-agreed duties such as putting up posters and giving lecture shout outs where they will be delivering the candidates' campaign message.
- Student Staff are not active supporters.
- Student Staff will provide neutral, practical support.
- Student Staff will not carry out any additional tasks which were not agreed prior to the work commencing.
- If a candidate requires assistance with the use of a computer as a result of a disability. This support will match that already provided by the university. The candidate will need to provide confirmation of this support from their welfare tutor
- If a candidate requires support which involves a computer this will be made available within the Guild of Students' building. Student Staff are not permitted to visit a candidate's home.
- Candidates are asked to be mindful of these responsibilities when pre-agreeing the campaigning duties required.

Candidate Feedback

Candidates may be contacted by the Guild of Students after the election has ended for their feedback.

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed in August 2018 by Student Voice.

12. Election Training & Events

The Guild of Students is responsible for training election candidates on the rules and regulations that govern the election, and the roles and responsibilities of delegates. All candidates for election must attend the election training which will take place on Thursday 19th October (6-8pm) in University House at the Business School – Room G05.

If candidates are unable to attend, they must inform the elections team in advance via email to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk, we will then make alternative arrangements for you to receive the information.

It is a candidate's responsibility to make sure they have understood the rules concerning the election. Ignorance of the rules will not be taken as an excuse for a breach.

13. Campaigning

During campaigning candidates may critique each other's policies but may not engage in personal attacks or negative campaigning. This activity may be referred to the Guild's Harassment & Bullying Policy and Membership Disciplinary Procedure.

13.1. Locations/Estates Guidance

Candidates will be provided with guidance from University Estates regarding putting out publicity on campus. No material that will damage an interior or external surface may be used in the display of publicity.

Candidates are permitted to campaign within the Guild, but must not interfere with any student who is voting.

13.2 Developing an Election Platform

This section offers some advice about how to develop an election platform i.e. the arguments that candidates use to convince students to vote for them. It will concentrate on how candidates can develop a robust and relevant set of policies and how to highlight any prior experience.

What is a Policy?

Policies are the beliefs and ideas that candidates would seek to implement should they be successfully elected. They are there to show the voters what a candidate would do with the position.

There are roughly two types of policies: statements of belief and pledges of action. They differ in what the candidate is promising the voters. In the 'statement of belief' the candidate is promising to believe certain things or advocate certain stances. If the candidate were to have a policy such as 'I am committed to furthering equality' they wouldn't be advocating anything specific but informing people that their general commitment to equality would guide their actions as an Officer.

'A pledge of action' is different in that it's a promise to undertake an action during the candidate's term of office i.e. promising to run a campaign. Such policies are good because they give students an idea of what the candidate would actually do if they were elected. However, it's important to remember that these types of policy have to be achievable, because should the candidate win, they will be expected to fulfil their manifesto pledges. And of course, a blatantly unachievable manifesto policy could undermine a candidate's credibility during the campaign and lose them votes.

Both types of policy are useful and send different messages to the voters. Usually it's wise to have a mixture of the two types of policy, so that voters know what you believe in and what you would do with the role.

Evidence Based Policies

It's important that policies are backed up with a firm evidence base, so that a candidate can convincingly explain to students how they would make a positive impact. This evidence can be firmly rooted in the candidate's own experience as a student and a member of the

Guild of Students, if they have direct personal experience of a problem then it makes sense to directly refer to those experiences when proposing the solution.

However, it also helps to look beyond personal experiences and look at the bigger picture. Over the past five years the Guild of Students has done a significant amount of market research to build a clearer idea about what students feel the Guild should focus on and what their personal priorities are. These can be found in the Guild of Students' Strategic Plan.

Students increasingly see their higher education as an investment in their future and so expect the Guild of Students to help them ensure that they get the best possible return on their investment. When developing policies you should be thinking about what proposals you can put forward to ensure that students are getting the best possible experience at the University of Birmingham.

Presenting Policies

Policies are primarily presented in a manifesto and/or written statement. When writing policies it's wise to use as concise and direct language as possible. Concisely written policies are easier for voters to read.

It is generally a good idea to limit the amount of policies a candidate puts forward to ensure that students can focus and understand all of them and ensure that the candidate is not promising more than they can deliver.

14. Campaigning Materials

14.1 Printing

Candidates are permitted to choose their printing vendor.

Candidates must submit receipts or proof of purchase of all printing to Student Voice along with a completed Personal Expense Claim Form (yellow form which can be collected from the Student Groups Counter). Once all receipts and forms have been received and approved, candidates shall be reimbursed for their election expenditure.

Candidates must not exceed their candidate budget, this includes all printing.

Candidates are prohibited from printing publicity on a personal printer.

14.2. Noise

Electronic sound and loud-hailing equipment are prohibited by University of Birmingham. Candidates may be subject to disciplinary action by the University if they use this equipment.

14.3. List of Freely Available Items

Below you will find the list of Freely Available Items. These are items that can be used in your election campaign that do not need to be claimed for in your elections budget. If you wish to use any item not on this list, you must make a claim for them out of your allocated budget.

Item	Note/Examples
Materials used to affix publicity (please remember that in putting up publicity you must not cause any damage)	Blue Tac, Drawing Pins, Rope, Safety Pins, Bamboo Sticks
Items used for cutting fabric	Scissors/Craft knives
Transport solely for the purpose of moving items or people	Journeys by Car or Public Transport
Other General Items	Candidates may use their personal social media accounts instead of creating campaign-specific ones, however you may not use 'corporate' ones that you have set up in a non-personal capacity

14.4. Emails/Electronic Messaging

No candidate or supporter shall use electronic messaging systems (including but not limited to email, mailing lists, instant messaging, social networking, mobile phone text messaging) to send unsolicited bulk messages regarding the elections or their candidacy. This is a breach of the law (data protection).

15. Nicknames

Candidates are permitted to campaign under a nickname. The chosen nickname must be submitted at the point of nomination. The nickname will be used on the ballot paper and all Guild publicity for that candidate.

If a candidate wishes to use a nickname, this should be submitted at the point of nomination. This can be changed in the 'display name' field. If you are unsure how to do this, please email elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

16. Supporters

All candidates may appoint a 'campaign manager' to act as a point of contact between the Guild of Students and their campaign.

All supporters must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. No Full-Time Guild Officer shall endorse a candidate. Candidates are not permitted to seek support from organisations external to the Guild or the University of Birmingham.

Guild Media Groups are not allowed to support a candidate as a student group.

Candidates are reminded that they are responsible for the conduct of their supporters throughout the election period.

17. Budgets and Scrutiny of accounts

The candidate budget for NUS Conference Delegates is £10.

Candidate budgets can only be spent on campaign materials for the election or which the budget has been allocated.

All personal expenditure must be declared to the Guild of Students and shall be reimbursed on the presentation of itemised receipts.

Candidates will be asked to submit their campaign expenditure before the end of the campaigning and voting period. It is strongly advised that you submit expense claims as soon as possible after the amount has been spent and keep the Student Voice Team regularly informed of any spending.

Public Scrutiny of Candidate Spending

Candidates and students will be given the opportunity to scrutinise each candidate's spending in an election and make a complaint if they feel a candidate has breached the rules surrounding candidate budgets. The following procedure shall be followed:

- All candidates shall be encouraged to provide full details of their campaign expenses (including free and fair use items) prior to the opening of campaigning. Candidates should update their expenses throughout the election by emailing elections@guild.bham.ac.uk
- Student Voice shall make candidate budgets available for public scrutiny as soon as this information is received.
- All candidates are required to have completed spending and submitted all expense claims (with receipts) to Student Voice department the day before the close of voting.
- Students are given a period of 2 hours after the close of voting to scrutinise candidate spending and submit a complaint to the Returning Officer if it is felt that a candidate has breached regulations.
- The Returning Officer shall not accept complaints made after 2 hours of close of ballot.
- All complaints shall be reviewed and resolved within 1 day of the deadline for complaints.
- Results shall remain provisional until the Returning Officer has resolved any outstanding complaints.

18. Election Complaint Procedure

The following procedure must be followed by students or candidates submitting an election complaint during a Guild of Students election and by Guild of Students investigating an election complaint:

A student or candidate wishing to submit a complaint must do so using the Guild of Students Election Complaint Form:

- a) All fields (excluding 'For staff use only' section) on the Election Complaint Form are required from the student making the complaint.
- b) The student making the complaint may use additional pages to continue with the 'Details of Complaint' section.
- c) The completed Election Complaint Form must be emailed to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk – hard copy versions of this form shall not be accepted.
- d) On receipt of an Election Complaint Form, Student Voice shall respond by email to the student making the complaint to confirm it has been received and accepted.

In most cases evidence shall be requested (if not already provided) in support of the complaint. Evidence can be (but is not limited to) video recordings, photographs, computer screen shots and emails. Students making an election complaint should try to ensure they provide evidence which clearly supports their complaint – e.g. if a student is providing a screen shot of a website, the student should try to include the date & time stamp in the bottom right-hand side of a computer screen to show the screen shot was taken at the appropriate time.

Once the complaint has been reviewed, the complaint shall be sent to the Returning Officer or their nominated person for a ruling.

Complaints may be received up to 2 hours after the close of voting. Complaints received after this time will not be considered.

This procedure must be used in conjunction with Election Regulations, Guild of Students Bye Laws, Guild of Students governing documents, University Legislation, or any Laws of the Land.

When a complaint is made, Student Voice staff will log the complaint and follow up with the complainant if it is deemed that further information is required. All complaints shall be referred to the Returning Officer for a decision.

19. Appeals Process

If a student wishes to appeal a decision made by the Returning Officer as an outcome of a complaint they may do so by emailing the details of their appeal to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk

Appeals must normally be received within 48 hours of the notification of the original decision. Any appeals received after this time may be refused.

The appeal details shall then be referred onto the Returning Officer or nominee.

Students may be asked to provide evidence in support of their appeal.

20. Guild Membership Discipline and Appeals Policy

Should an election complaint be deemed a membership disciplinary issue (e.g. complaint about harassment) then the complaint shall be referred to this policy (full policy are details available at www.guildofstudents.com).

Complaints that a student feels should be dealt with under this policy should be submitted in writing, and should contain as much information as possible about the nature of the complaint. This should be sent via email to: complaints@guild.bham.ac.uk

You may also speak to the Welfare Officer or any other member of the Officer Team, but not more than one Full-Time Officer if you wish to.

21. Voting

Polling should be held for at least one day for a set number of hours, as determined by Guild of Students. In all Autumn Term Elections polling shall be open for 5 days. Voting will be conducted online.

No candidate or supporter shall attempt to influence voters whilst they are voting. This means once a student has begun to complete their ballot. Candidates are permitted to campaign in sight of a ballot station such as a computer but are not allowed to interrupt a vote.

22. Paper Ballot Procedure

In the event of an online voting system not being available the following procedure must be followed by Guild of Students to conduct a paper ballot:

Check eligibility to vote

- a) Only Full Members may vote in a Guild of Students election (unless otherwise stated). Restrictions on which Full Members may vote shall apply in the following elections; Residence Association Elections, Assessment Group, Chair of Officer Question Time, Guild Committee & Officer Elections (please refer to Election Regulations). All other elections shall be cross campus and open to all Full Members.
- b) When a voter approaches a ballot station, ask them to declare their full name and Student ID. They must then present their University ID card as proof of ID. This must be checked against the voter register and the photograph should be checked to ensure the voter is in possession of their own ID card.
- c) Once you are satisfied the voter is eligible to vote, mark their name on the register and update this on other registers to ensure they may only vote once.

Issue ballot paper

- a) Once the voter's eligibility to vote has been confirmed, ballot papers may then be issued.
- b) Ensure that the ballot paper to be issued bears an official mark.
- c) A separate ballot paper for each election (if multiple elections are being run at the same time e.g. Officer Team Elections) must be issued.

Voting

- a) Voting shall be carried out by STV or ATV. This means voters shall place a number against each candidate's name in order of preference. Advise them that they vote by preference and that they should mark the box that corresponds to their preference. They do not have to use all their preferences.
- b) The voter marks the ballot paper in the privacy of a polling booth.
- c) Ask the voter to then show you the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper before they place it in the ballot box to ensure they have not issued a fake ballot paper. The student should place their ballot paper into the ballot box (you should not handle the paper for them).
- d) All ballot boxes shall be fully secured, locked and monitored by a member of staff for the duration of the voting period.

Counting

- a) Counting shall take place at the earliest possible time after the close of ballot.

- b) Counting for each election shall be done separately – ballot papers should be divided into each election and counted.
- c) Where possible, results shall be inputted into 'OpenSTV' programme which will then calculate the final results using ATV/STV.
- d) Once counting has been concluded, if the number counted does not tally with the verification figure, then the votes will be counted again in full.
- e) If a voter spoils their ballot paper (e.g. by placing an 'X' next to a candidate's name instead of numbering their preference) the spoilt ballot paper shall be declared invalid. Place it in the appropriate envelope (for spoilt votes) and retain until at least 5 days after the close of voting.

After the Election

- a) Voter identification details will be retained for several weeks after the declaration of results (This is proof of who voted in case an election result is contested).
- b) The register will not be brought into contact with the ballot papers unless there is an investigation about the conduct of the election. This is the same procedure used for UK General Elections

23. Results

All results shall be provisional until confirmed by the Returning Officer following the closure of any complaints – this should be no longer than 1 day following the close of voting. However, results shall only be announced once the Returning Officer is satisfied with the conduct of the election and after any outstanding complaints have been resolved.

Appendix A

Elections FAQ

- **Who runs the Elections?**

Arrangements for the Elections are made by Representation and Resources Officer with the Student Voice team, and overseen by the Guild's Returning Officer or nominee.

- **Are there any rules?**

Yes, the Election Regulations and Bye Law 8 can be found at the end of this guide (Appendix A & B). If you are proven to have broken any of these you could be subject to removal from the election.

- **Can I support my friend who is standing for another position?**

Yes. Candidates in different elections can endorse each other. This is called a Slate. However, if you are running in the same election e.g. a multi seat election such as NUS Delegate Elections you are prohibited from supporting each other.

- **Can my friends help?**

Of course! The more people who get involved in your campaign the better. Do remember that those helping you in your campaign must also be students at the University of Birmingham.

- **What if I change my mind and don't want to be a candidate anymore?**

You are free to withdraw as a candidate from the election at any time. You will be asked to provide your wish to withdraw in writing to elections@guild.bham.ac.uk.

- **The website says I am not eligible to run for a post, why is this?**

If you are registered student then you should be able to nominate yourself for a role you want. Some roles have additional criteria, where you would need to self-define. Instructions on how to do this are provided in this guide on page.... If you are still having problems please email us with screenshots and we will be able to help you.

Where can I go to for advice?

This depends on the information being sought – please find a directory below:

Student Voice

The Guild's Student Voice Department is there to support candidates with election issues such as having problems completing their nomination forms, understanding the election regulations, providing candidates with election dates and designing their manifesto.



elections@guild.bham.ac.uk



0121 251 2428

Representation and Resources Officer – Jess Levy

The RRO oversees the running of elections as part of their remit and will be happy to answer any questions about the election process.



representation@guild.bham.ac.uk

Officer Team

If you're interested in standing for a position but want to find out more about what is involved in doing the role, then feel free to approach the current Officer. They'll be more than happy to answer any questions you have and give you a true picture about what you could achieve should you be elected. You can find their contact details at guildofstudents.com.

Appendix B

Election Regulations 2016-17

1. Interpretation

- 1.1 These Regulations are written with the intent of ensuring free and fair elections at the Guild of Students.
- 1.2 These Regulations are in conjunction with Byelaw 8 (Elections) of the Guild of Students. Please refer to this Byelaw in addition to these regulations.
- 1.3 The Returning Officer of the Guild of Students shall have the final say over the interpretation of these Regulations.
- 1.4 These Election Regulations shall apply to all Guild of Students elections.
- 1.5 In addition to these Regulations, all other Guild of Students governing documents, University Legislation, and all Laws of the Land shall apply.

2. Notice and Nominations

- 2.1 All nominees must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. In some elections further restrictions apply (as stated in these regulations).
- 2.2 Full Members may not stand for two positions on the same committee.
- 2.3 The procedure for return of nominations is outlined in Byelaw 8, Section 4.
 - 2.3.1 In Residents' Associations elections, only Full Members who are resident in a specific University accommodation may stand in the election for that University accommodation.
 - 2.3.2 In Officer Team elections, Full Members may only stand in elections for liberation positions who self-define as belonging to that liberation group.
 - 2.3.3 In Officer Team elections, it is expected that only Full Members from relevant representation groups may stand for representation positions e.g. a home student may stand for Home Students' Officer.
 - 2.3.4 In Assessment Group Elections, all Full Members may stand for the Open Place positions.
 - 2.3.5 In Assessment Group Elections, Full Members may only stand in elections for liberation positions who self-define as belonging to that liberation group.
 - 2.3.6 In Assessment Group Elections, it is expected that only Full Members who are Postgraduate Students may stand for the position reserved for Postgraduates.
 - 2.3.7 In NUS Delegate Elections for National Conference, the Guild of Students shall ensure annual delegations will consist of at least 50% self-defining women (rounded down) in accordance with the 'Fair Representation' NUS motion.

- 2.3.8 In NUS Delegate Election for all other NUS liberation and representation conferences, Full Members may only stand in elections for positions in which they self-define as belonging to that group.
- 2.3.9 If no nominations are received for a position by the close of nominations, nominations may be reopened for that position.
- 2.4 Re-open Nominations (R.O.N.) shall be a candidate in every election. R.O.N. shall not be depicted in any Guild promotional material as a person or character.

3. Supporters

- 3.1 The Returning Officer or Nominee shall have the absolute discretion in determining a supporter of a candidate.
- 3.2 All supporters must be Full Members of the Guild of Students. No Full-Time Guild Officer shall support a candidate.
- 3.3 If a Student Group or Part-Time Guild Officer wishes to endorse a candidate in an election, they and the candidate must adhere to the Guild's endorsement guidelines
- 3.4 No candidate shall seek support from a body external to the Guild of Students or the University of Birmingham.
- 3.5 Slates are permitted in single seat elections.
- 3.6 Candidates may be held responsible for fellow slate members and campaigners.
- 3.7 Slates are not permitted in multi-member elections.

4. Publicity

- 4.1 All candidates in all elections should submit a manifesto outlining why they are standing, their election wishes, pledges and any other relevant information. These should be submitted by close of nominations for that election.
- 4.2 Candidates must adhere to Guild and University regulations when displaying election publicity
- 4.3 Candidates can only cover, move or alter their own publicity.
- 4.4 Candidates shall be responsible for removing all of their own publicity.
- 4.4.1 Publicity may not be attached to trees or buildings without the permission of the owner, or in contravention of UoB regulations

5. Budget

- 5.1 A budget will be provided by the Guild to every candidate. The budget amount for individual elections shall be clearly stated in candidate training.
- 5.2 Candidates cannot spend more than the budget given to them by the Guild of Students.
- 5.3 Candidates are required to have completed spending their budget and submitted receipts for all personal expenditure claims 1 day prior to the close of voting.
- 5.4 The Guild of Students shall make all candidate campaign budgets available for public scrutiny.

6. Campaigning

- 6.1 No candidate or supporter shall attempt to influence voters whilst they are voting.

7. Elections Training, Hustings and Candidate Meeting

- 7.1 Every candidate is expected to attend Elections Training and Hustings. If they are unable

to attend then they must send apologies for their absence at least 1 hour before the event and make alternative arrangements with the Guild of Students.

- 7.2 Nominees
Candidates may appoint nominees to attend Hustings. Nominees must be Full Members and shall make a speech.
- 7.3 If, in the opinion of the Chairperson, a speaker is deliberately breaching or flaunting the Regulations, the Chairperson shall have the authority to remove the speaker from that round of speeches, the remainder of the Hustings, and, on subsequent approval by the Returning Officer, from all further Hustings.

8. Voting

- 8.1 Wherever possible, voting shall be online (e-voting).
- 8.2 Where E-voting is not possible in cross-campus elections, or where the E-voting system becomes inoperable, a paper ballot shall be conducted in accordance with the Guild of Students' Paper Ballot Procedure.
- 8.3 Restrictions on which Full Members may vote shall apply in the following elections. All other elections shall be cross campus and open to all Full Members.
 - Residents' Associations – only Full Members living in a University accommodation may vote in the election for that accommodation.
- 8.4 In elections for Liberation Officers, liberation Assessment Group Members and NUS Liberation Conference Delegates it is expected that only Full Members who self-define as belonging to the particular demographic that the position represents shall vote in that election.
 - 8.4.1 For the removal of doubt, non-binary students are eligible to vote in the election of the Women's Officer.
- 8.5 In elections for Representation Officers, Assessment Group Members (Postgraduate Student) and NUS Representation Conference Delegates it is expected that only Full Members who belong to that specific group shall vote in that election e.g. home students vote in the Home Students' Officer Election.

9. Results

- 9.1 All results shall remain provisional until the Returning Officer is satisfied with the conduct of the election and following the closure of any complaints.

10. Enforcement of Regulations

- 10.1 The Returning Officer
 - 10.1.1 The Returning Officer shall be the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham
 - 10.1.2. The Returning Officer may delegate the management of complaints, appeals, and other appropriate business to a nominee (or nominees).
 - 10.1.3. For the purpose of all Guild Elections during 2016/17, the following Returning Officer structure shall be in place:

- Complaints about a candidate having possibly broken these regulations shall be determined by the Representation & Resources Officer 2016/17 as nominee for the Returning Officer; and
- Appeals against decisions made by the Representation & Resources Officer 2016/17 shall be determined by a representative from National Union of Students (NUS) as nominee for the Returning Officer; save that
- Appeals against decisions made by the Representation & Resources Officer 2016/17 which, in the reasonable opinion of the representative from National Union of Students (NUS), relate to material issues affecting whether or not the election was free and fair shall be referred for determination by the Registrar and Secretary as appropriate

10.1.4. In the case where the Representation & Resources Officer declares a conflict of interest, or wishes to run in an election, their responsibilities as Nominee shall be delegated to another member of the Full-Time Officer Team.

10.1.5. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and shall have final interpretation of the Election Regulations and Bye-Law 8. However, the nominee(s) shall be responsible for the day to day good conduct and administration of the elections.

- 10.2 All complaints about a candidate having possibly broken these regulations shall be subject to the Guild of Students' Election Complaints Procedure.
- 10.3 If a candidate is found to have broken these regulations, as deemed by the Returning Officer or Nominee, the candidate may be removed from the election.
- 10.4 Candidates in breach of these regulations may also be subject to Guild, and/or University discipline procedures, and/or legal proceedings.
- 10.5 Candidates shall be held responsible for their own actions in elections and the actions of their supporters, which are proven to the reasonable belief of the Nominee or Returning Officer as appropriate.

11. By-Elections and Co-Option

- 11.1 If a post becomes vacant following the close of an election, a by-election may be run during the next election period.
- 11.2 If a position remains unfilled following both an ordinary election and a by-election, the position may be filled by co-option.
- 11.3 A vacant position may also be filled by co-option if it is deemed to be a time-sensitive role following a request submitted to Returning Officer (or nominee).
- 11.4 Co-option may only be used for Guild Committees, Residents' Associations Committees and Assessment Group
- 11.5 Co-option may not be used for Guild Officer Group, NUS Delegates or Appointments Panel.
- 11.6 The process of co-option shall be as follows:
- 11.6.1 The relevant chair responsible for the position should approve the use of co-option, issue a notice of co-option, inviting members to stand for the position.
- 11.6.2 Candidates shall be invited to the next relevant committee meeting to give a speech and answer questions.
- 11.6.3 The relevant committee shall then vote to co-opt their new member.
- 11.6.4 Any co-option must be agreed by simple majority.

- 11.6.5 A co-opted member will remain in position until the next full election for that position

Appendix C

BYE-LAW 8 – Elections

1. Scope

- 1.1. This Bye-Law shall apply to all Guild elections.

2. Returning Officer

- 2.1. The Returning Officer shall be the Registrar and Secretary of the University of Birmingham.
- 2.2. The Returning Officer may delegate the management of complaints, appeals, and other appropriate business to a nominee (or nominees), as agreed between the Guild and University, and described in the Guild Election Regulations.
- 2.3. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for the good conduct and administration of the elections and shall have final interpretation of the Election Regulations. However, the nominee(s) shall be responsible for the day to day good conduct and administration of the elections. The powers and responsibilities of the Returning Officer and their nominee(s) shall be as described in the Guild Elections Regulations.

3. Notice

- 3.1. The Guild of Students shall publish notice of every election.
- 3.2. Such notices shall state:
- 3.2.1. The date(s) and times of ballot
 - 3.2.2. The earliest and latest times of receipt of nominations
 - 3.2.3. The substance of any regulations governing the election
 - 3.2.4. The type and number of vacancies

4. Nominations

- 4.1. Nominations shall be accepted by the Nominee until the close of nominations.
- 4.2. Re-open Nominations (RON) shall be a candidate in every election.

5. Voting

- 5.1. All Full Members eligible to vote, as specified in the Election Regulations, shall be allowed to vote.
- 5.2. The method of voting shall be outlined in the Election Regulations Documents.
- 5.3. Voting shall be by the Single Transferable Voting System for all multi-seat elections, and by the Alternative Transferable Voting System for all single-seat elections.

- 5.4. Polling shall be held on at least one day for no less than the advertised number of hours.

6. Provision for Secrecy of the Ballot

- 6.1. At the time of closing the ballot the voting register shall be sealed. Under no circumstances shall it come together with the ballot papers unless the validity or conduct of the election is questioned.
- 6.2. The voting register and ballot papers shall be kept for three months after the declaration of the result after which time they will be destroyed unless the validity or conduct of the elections is questioned.

7. Ties

- 7.1. In the event of a tie, the Returning Officer or his representative shall decide the issue by drawing lots, having given the candidates prior notification.

8. Election of Re-open Nominations

- 8.1. The election of Re-open Nominations shall result in nominations being re-opened as soon as possible, and a By-election being held.
- 8.2. This shall not affect the return of any candidate elected before Re-open Nominations in a multi-member election.

9. Complaints

- 9.1. Any complaints regarding the conduct of the election shall be dealt with in accordance with the Guild of Students' Elections Complaint Procedure.
- 9.2. Complaints may be received up to two hours after the close of the ballot.

10. Declaration

- 10.1. Results of the elections shall be declared by the Returning Officer or nominee when the count for each post has been successfully completed.
- 10.2. Results shall be provisional until confirmed by the Returning Officer, which will normally be not less than 5 working days after the close of the ballot.
- 10.3. Results of the elections shall be announced as soon as possible after the completion of the count.