

Byelaw B	Union Decision Making
Version: 1	Effective Date: 21/09/2026

Purpose

1. This Byelaw has been established to set out how the Union, and its members can make decisions, and it will ensure the conduct of a free and fair process for any of the contained mechanisms.
2. It sets out key principles and major requirements, but it also gives Board and the Returning Officer the power to develop local rules and regulations as they deem appropriate.
3. The decision-making mechanisms of the Union are:
 - 3.1. The Board of Trustees
 - 3.2. Referenda & Priority 8
 - 3.3. Union Council
 - 3.4. Policy Forums

The Returning Officer & Deputy Returning Officer

4. The Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer along with their duties will be appointed annually by the Board of Trustees.
5. For the purpose of this byelaw, reference to the Returning Officer may also include the Deputy Returning Officer, where duties have been delegated.
6. The Returning Officer may determine that the issue proposed to be put to referendum has already been decided by referendum in the current academic year, in which case they have discretion to decline to put the question to referendum. Student members who wish to contest this ruling may do so, in the form of an appeal to the Board

Referenda

7. A referenda involves a cross campus poll of all student members. It may involve more than one option for students to consider (known as a preferendum), and may be called to:
 - 7.1. Agree, amend or reject Policy of the Union
 - 7.2. Agree or reject a Contemporary Resolution of the Union
 - 7.3. Agree or reject an affiliation by the Union to an external organisation
 - 7.4. Censure or remove an Office Holder or Trustee of the Union
 - 7.5. Wind up or dissolve the Union
8. A referendum may be called by:
 - 8.1. A simple majority of a Union Council
 - 8.2. The President, on receipt of a verified petition of 500 student members
 - 8.3. A resolution of the Board
9. All cross campus referenda will use either 'First Past to the Post' for decisions where there are only two options to be considered, or 'Alternative Vote' in the case of a preferenda.

10. The Deputy Returning Officer will be responsible for publishing the details of the referenda along with any campaigning rules and regulations and a complaints procedure.
11. The following criteria must be met for any decision to pass.
 - 11.1. Decisions made by simple referendum (i.e. two options) on all matters of Policy and Contemporary Resolutions are valid irrespective of turnout and shall take place under 'First past the Post' system.
 - 11.2. Decisions made by preferendum (i.e. more than two options) on all matters of Policy and Contemporary Resolutions are valid irrespective of turnout and shall take place under the 'Alternative Vote' system.
 - 11.3. Decision made to amend the Constitution or to reject an affiliation of the Union require a quorum of 5% of registered student members to vote. It may take place under First Past the Post (where a simple majority is required), or where more than two options are under consideration, the Alternative Vote System.
 - 11.4. Decision made to censure or remove an Office Holder or Trustee of the Union require a quorum of 5% of registered student members to vote and must pass with a two thirds majority including abstentions under the First Past the Post system.
12. The Students' Union may conduct a referendum by electronic means, provided that:
 - 12.1. An email notice is sent to student members, explaining the purpose of the vote, detailing the resolution to be put to vote with accompanying text or documents, and the voting procedure.
 - 12.2. The email notice is sent at least 14 days before the deadline for the submission of votes.
 - 12.3. A person independent to the Union can attest to the security and independence of the electronic method to be used.
13. The Union may conduct referenda at any time or place that it considers will encourage the highest level of participation.

Union Council (Executive Committee)

14. The Executive Committee shall be known as Union Council and will meet regularly (normally 5 times a year) to discuss matters that affect students and it will have the power to:
 - 14.1. Decide actions relating to Priority 8
 - 14.2. Set direction of policy, student led campaigns and the work of any officers of the Union
 - 14.3. Conduct a referendum/preferendum and set out the wording of these questions, ensuring it is fair, balanced and lawful
15. Union Council will receive updates and oversee the work of:
 - 15.1. The Sabbatical officers and other Part-time officers
 - 15.2. Priority 8
 - 15.3. Policy Forums

16. The voting membership of Union Council will be made up of:

- All Sabbatical officers
- All Inclusion community leads
- All Faculty Representatives
- 2 elected Representatives from Societies and Sports communities (1 for each grouping)

17. Decisions will be made by a simple majority of the meeting and quoracy will be set at half the voting membership.

18. Staff will be in attendance to support the meeting and present work but will not hold a vote.

19. Annually one Union Council meeting will be opened to all and form the Annual Student Meeting set out in Article 16.

Policy Forums

20. The Union will operate Policy Forums that will aim to bring students together to discuss topics that matter to students.

21. Whilst these sessions will not make decisions on behalf of the Union, the work can then be directed towards any one of the decision-making processes set out in this Byelaw.