



# Democratic Procedures Committee Report

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## Key information

### Referring back reports

During the “business and work carried out section” of any report constituent members will be empowered to submit the following report motions:

- b. The reference back of a specified part of the report
- c. A motion of censure on a member of the relevant body or body as a whole

If 100 delegates wish to discuss the motion it will be moved. A member of the body will reply and the National Conference will immediately vote on the motion.

Following discussion of all Report motions or at the end of the time allocated for Report motions a member of the relevant body will sum up and the National Conference will vote on the adoption of all sections not referred back.



## Introduction from Sam Mujunga, Democratic Procedures Committee Chair

It has been a privilege for myself and the rest of the volunteers on the committee to serve as elected Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC) members for NUS.

DPC acts as the referee for National Conference. Our role is not to see that one side of the debate is successful over another, but instead to support the process and make judgements that we hope are fair and balanced. We seek to follow the rules and give guidance so that Conference can be an accessible event that everyone can take part in and feel that their contribution is valid and respected.

Like all referees we do not expect everyone to agree with every decision that we make but we do ask that you recognise our role in keeping the policy process and the motions debate moving so that the democratic will of members can be set out over the 3 days in Glasgow.

Perhaps most importantly I ask that delegates enter the event with respect for each other and the right of people to have and express differing opinions. Safe discussion, debate and even disagreement is important for outlining the will of the membership and setting a policy mandate for officers but we ask you to consider all others at NUS Conference while you do so.

This report sets out the work DPC has undertaken this year. A great deal of our time is spent dealing with the delivery of National Conference. This includes considering appeals to delegate entitlement, ensuring fair representation, reviewing and preparing motions and setting the agenda for debate.

Inevitably, discussion of Reform to NUS Democracy has dominated our conversations this year. We work within a governance system which often does not allow the type of lengthy, detailed, and nuanced discussion that reform like this needs. As your DPC our main focus has been to enable a discussion which is balanced, informed, and matches a legal complexity with the sovereignty of Conference. I'm really proud that we have been able to find a format for the motion which is clear, a process that allows significant amendments without causing legal injury to the will of Conference, and confirmed a communications timeline which leaves delegates with clarity over what to do. We've set out the rules for debate and as your impartial referees we can't wait to fire the starting gun on such a huge topic for discussion.

We have unfortunately dropped two members of the committee since their election. Although this is sometimes unavoidable, I would ask those considering running for DPC to ensure that they will be able to commit to serving their full term if elected. The role of DPC is not just 3 days at National Conference sitting on stage getting to rule on all the drama from conference floor, it's a two year commitment that involves volunteering at different points of the year, from induction, regular meetings and also overseeing the policy aspect leading up to conference. Please speak to any member of DPC if you have any questions about what the role entails plus the time commitment and expectations of being a committee member.

This is my final National Conference and it has been a pleasure to serve on this committee over the past four years. Conference has evolved in many ways and I am proud to have been part of committees that have streamlined debate, trimmed down on wasted time at conference, made the policy process easier for SU's to understand in advance of conference. I would like to thank past and present members I have served with and I look forward to seeing from afar how Conference, and NUS in general, goes forward.

For the final time, I commend this report to National Conference.

Yours,

Sam Mujunga  
Chair, Democratic Procedure Committee  
[Sam.mujunga@nus.org.uk](mailto:Sam.mujunga@nus.org.uk)





### Who sits on the Democratic Procedures Committee (DPC)?

The Democratic Procedures is made up of nine members, each elected by National Conference. As explained, we had 2 resignations as well as 1 vacancy from a resignation last year, so we had to co-opt two new members to the committee for the rest of the 2019 term.

Name	Elected	Term ends
Sam Mujunga	Conference 2017	June 2019
John Hein	Conference 2017	June 2019
Bradley Langer	Conference 2017	June 2019
Lucas North	Conference 2018	June 2020
Naa Aqcuah	Conference 2018	June 2020
Esther Offenberg	Conference 2018	June 2020
Redwan Shahid	Co-opted 2019	June 2019
Lani Baird	Co-opted 2019	June 2019
Vacancy		

### When has DPC met?

DPC has met four times so far this year, including an induction meeting. In addition we have three further meetings scheduled for before National Conference to review, zone and composite motions as well as reviewing, zoning and compositing amendments to the reform motion.

We have been in regular contact via email and whatsapp for discussion and decisions.

### What does the Democratic Procedures Committee do?

From the NUS Constitution: Democratic Procedures Committee

62. The Democratic Procedures Committee of the National Union shall be responsible for the democracy of the National Union and shall have the power to govern and interpret all matters relating to democratic procedures except elections.

63. It shall also be needed to structure and run National Conference in such a way as to guarantee the accessibility of proceedings for delegates in line with the Democratic Procedures Rules

64. The composition of the Democratic Procedures Committee shall be as follows:

65.1 Nine Individual Members, four of which will be elected by the National Conference in even years and five in odd years. All of these will serve two-year terms at its annual meeting; and

66. Two non-voting members, which it chooses to co-opt that shall not usually be Individual Members of the National Union.

67. A Full Time Officer appointed by the President shall be entitled to go to meetings of the Democratic Procedures Committee as a non-voting member.

68. The procedures of the Democratic Procedures Committee shall be further defined in the Democratic Procedures Committee Rules.

### Activity and Decisions of the DPC

This section describes the decisions taken by the DPC since National Conference 2018. We have made **3** types of decision: the acceptance of new members; decisions around the democratic rules of NUS and rulings on the eligibility of motions.

### New Members

We have received one application for membership since the last National Conference and at Conference will ask delegates to vote to formally accept membership.

New application for membership was received from Newman College Brighton Students' Union

### Decisions on the democratic rules

- Since the last National Conference 2018, DPC has ruled on a number of standard issues including:
  - *Whether to accept motions submitted*



- *Whether to accept motions submitted after the motions deadline had passed*
- *Whether to accept new organisations as interim Constituent Members of NUS*
- *Whether to accept challenges to Delegate Entitlement*
- *Whether to accept appeals to Fair Representation requirements*

## Democratic Processes

A great deal of our work around Democratic Processes has related to NUS's work around turnaround and reform. At all times we have worked closely with the NUS UK and Turnaround Boards to uphold democratic principles and rules. We have worked to ensure that the implementation of vital decisions is conducted in a free and fair manner.

In January 2019 the Chair of DPC, Sam Mujunga released a Joint Statement along with the NUS National President Shakira Martin and the Chief Returning Officer Jules Mason. This was in response to the Joint Board on the 2019/20 budget and suspension of certain elections. It contained details of implementation of these decisions in democratic spaces. [The full statement can be read on NUS Connect here](#)

DPC participated in formal consultation activity as part of the Reform White Paper Consultation where we fed back our experience and knowledge of the current democratic structures and views on what a reformed democracy may look like.

We've also had several discussions and meetings to agree a submission process and timeline for the NUS UK Board's Reform Motion. We've agreed a separate amendment period for the motion itself, which allows us to order the debate in a coherent, logical and fair manner. We've also given great consideration for the AGM and subsequent debate of reform measures in order to facilitate a wide range of views and participants.

## Accessibility of Conference

DPC is also responsible for overseeing the accessibility of Democratic Events in terms of policy and procedure as well the venue and activities around the main debate sessions of Conference. We have:

- Produced and publicised a timetable for conference documents
- Produced, in time of all deadlines, the conference documents
- Introduced each conference document by explaining its role and the actions required by delegates in relation to it.
- Updated a training presentation for students' unions to use to train their delegates, available on the National Conference hub.
- Contacted delegates who have indicated access needs in their registration in order for these to be discussed and accommodated for appropriately.

DPC is responsible for the smooth and democratic running of National Conference and are always looking for ways to ensure that delegates have an enjoyable Conference and are able to fully participate in the democracy of NUS.

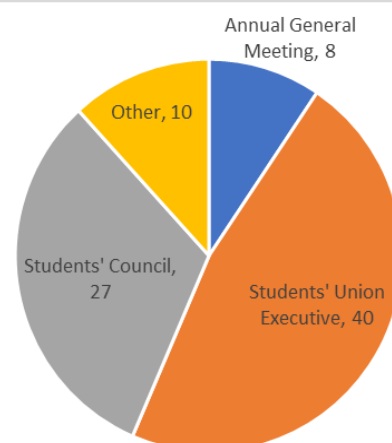
## Submission of Motions and Amendments

In total 85 Motions and Amendments were submitted to DPC this year. Following the compositing process, 74 Motions have been sent to Conference from Constituent Members.

The chart on the right summarises the methods by which these motions were passed in Students' Unions. Passing through Executive remains the most popular method of passing policy, with Students' Councils as the second most popular method.

Motions were submitted by the following Unions:

*ARU Students' Union*





*Cardiff University Students' Union*  
*Coventry University Students' Union*  
*Durham Students' Union*  
*Edge Hill Students' Union*  
*Edinburgh University Students' Association*  
*FXU (Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union)*  
*Goldsmiths Students' Union*  
*Keele University Students' Union*  
*Kent Union*  
*King's College London Students' Union*  
*Lancaster University Students' Union*  
*Leeds Beckett Students' Union*  
*Liverpool Guild of Students*  
*Manchester Metropolitan Students' Union*  
*Middlesex University Students' Union*  
*NUS Disabled Students' Committee*  
*NUS LGBT+ Committee*  
*NUS Women Students' Committee*  
*Queen Mary University Of London Students' Union*  
*Roehampton Students' Union*  
*Sheffield Hallam Students' Union*  
*Students' Union UCL*  
*Swansea University Students' Union*  
*The Students' Union at UWE*  
*Ulster University Students' Union*  
*University East Anglia Students' Union*  
*University of Bristol Students' Union*  
*University of Central Lancashire Students' Union*  
*University of Manchester Students' Union*  
*University of Salford Students' Union*  
*University of Stirling Students' Union*  
*Warwick Students' Union*

## **Delegate Entitlement**

In the NUS Core Constitution, the bulk of participants in National Conference are made up of:


"a number of representatives from each Constituent Member, as decided in line with the National Conference Rules. An entitlement to a number of delegates per "full time equivalent" student at the Constituent Member, where "full time equivalent" means the total number of full time students added to 0.6 of part time students will be proposed by the Democratic Procedures Committee and agreed by Conference in accordance with the National Conference Rules; save that in proposing the entitlement figure the DPC shall ensure that the total number of delegates entitled to attend National Conference is calculated to not fall below 1400"

The National Conference rules say that:

"the number of full-time student members of the National Union who are members of that Constituent Member, and three fifths of the number of part-time student members of the National Union (rounded upwards in the case of fractions, to the nearest integer) who are members of that Constituent Member, will be added together. This figure will be known as the number of 'full-time equivalent students'. In adopting the relevant section of the Democratic Procedures Committee report, the National Conference will annually set a figure, which each constituent member may elect one delegate for from their full time equivalent students. In proposing the figure, the Democratic Procedures Committee will consult with the trustee board and pay due regard to the need to ensure wide participation, demographic change, accessibility and an event within financial means. In the event that the relevant section of the Democratic Procedures Committee report is not approved the entitlement figure will be the one last used for National Conference"







**In short,** DPC must propose a delegate entitlement that is within the finance allocated to it by conference and as wide as possible to allow unions to send a range of delegates.

**The proposal for the year ahead:**

The accounts and estimates have suggested a prudent level of spend for National Conference therefore we would not propose any increase in delegate entitlement.

**Therefore, for the next year, DPC continue to propose a delegate entitlement of 1 per 3,500 full time students and 0.6 per 3,500 part time students.**

