



BRIGHTON
STUDENTS' UNION

Referendum Policy

BYE LAW of

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
STUDENTS' UNION

Passed at Trustee Board June 2022

1. Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1. A referendum is a vote open to all full members of University of Brighton Students' Union (also referred to as 'Union' or 'BSU'). It is considered to be the most accessible way to canvass the opinion of all members.
- 1.2. For the purpose of this policy, a Political Position is defined as a stance that students take on a subject, for example on membership to an external organisations or an opinion about an environmental issue.
- 1.3. For the purpose of this policy, term time is defined using the University of Brighton Standard term dates.

2. Voting Members

- 2.1. Only Full Members of the University of Brighton Students' Union can vote in a referendum.
- 2.2. For the avoidance of doubt Associate Members and Honorary Members cannot vote in a referendum.

3. Authority

- 3.1. A referendum is a vote open to all Full Members of the Union to either;
 - 3.1.1. set a political position; or
 - 3.1.2. pass a vote of no confidence in an elected officer; or
 - 3.1.3. amend the University of Brighton Students' Union Articles of Association or Policy;
or
 - 3.1.4. overturn a previous decision of the AGM.
- 3.2. The Board of Trustees may over rule any decision made by the Members in a Referendum which the Trustees consider (in their absolute discretion):
 - 3.2.1. has or may have significant detrimental financial implications for the Union;
 - 3.2.2. is or may be in breach of or contrary to charity legislation or education law or any other legal requirements;
 - 3.2.3. is not or may not allow the Union to meet any of its charitable objects.
- 3.3. If the referendum vote does not reach quoracy, the Board of Trustees may make a decision on the motion, providing that:
 - 3.3.1. Students had a fair and reasonable opportunity to vote eg it was widely distributed and advertised; and
 - 3.3.2. Students had enough information and that each side of the discussion were fairly presented; and
 - 3.3.3. Any votes cast are taken into account, eg. If there is a clear direction from students, even if quoracy was not reached; and
 - 3.3.4. Any such Board vote will be by a simple majority decision.

4. Calling a Referendum

- 4.1. A referendum can be called at any point by one of the following:

- 4.1.1. resolution of the Trustees; or
- 4.1.2. resolution of a general meeting; or
- 4.1.3. a secure petition signed by at least 500 Members.

4.2. The secure petition can be either an e-petition or a hard copy petition.

4.3. In the case of a hard copy petition, it must have its purpose on the top of every page including the question to be put to a referendum. It should collect the full name, student number and signature/e- signature of every member that signs the petition for that entry to be valid.

5. Referendum Question

5.1. The persons or body proposing the referendum must propose a simple 'YES' or 'NO' question for referendum.

5.2. The Executive Committee may make alterations to a proposed referendum question made by a general meeting or petition for the purpose of making the question:

5.2.1. balanced and not tending towards one response; or

5.2.2. to comply with the requirements of the University of Brighton Students' Union Articles of Association.

5.3. Any changes made to proposed referendum questions must be explained to the persons or body proposing the referendum.

6. Referendum Rules

6.1. The Engagement Team will conduct the referendum process using the election regulations as a guide.

6.2. They will publish clear information prior to the start of any campaign period, such as dates, available resources, deadlines for statements, whether external speakers are allowed to represent a viewpoint.

6.3. They will actively seek a person or group to co-ordinate each side of the debate. If one side is not represented, then the referendum will still take place.

6.4. Both 'sides' will be given equal promotional resources and opportunities.

6.5. A debate/question time will always be held prior to the vote taking place. This does not have to be in person.

6.6. The voting period must take place at a time that maximises the number of potential votes, and where possible the date should be agreed with both sides of the issue.

6.7. The vote must take place within 30 term time days of being called.

6.8. A referendum on the same issue may not be held during the same academic year or within 6 months – whichever is longer.

7. Vote Requirements

7.1. To be a valid referendum outcome, 1000 members must cast a valid vote.

7.2. A vote of no confidence in an elected officer requires a 75% majority.

7.3. Any other referendum decision other than 7.2 will be decided by a simple majority (50%+1).

8. Results

8.1. The result shall be announced within 48 hours of the close of voting.