

Referenda Rules – Motion to hold a referendum to disaffiliate from NUS UK

Returning Officer / Deputy Returning Officer

- 1.1. The rules in the Union's Elections Bye-law concerning the Returning Officer / Deputy Returning Officer apply equally to referenda.
- 1.2. The Returning Officer for this referendum is **Andrew Hodgson, Winchester Students' Union's Chief Executive Officer**, as confirmed by the Trustee Board.
- 1.3. There is no Deputy Returning Officer for this referendum; with the Chief Exec remaining impartial as the Returning Officer, the Union's Head of Membership (Deputy CEO) will act to support and advise elected officers (where requested) and therefore will not act as an official for this referendum.

2. Call for Referendum

- 2.1. A call for a referendum is defined in Section 15 of the Articles of Association and has been made by: A majority vote of Student Senate. The question to be asked is specific, and has been confirmed as:
 - 2.1.1. **'Should Winchester Students' Union disaffiliate from the National Union of Students UK (NUS UK)?'**
 - Yes, Winchester Students' Union should disaffiliate from NUS UK
 - No, Winchester Students' Union should not disaffiliate from NUS UK
- 2.2. The Returning Officer has considered the proposed wording of the question and considers it an appropriate question to which a 'Yes' or 'No' answer can be given.
- 2.3. This referendum will be held according to the timetable below, providing for point 2.4 & 2.5
 - 2.3.1. Notification to members of the referendum: Thursday 24th April 2025
 - 2.3.2. Referendum voting and campaigning opens: 9am Tuesday 13th May 2025
 - 2.3.3. Referendum voting and campaigning closes: 3pm Friday 16th May 2025
 - 2.3.4. Referendum results published on Union Website (winchesterstudents.co.uk) from 12 noon on Wednesday 21st May 2025.
- 2.4. There must be adequate time for publicity for the proposed referendum, to give Union members the opportunity to take part in any campaigns as well as to vote.
- 2.5. Notice must be given of the date of polling, once the date is confirmed, normally at least 14 days before polling. This should normally include the wording of the question which will be asked.

3. Campaign Publicity

- 3.1. Campaign publicity is defined as any material, issued at any time between the notice of the referendum and the close of polling, which includes a reference to the referendum, and which may have an influence on voting in the referendum.
- 3.2. Campaigning must not occur outside of the Campaign window set.
- 3.3. The Returning Officer should be advised of each individual who is leading on the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns as soon as practicable and by no later than the 6th of May 2025.
- 3.4. This referendum will be a 'paperless' referendum, in that publicity must be via in person or virtual conversation and without the use of physical leaflets, flyers, posters, badges or any other material that would be reasonably considered 'campaign publicity'.
- 3.5. Online material will be published by the Returning Officer (or their delegate) containing background information and up to 750 words in favour of the YES proposal and up to 750 words for the 'NO' proposal; such wording to be provided by the 'Yes (Leave)' and 'No (Remain)' campaign contacts and agreed with the Returning Officer. **Statements must be received by no later than 6th May 2025 to allow appropriate time for review and inclusion.**
- 3.6. The Union will centrally promote both statements equally across all communication channels, including via at least 1 direct all-member email at the start of voting/campaigning. In the interest of clear communications that fairly present both arguments, individual parties (including elected officers and NUS UK) are not permitted to send mass emails directly to members.
- 3.7. In addition, the Union will repost via its Instagram account, the first post each day during the campaign period from the YES/leave and No/remain campaign, that tags @winch_su
- 3.8. Social media owned and operated by individual students or elected officers, and/or NUS UK otherwise can be used for campaigning purposes during the campaign window.
- 3.9. Students shall have the choice to join official campaign teams by notifying the Returning Officer (or their delegate). One person from each side shall be designated the agent for that viewpoint and have overall responsibility for publicity – see 3.3.
- 3.10. There are no designated 'exclusion zones' for this referendum
- 3.11. Any Election publicity which, in the opinion of the Returning Officer (or their delegate), contains information that is blatantly factually inaccurate, discriminatory, defamatory, or that might constitute a breach of policy or law, may result in the campaign side being penalised or disqualified.
- 3.12. The Returning Officer (or their delegate) may set an expenditure limit or a spending allowance for Referenda publicity; for the purposes of this referendum the campaign expenditure limit is **£nil**

4. Involvement of Union staff and officers and use of Union facilities

- 4.1. The principles in the Elections regulations regarding Union staff and use of Union facilities apply equally to this referenda.
- 4.2. Any elected Officer may campaign for or against the matter of this referenda.

5. Polling

- 5.1. The rules in the Elections regulations headed "Method of Voting", "Voting Systems", and "Voting Procedures" (where applicable) apply equally to referenda.
- 5.2. The voting system shall contain the question as specified and the facility for members to vote for or against.
- 5.3. The voting system selected for this referendum is the secure referendum module provided on the Union's Website by OneVoice digital.

6. The Count

- 6.1. The rules in the Elections regulations headed "The Count" apply equally to referenda.
- 6.2. In order for the result of this referendum resolution to pass, the total number of votes counted must be at least that number required under the Articles of Association and where a majority (50% +1) of the votes cast are in favour of the resolution. For the purposes of this referendum, a referendum on affiliation, any number of student members will be considered quorate

7. Confirmation of Result

- 7.1. The results shall be declared as soon as is reasonably practicable upon the conclusion of the count. The Returning Officer shall declare to the effect that the count is accurate and valid. The timetable of this election has set the release date of the result as Wednesday 21st May 2025.
- 7.2. A copy of the results shall be displayed on the Union's website for not less than seven days following the declaration and shall be published via all other relevant mediums.
- 7.3. The rules in the Elections regulations headed "Recounts", "Retention of Ballots", and "Complaints" apply equally to referenda.

Elections regulations can be referenced in Bye-Law 3, Elections (& Referenda) Regulations: [https://assets.prod.unioncloud-internal.com/document/documents/108143/d060948362210024d5daad7b29b0809d/Bye-law 3 - Election Referenda Regulations October 2023 approved.pdf](https://assets.prod.unioncloud-internal.com/document/documents/108143/d060948362210024d5daad7b29b0809d/Bye-law%203%20-%20Election%20Referenda%20Regulations%20October%202023%20approved.pdf)