

Conference Document 1: Notice of Conference

Purpose of this document

This is Conference Document (CD) 1 which gives Notice of National Conference 2014. Within it you'll find the key dates for the policy and accountability process for the year ahead and a brief summary of how the processes work. Each conference document will go into more details on that specific area.

What you need to do

You should read this document and all other Conference Documents published when they are sent to you. You should aim to circulate them around your union and send them to your delegations when selected and used within their delegate training.

Checklist

- The key dates on page have been added to my calendar
- My student council will be debating zone recommendations in January/February
- I note that the access requirement deadline is 12 March 2013
- Delegates for National Conference will be elected before 12 March 2013
- We will be training delegates on their role at National Conference

If you require additional information please contact the following people:

For issues relating to the administration of conference, including registration, access needs, room bookings and stalls contact the Events Team through events@nus.org.uk

For issues about delegate entitlement, zone committees, reports and policy, amendments to zone policy proposals & Cross Campus Ballots contact the Chair of the Democratic Procedures Committee through executiveoffice@nus.org.uk

For issues about elections contact Chief Returning Office through executiveoffice@nus.org.uk





Message to Students' Unions/Associations

This document represents a challenge for you

You face challenges every day. You make decisions that change students' lives and improve the way that students feel about their campus, institution and society. Students themselves face challenges every day – attacks on their education, on how they define themselves, live their lives and take part in the world around them.

The notice of National Conference lays out how you can face these challenges on a National stage. NUS National Conference is an event unlike any other. You and your delegates can take charge here to debate major issues, hear from speakers and experts in fringe meetings and elect your leaders. There's nothing stopping you being the next NUS President.

You'll meet students and activists who are both like minded and different in their opinions, but with a common belief that they want to do the best for students across the UK.

This document presents a challenge for you to prepare, debate and take part in your National Union's structures. It is my pleasure to lead NUS, but an equal pleasure to be led by students at conference and through the policy it sets.

See you in Liverpool,

Toni Pearce
NUS National President

The National Union of Students of the United Kingdom welcomes your participation at our National Conference 2014 to be held in Liverpool.

All of our members are invited to take part in National Conference, which for registered delegates is free to attend. This document contains instructions on how to take part in NUS National Conference and what you need to do in the run up to the event in coming months.

You can find this document and all the other information and papers for Conference on our website at www.nusconnect.org.uk

The Democratic Procedures Committee will be outlining your role in relation to each document throughout the year as well as extra guidance on what you can do in your union. Feel free to contact us via executiveoffice@nus.org.uk with any questions.

Best wishes - I look forward to seeing you there

Yemi Gbajobi
Chair, Democratic Procedures Committee





National Conference Key Dates

December 2013

Monday 2 December 2013

Registration Opens

12 Noon Wednesday 18 December 2013

Challenge to delegate entitlement deadline

January 2014

12 Noon Wednesday 22 January 2014

Zone Committee Reports and proposals deadline

February 2014

12 Noon Wednesday 5 February 2014

Deadline for Applicants to Membership

12 Noon Wednesday 12 February 2014

Close of Nominations for NEC positions Full time Officer Positions

12 Noon Wednesday 19 February 2014

Close of Nominations for NEC positions (Block of 15)

12 Noon Wednesday 26 February 2014

National Conference deadline for Motions for Adoption

March 2014

12 Noon Wednesday 5 March 2014

Close of Policy recommendations Amendments & Ordinary Motions

Deadline to challenge Estimates

Deadline for Elections, NEC, Trustee Board & Nominations Committee Report

12 Noon Wednesday 12 March 2014

Close of Registration including registration for access needs

Sunday 16 March 2014

Drafting Commissions – submitters of motions may be invited to attend

12 Noon Wednesday 19 March 2014

Vote opens on priority ballot for zones and motions

Deadline for Democratic Procedures Committee Report

12 Noon Wednesday 26 March 2014

Close of Emergency Motions

April 2014

Tuesday 8 April – Thursday 10 April

National Conference



Participating in the Policy Process

This section outlines how members can get involved in shaping the priorities and activities of NUS each year. As we go through the year, each member union will receive information and reminders about how and when to add their voice to NUS' democracy. Unions are encouraged to regularly check our website for up to date event information, all of which will appear on www.nusconnect.org.uk

The Policy Cycle

The work that NUS does is prioritised and decided through policy. The National Union of Students produces campaigns, projects, briefings, events, training, statements, seminars, resources, materials, committees, speaker tours, lobbies, protests, conferences, consultations and probably a hundred other types of 'things' to help students in their studies and in their lives. To help make sense of this, the work of NUS is split into five separate "zones" and the policy that is passed fits into one of these five zones. Policy for each zone goes through a journey from the first time it is discussed through to the way it is implemented.

- Reflecting on National Conference and in consultation with the NEC, the needs for work on certain areas are identified and grouped into Key Themes for the year ahead by Vice Presidents.
- The Policy Portal opens up online, to establish dialogue and debate on the Key Themes.
- Zone Conferences, based on these Key themes, bring in the experiences of the membership and their needs, helping to understand the problems, build and debate solutions.
- Zone Committees are elected to steer and deliver the work on the Key Themes.
- The Policy Development Convention takes place comprising the NEC and every Zone Committee, streamed live to the membership. It debates proposals based on evidence from investigations and from the Policy portal.
- Zone Committees create their policy recommendations for the year ahead.
- Unions get a chance to look at these recommendations and comment on them (a student forum debates the policy)
- Unions feedback on the policy (an amendment to the policy is suggested by the union)
- Unions submit ordinary motions on issues not discussed in the zone recommendations (identifying a need for work on certain areas)
- National Conference votes on the policy submitted and it becomes the work plan for the Zone for the year ahead.

Policy Routes

There are three main routes to passing policy at NUS which include:

1. Zone Policy Recommendations
2. Ordinary Motions
3. Liberation, Student Sections & Nations Policy

1. Zone Policy Recommendations

Inside NUS, there are five policy zones covering five main broad areas of issues affecting students: Welfare; Further Education (FE); Higher Education (HE); Union Development; and Society and Citizenship. In addition the priority work of the National President is counted as a sixth zone known as the Priority Zone.

The policy recommendations will be circulated to each union at the end of January 2014 in good time before National Conference. At that stage Unions may suggest amendments to the Policy Recommendations presented in each Zone Report by sending them into NUS by 5 March 2014. These will be compiled by the DPC and debated at National Conference. If unions want to submit text that is not an amendment or addition to a Zone recommendation this is an ordinary motion.

2. Ordinary Motions

Unions are able to propose ordinary motions on issues that are not covered in the Zone Policy Recommendations. The deadline for submitting these motions is 5 March 2014.

Unions will have a word limit they can use on submitting amendments and ordinary motions. Once the submission deadline has passed the Democratic Procedures Committee will take each submission of text and first determine if the text or sections of it represent an amendment to the Policy Recommendations of any of the Zone reports. In this event it will bring them together or “composite” them where appropriate and list these as proposed amendments to the Policy Recommendations to be debated separately. All other text will become composite motions under the appropriate Zone. For example: Your Union wants some text on apprentices and a second piece of text on provision of IT for postgraduates. The FE zone committee has recommended policy on apprentices, but there are no submissions from zones on IT. Your EMA text becomes an amendment and the IT text is an ordinary motion.

Once composited, Democratic Procedures Committee will circulate the Zone Policy Recommendation Reports and motions documents to all unions in good time before National Conference.

Each zone will have a set amount of time to debate the policy recommendations, amendments and ordinary motions submitted within it. Times can be extended for a specific area, but this will cut time to debate other motions.

The order that both zones and the order in which ordinary motions are discussed within that zone is decided by a ballot of registered delegates before conference. Note that it is usual for more policy to be submitted than conference has time to discuss, so the priority ballot is an important process to be part of.

3. Liberation, Student Sections and Nations Policy

Each Liberation Campaign, Student Section Campaign and Nation has its own conference, where policy relating to the students in those campaigns is debated and agreed. The process of passing policy at each conference differs between campaigns. Member unions should refer to the relevant standing orders available on www.nusconnect.org.uk for further details.

Every year the policy of each Liberation, Student Section and Nation is presented to National Conference for adoption. Delegates to National Conference are not permitted to propose amendments. Once adopted, the policy of each of these campaigns becomes the policy of National Union of Students.

Lapsed policies

All the policies of NUS, which are three years old, (i.e. passed or ratified by Conference 2011) will be presented to Conference for either lapse or retention. The procedure is that the policies will automatically lapse at the end of the Conference unless a union objects to the lapse. You must notify the Democratic Procedures Committee, in writing before 12 Noon on the second day of Conference. Conference will decide on all objections during the final session.

Should you have any queries about the policy process and how to get involved, please contact our democratic services team on executiveoffice@nus.org.uk

Accountability

NUS National Conference holds the Zones accountable for the work they have undertaken since the last Conference. It also can hold accountable all members of the NEC for their conduct as members of the Council and representatives of the organisation.

Report Section

Before each Zone Motion debate, there will be a report section chaired by a member of DPC. Each Zone is required to submit a written report on their work for the year and present on it at National Conference. After the presentation there will be a period for questions. Questions must be submitted in writing to DPC. (is there a deadline for this?)

Report Motions

If a union is unhappy with the work of a zone as reported to National Conference it can propose a report motion. This can be done before the end of the Zone report in writing to DPC. The Report Motions can do two things;

- 1) Refer back a section of the report – when the Constituent Member is unhappy with the work done a specific area
- 2) Refer back the whole report- when the Constituent Member is unhappy with the work done as a whole

After any report motions the Conference will be asked to accept the report from the Zone.

Motions of censure or no confidence

The NEC is accountable to the National Conference on its conduct as individuals and as a whole in relation to how it goes about representing and campaigning for students.

A censure is a criticism of the individual or group and stern indication that National Conference is unhappy with their work or behaviour. A no confidence is much more serious and says that the Conference believes that they are unable to perform their role and should be removed.

A motion of censure or no confidence or must be presented in writing to DPC by 12 Noon on the second day of Conference ready for the NEC report session on the last day. A motion of censure or no confidence may be made against an individual NEC member, a group of members or the NEC as a whole. This decision rests with the proposer of the motion of censure or no confidence.

A Union submitting a motion of censure or no confidence will be asked to give a speech on why they feel the officer should be censured or no confided. There will be a speech against the censure or no confidence made by either the individual, one member of the group being censure or no confided or the National President if the censure or no confidence is made against the whole NEC. National Conference will then be asked to vote on the censure or no confidence.

Your Delegation

This section outlines your delegation to National Conference, how to bring Observers and what their rights are.

1. Delegate Entitlements

CD2 - Delegate Entitlement document details the number of free Delegates each union is permitted to send to conference. Free covers the cost of attending the conference and bed and breakfast accommodation, but not travel or other meals which should be covered by the union. Note however that many fringes are catered.

2. Delegate elections

All universities and public sector higher education colleges must elect their delegates by cross campus ballot (one office bearer may be an ex-officio delegate). If you feel you feel unfairly penalised by such an arrangement you should contact the Democratic Procedures Committee via email, executiveoffice@nus.org.uk

Further Education colleges are exempt from the requirement to hold a cross campus ballot, though this is encouraged where possible.

We encourage all unions to have held their cross campus ballots prior to 12 Noon Wednesday 12 March 2014, the deadline for registration to National Conference otherwise we cannot guarantee you free places at conference. A declaration that the cross campus ballot has taken place is included on the registration form for Conference.

3. Delegate and Observer rights

All delegates have full speaking and voting rights. Observers have full speaking rights but do not have voting rights. Press representatives do not have speaking or voting rights.

Each Union is entitled to send up to three observers. Each observer may be sent at a cost of £300 plus VAT. The only exception is that any Union who has a delegate entitlement of 1 may send 1 observer for free.

There is also the opportunity to send Student Union staff observers at a cost of £300 plus VAT.

4. Registration

Your delegation must be registered for Conference on www.nusconnect.org.uk

The Events Office cannot fill in the form for you. Please ensure all names are spelt correctly.

Each individual union president or SSLO received their own security code in September 2013. You will need this in order to register your delegation, submit motions and amendments. Please ensure that you have all the information on each delegate before you start the registration process. For example – delegate email address, delegate dietary requirements, delegate access requirements, date of birth if under 18 years of age.

If you do not have your NUS Secure Code the union Chief Executive/General Manager or President should email events@nus.org.uk to request this. This can only be done in writing.

5. Parental Consent

If you are between the ages of 16-18 years old and booking onto this event you should ensure you follow the procedures your union/college have in place for parental consent. If you are required to bring a guardian with you then please make this known, giving full details of name and relationship. Your college/union will be responsible for the cost of your guardian. You will also be required to complete a consent form when registering for the event and ensure it is returned to the Events Team by 5.00pm Friday 28th March 2014.



6. Late Registrations

Late registration causes administrative difficulties both for arrangements at the Conference venue and provision of hotel accommodation for your stay at Conference.

The date given under registration procedures is the absolute deadline for receiving registration documentation duly completed giving us the necessary information to proceed. You will receive an invoice after the event for any monies payable in respect of observers, student press etc attending.

It is felt you are being given fair warning in relation to lateness and if your registration is received after the deadline you will forfeit your right to the 100% subsidy per delegate at conference. This means that you will have to pay for the cost of your own accommodation and meals.

7. Access Requirements

Please ensure that you include details of any access needs required by your delegate to enable that person to fully participate in the event. Advance notice of access requirements allows the necessary arrangements to be made in good time. Please state all such requirements when registering by 12 Noon Wednesday 12 March 2014. Full details are necessary.

Please phone or email the events@nus.org.uk if you wish to discuss your access needs further. We cannot guarantee access requirements will be met if not received by this time. You should send your access needs even if you have previously attended NUS events. Once the events team have notification of an access need then a call will be made to the delegate to confirm this requirement and what measure will be in place to meet this need. Please note that if an access need cannot be met this will be confirmed in writing.

8. Cancellation Policy

In the event of your having to cancel your delegate place, you must contact NUS events in writing, via phone or email prior to the event. All contact details can be found on your booking confirmation and www.nusconnect.org.

Except in exceptional circumstances, and at the sole discretion of NUS, refunds can only be made for cancellations received prior to the close of registration.

In situations where a delegate decides to cancel their booking, the following refund policy applies. Refunds reflect the costs incurred by NUS in booking accommodation, catering and venues.

Up to 25 working days in advance of an event	= 90% refund
Up to 15 working days in advance of an event	= 30% refund
Less than 14 days before an event	= 0% refund



Finances

1. Subscriptions

Your annual subscription to the National Union are due before the end of October 2013.

Important: Please note, if your subscriptions were not paid by the due date and no arrangements for method of payment made, it will affect your registration for Conference.

This can only be varied if your union has approached the NUS Finance Office which is responsible for fees, and agreed payment arrangements effective from the month of October 2013. To avoid any problems arising concerning registration, we would suggest that you contact Brenda Scott at (Brenda.scott@nus.org.uk) who deals at first hand with subscriptions and special arrangements.

2. Fees

All free delegates (according to their delegate entitlement) go to Conference free of charge providing they register online by the registration deadline. There is a registration fee payable for all observers and press representatives.

You will be invoiced for these places shortly after National Conference.

Documents

Documents will be made available on www.nusconnect.org.uk as they are released and emails about them will be sent out via the Democracy Mailing list which you can sign up for by emailing executiveoffice@nus.org.uk

Officers are encouraged to send these documents out to their delegates and student councillors. Each document will include a section outlining its purpose and also the actions required by you within it.

Printed documents

NUS will print 1 copy per delegate of:

- CD4 Conference Order Paper (Agenda)
- CD 10 All Motions and amendments

NUS will print 1 copy per delegation leader (a copy per Union/Association at Conference):

- CD 5 -7 Reports from Zones and other committees and Estimates
- CD12 Manifestos for candidates

There will be some of the other documents available in printed form on request but not printed one per delegate in line with the NUS green policies.

The documents will be on the website and on the mobile app both before and during conference.

Elections

The elections, which will be held at National Conference 2014, are listed below.

1. Full time positions

Elections will be held at National Conference 2014 for the offices of President, Vice President (Further Education), Vice President (Higher Education), Vice President (Society and Citizenship), Vice President (Union Development) and Vice President (Welfare)

2. National Executive Council Positions

The full time officer positions are all ex-officio members of the National Executive Council, with the President as chair. In addition National Conference also elects 15 other National Councillors – known as the 'Block of 15'.

3. Student Trustees

The National Conference elects student trustees to sit on the National Union's Trustee Board. The conference will elect three trustees for a tenure of two years. The National President will also be elected to chair of the Trustee Board ex-officio.

4. Democratic Procedures Committee

The National Conference elects members to the Democratic Procedures Committee, which ensures the smooth running of Conference and the policy process. National Conference will elect four members this year.

Election Procedures

Election Procedures will be made available by the Chief Returning Officer in CD11.

Election counts

The elections for the President and Vice Presidents will be counted and announced at National Conference. Other positions will be counted and announced a week later.



Conference Documents

The following documents will be made available throughout the year. They will not necessarily appear in this order. The core Conference Documents (CD) are as follows:

CD1 – Notice of Conference

This document introducing the key dates and processes

CD2 – Delegate Entitlement

This outlines how many delegates each union in membership can send and outlines the formula used within the calculation.

CD3 – Minutes of the last Conference

The record of National Conference 2013, the policy passed and the election results.

CD 4 – Order Paper (Agenda)

The outline of timings for the Conference, note that this is subject to change by the will of delegates, and often does get altered dramatically over the course of the event

CD 5- Zone Reports and Policy recommendations

Due in January this is the first report of the zones and their initial policy recommendations based on discussions at Zone Conferences.

CD 6 – Accounts and Estimates

The accounts of the past year and also the financial estimates jointly proposed by the Trustee Board and National Executive Council

CD 7 – Reports of the Trustee Board, National Executive Council, Democratic Procedures Committee & Chief Returning Officer

Reports of various committees and individuals to conference

CD 8 – Adoptions of Nations, Liberation Campaigns & Student Sections

Policy passed at autonomous conferences is sent to National Conference to be adopted by the organisation as a whole

CD 9 – Policy due to Lapse

Policy is valid for 3 years unless conference challenges it lapsing. Policy from 2011 will lapse at this conference

CD 10 – Final Proposals, Amendments and Ordinary Motions:

The final document of the policy recommendations, any amendments to these and the ordinary motions supplied by unions

CD 11 – Election Schedules and Regulations:

Rules on how to run for elected positions at National Conference.

CD 12 – Manifestos:

The Manifestos of full time officers and block of 15 National Executive Council members

CD 13 – Minutes and Resolutions of National Conference 2014:

The official report of the Conference.

