

Bye-Law 6: Referenda

This Bye-Law outlines how referenda can be called within the Students' Union, the types of issues they can address, and how they are managed.

The Union's Returning Officer must adhere to this Bye-Law as far as practicable but may take reasonable steps to ensure that voting is open, fair and accessible.

Table of Contents

1. Referenda Purpose	1
2. Calling Referenda	1
3. Setting the Question.....	1
4. Referenda Outcomes and Validity.....	1
5. Union Responsibilities.....	2
6. Appendix – Glossary of Terms	3
Document Control	4

1. Referenda Purpose

- a. Referenda may be called for the following reasons:
 - i. To set the Union's formal position on an issue;
 - ii. To approve or overturn a policy created by the Union's democratic structures;
 - iii. To approve amendments to the Articles;
 - iv. To seek endorsement from students on major strategic or constitutional changes.
- b. Referenda can not be called on any issue which has already been decided by a referendum within the same academic year.
- c. Referenda cannot overturn decisions of the Union's Board of Trustees.

2. Calling Referenda

- a. Referenda may be called on any issue by:
 - i. A resolution of the Trustees
 - ii. A majority vote of members at an All Students Members Meeting where there are at least 150 members; or
 - iii. A secure petition signed by 3% of the membership.
- b. The Union may run more than one referendum simultaneously.

3. Setting the Question

- a. Each referendum must be proposed to the student body in the form of a closed question (e.g. Yes or No).
- b. The Union's depute returning officers will
 - i. Draft a proposed a question for each referendum for consideration by the Returning Officer
 - ii. Ensure that each proposed question is clear, easy to understand and is not seen to be guiding towards any answer in the referendum
 - iii. The Returning Officer will review and approve each referendum question and their decision is final.

4. Referenda Outcomes and Validity

a. Approval Threshold

A referendum question will pass if:

- i. A simple majority of valid votes are cast in favour and
- ii. At least 3% of the Student Membership vote.

b. Notice Period

The Union must give at least two weeks' notice of the referendum to all Student Members.

c. Polling Duration

The Returning Officer will determine the polling period for each referendum. The minimum duration is 24 hours.

5. Union Responsibilities

- a. The Union will publish clear and impartial information for each referendum question and at least five days before the referendum has taken place.
- b. The Union will provide support to students who seek to campaign for either side of a referendum question.

6. Appendix – Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Articles	The Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Students Union of the University of the West of Scotland – the core constitutional document.
Bye-Law	Governing rules that set out constitutional processes.
Membership	All enrolled students at UWS that has not opted out of membership of the Students Union.
Policy	A formal statement or plan that establishes principles, values and course of action for the Students' Union – e.g. the Student Union's safe space policy.
Polling	The duration of time that members will be able to vote in the referendum.
Position	A clear concise statement that outlines the Union's stance or perspective on a particular issue. E.G the Union believes all students should have a fantastic experience at UWS.
Referendum/Referenda	A general vote by all members of the Students Union on a question that has been referred to them for a direct decision.
Returning Officer	Individual appointed by the Union's Board of Trustees to oversee the election in accordance with legislation.
Depute Returning Officer	Individual(s) appointed by the Board of Trustees to support the Returning Officer.

Document Control		
Review Date	Changes	Version
19/05/2019	Initial Approval	V1.0
5/12/2023	No changes required	V1.1
25/08/2025	Bye Law re-written to accommodate democracy review recommendations	V2.0

Approving Body	
Date of approval:	
Review date:	