Annual General Meeting and Election Guidance for Student Groups - March 2020

The restrictions due to Covid-19 have presented many challenges, one of which being how student groups can ensure that they hold a successful Annual General Meeting (AGM) and elect a new committee in accordance with their constitution. Considering these changes, this document contains important updates on how to hold your AGM and election online.

Each student group must hold an AGM and elections before the end of the Academic Year (31st August 2020). Although student groups can take the risk of waiting to see if the restrictions are lifted before this date, it is advisable that they plan on using alternative methods as outlined in this guide.

Holding your AGM online

Please consider the following:

1. **REMEMBER**: Before anything, it is essential that you read through your constitution to ensure you are doing everything to follow the guidelines for your specific group.

2. **Where to hold my AGM**: you can hold an AGM online on platforms which allow you to host meetings via a shareable link, made accessible only to your members. If you can choose a platform which allows for recording of the meeting (with consent of your members), this is preferable as it may help with minute-taking.

3. **How to invite people to my AGM**: You should use a link to invite people to the meeting, which you should send out via the ‘messaging’ function on the control panel of your SU page, this should ensure that only your members are invited. Ensure that you give your members sufficient notice to propose motions (usually two weeks), and share any papers (e.g. proposed constitution changes) and an agenda in advance of the meeting. Guidance: [how to message members](#).

4. **What to do in my AGM**: Usually, AGMs include a summary of committee achievements throughout the year, a financial breakdown, and an opportunity to discuss any constitutional amendments. **No voting may happen during your video-AGM.** All discussions must be minuted usually by the General Secretary, and the minutes should include an attendee list.

5. **How to vote on constitutional amendments**: This **must** happen online, on your page on the SU website. Any motions which need voting on, including constitutional amendments, must go through the ‘referendum’ function, which can be set up by SU staff. You can request to have the referendum put on your page here: [referendum request form](#).

6. **It is advised that groups use the new constitution template.**

7. **How many changes can I propose**: You may propose as many constitutional changes as you deem necessary, either as one motion, or as several small motions. For example, if you want to bring the constitution in line with the new template, you may wish to do this as one motion ‘Do you agree with the proposed changes to bring the constitution in line with the SU recommended template’. Or, you might wish to propose it by section, such as ‘Do you agree with the proposed changes to section 10 of the constitution’. Try to keep the amount of motions to a reasonable number for members to digest, separating motions only where necessary.

7. **If the constitutional amendments pass, please send a copy of your updated constitution to your Development Coordinator and to suonline@nottingham.ac.uk.** Please also upload the updated version to your group’s page by using the resources function on the admin panel. Information: [how to upload resources guide](#).

Important links and information for AGM:

- **New constitution template**: [constitution template](#)
- **How to message members guide**: [how to message members](#)
- **How to upload resources guide**: [how to upload resources](#)
- **Referendum request form**: [referendum request form](#)
Online Elections
The only democratic way to hold elections now is to follow Section 4 guidance in the original guidance document. If groups are seen to hold elections not in line with the following process, they will be asked to repeat their elections in line with the process below:

Steps to hold an online election:
1. Note: you cannot hold an election for a position that is not in your constitution.
2. We have extended the deadline to submit your election request, which now must be done by 27th April 2020 - the form will no longer be available after this date. You can request an election here: online election request form.
4. SU staff will approve candidates and notify you on 11th – 12th May 2020.
   a. You will need to contact your members with details of your election period (nominations and voting), the positions available, and a position description for each role. Information: how to message members.
   b. Candidates can upload their manifesto and photo to the website. Info Sheet: how to stand in a committee election.
6. If your group needs to have an election online before the specified dates, this must be agreed by your DevCo with a valid reason (e.g. based on your constitution). Please contact your DevCo and they will provide you with more information and a different election request form to fill out.
7. Only members of the student group can stand and vote in your election (please ensure the current committee members have joined the group). If you wish, we can take all memberships sales offline during or shortly before the voting period. Information: How to vote in an online election.
8. SU staff will send you the results of your election the week commencing the 25th May 2020.
9. IMPORTANT: You must complete the committee details form immediately as we need their contact information. Please fill out the committee details form.
10. Inform the incoming committee members about compulsory training: new committee training.
11. If you need to hold a by-election for unfulfilled positions, you can do this through an online EGM or by completing another online election form.
12. Important links & information for online election:
   - Online election request form: Online election request form
   - How to contact group members: How to message members guide
   - How to stand in an online election: How to stand in a committee election
   - How to vote in an online election: How to vote in an online election
   - Committee details form: committee details form
   - New committee training information: new committee training
   - Problems/questions: suonlineservices@nottingham.ac.uk
   - Activities Officer: suactivities@nottingham.ac.uk

Online Handover
Due to the changes, you may be required to complete an online handover.
   - Handover from the outgoing to the incoming committee is important for continuity of the student group, preparing and empowering the incoming committee, learning from past mistakes and successes, and passing on valuable knowledge and skills.
   - Inform the incoming committee members of the new compulsory committee training. Information can be found here: new committee training.
   - Tips to consider:
Hold an online committee meeting with your outgoing and incoming committee members to discuss the past year, the future plans, the constitution, and other important aspects of your student group.

Hold individual online meetings with outgoing and incoming committee members of the same role to discuss the role requirements, achievements in the past year, potential for improvement, and to empower the incoming committee members to take on the responsibilities. You can use the handover document template for this: [handover document template](#).

Create and update a handover document containing information and insights from the outgoing committee that can be used in future years to guide the handover process.

Useful links and information for online handover period:

- Committee section of the website with essential information: [committee](#)
- Handover website section: [committee handover](#)
- Training: [new committee training](#)
- Handover document template: [handover document](#)
- Contact info for Societies and Sports team/ who is DevCo for societies: [support team](#)

### FAQs

1. **What if my group needs to make small changes or don’t know whether a change should go through the referendum process?**
   a. You can propose whatever changes you like, however if it is only a small change you may want to consider whether you want to wait until you can do this in person, or just later in the year. Remember that any change to your constitution MUST be passed by a quorate vote of a general meeting.

2. **My group needs to hold an election before the dates outlined (4th May – 22nd May), what should we do?**
   a. If your group needs to have an election online before the specified dates, this must be agreed by your DevCo with a valid reason (e.g. based on your constitution). Please contact your DevCo and they will provide you with more information and a different election request form to fill out.

3. **My group already submitted an online election request for the May period, do I need to submit another one?**
   a. Your group does not need to submit another online election request, your election will go ahead as planned.

4. **Can we use another platform to vote on changes to the constitution (e.g. SurveyMonkey, Facebook polls)?**
   a. Unfortunately these platforms are not secure enough to ensure that we are adhering to democratic practices, so any elections held on platforms outside of the SU website are deemed illegitimate. All elections must be run via the SU website.

4. **If we have already held our AGM online and voted on different platforms than those here, do we need to re-do our AGM?**
   a. You will need to re-run any votes you have run on different platforms, in the way we have outlined above, in order to ensure fairness, transparency and democracy throughout all groups.