BY-ELECTIONS REPORT OCTOBER 2019

Nomination Period

The [notice of elections](#) was publicised on Hull University Union's website on 2nd July 2019. Nominations were open online between Monday 16th September and Friday 4th October (extended from Wednesday 2nd of October).

Throughout the duration of the elections, students were kept informed through general student email communication, as well as tailored information for candidates who signed up to a specific mailing list, social media posts, posters around campus and leafleting by the student voice assistants..

The election consisted of a by-election for part-time Officer positions that had not been filled in the spring 2019 election.

Nominations were again open for a two week period (weeks 0 and 1) to ensure that both new and returning students had the opportunity to find out about the vacant positions and submit nominations. Election nominations were promoted through a range of social media, the WelcomeFest app, face-to-face on campus by the Student Voice team, through lecture shout-outs and face-to-face and social media engagement activities led by the President Team.

The elections section of Hull University Union's website included information for prospective candidates such as detailed role descriptions for each position and the election rules & regulations.

One-to-one support and information was offered to all candidates by the Student Voice Manager, in the position of Assistant Returning Officer. After implementing more engagement with candidates in the spring 2019 elections we did so again in the by-elections, following positive feedback. This included a space for candidates to relax during the week of campaigning and voting, refreshments and space to store any publicity materials, and a free pizza lunch. This was again seen to be successful.

Table 1. Nominations received for Part-Time Officer positions (23 positions available)

Position	Number of nominations
Mature Students Officer	2
Foundation Students Officer	2
Postgraduate Research Students Officer	1
Chair of RAG	1

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Councillor for scrutiny (I&D)	1
Disabled Students Representative	1
Representative for Women in Sport	1
Councillors for Scrutiny (Sport)	1

Contested Positions: 1 (the nominees for Foundation Students Officer approached the Assistant Returning Officer at an early stage to say they wished to work in a partnership which was approved.)

Uncontested Positions: 6

Positions with no nominations: 17

Total nominations received: 10

Academic Rep Recruitment

Faculty Rep positions and Deputy Faculty Reps (a new role for this year) were recruited through an application form and interview process during spring 2019 rather than through elections, as was done last year, with the aim to attract a greater number of high quality applicants who would be well-skilled and enthusiastic about the role, but would not have put themselves forward for an elected position. All but 3 of the 8 roles were filled before the start of the new academic year, and those three roles have since been filled through a second round of recruitment.

Course Reps were again appointed through a self-nomination process and all training was conducted online this year.

As a result of the academic rep restructure that took place in Trimester 2 of the 2018/19 year, Course Rep Leaders were elected in the by election this year, following the same timeline as the Part Time Officers.

Table 2. Nominations received for Course Rep Leader positions (27 positions available)

Position	Number of Nominations
Law	1
Nursing	1
Midwifery	1
Psychology	2 (as a role share)
School of Arts	1
Marketing and Business Studies	1
Languages and Philosophy	2

Contested Positions: 1

Uncontested Positions: 6

Positions with no nominations: 20

Total nominations received: 9

A number of issues around the Course Rep Leader elections arose; in part this was related to not all eligible students being able to view and vote in the relevant elections and this particularly affected some students on joint programmes and had not been anticipated. The other main issue, which is still ongoing some weeks after the by-election, is reviewing the nature of the role as an elected position, and identifying the reasons for such low numbers of students running for these positions.

These are issues which we will seek to address through the convening of a meeting of the Student Voice Operations Group in the near future.

Campaigning and Budgets

Campaigning opened on Monday 7th October 2019, after the candidates meeting, and candidates were eligible to claim reimbursement of campaign spending up to a maximum of £15. Just two candidates claimed campaign expenses, with other candidates campaigning on a smaller scale using social media and face-to-face engagement without any printed materials or boosted posts requiring expenditure. With so few positions having been contested, this is not surprising.

The Returning Officer for this election was Lydia Blundell, Head of Engagement at Huddersfield Students' Union. No formal complaints were received.

Voting and Turnout

Voting opened online on Tuesday 8th October 2019 at 9am and closed on Friday 11th October 2019 at 3pm. All candidates had to stand against Re-Open Nominations (RON) and Single Transferable Vote (STV) was used to determine the winner.

In addition to the general marketing campaign, Hull University Union engaged students in the importance of the elections by encouraging them to vote at stalls in the Library and Student Central during voting week.

A total of 1159 votes were cast by 425 unique voters in comparison to 984 votes cast by 284 unique voters in the October 2018 by-elections. This shows a fair increase after consistent decreases from 2016 to 2018.

Unfortunately some technical issues came to light during the voting period, with most voters not being asked the self-identifying questions, preventing them from voting on roles such as Representative for Women in Sport and Disabled Students Representative. This issue was resolved on the second day of voting, but this may have meant certain roles received less votes than they could have if the system had been fully operational from the first day of voting.
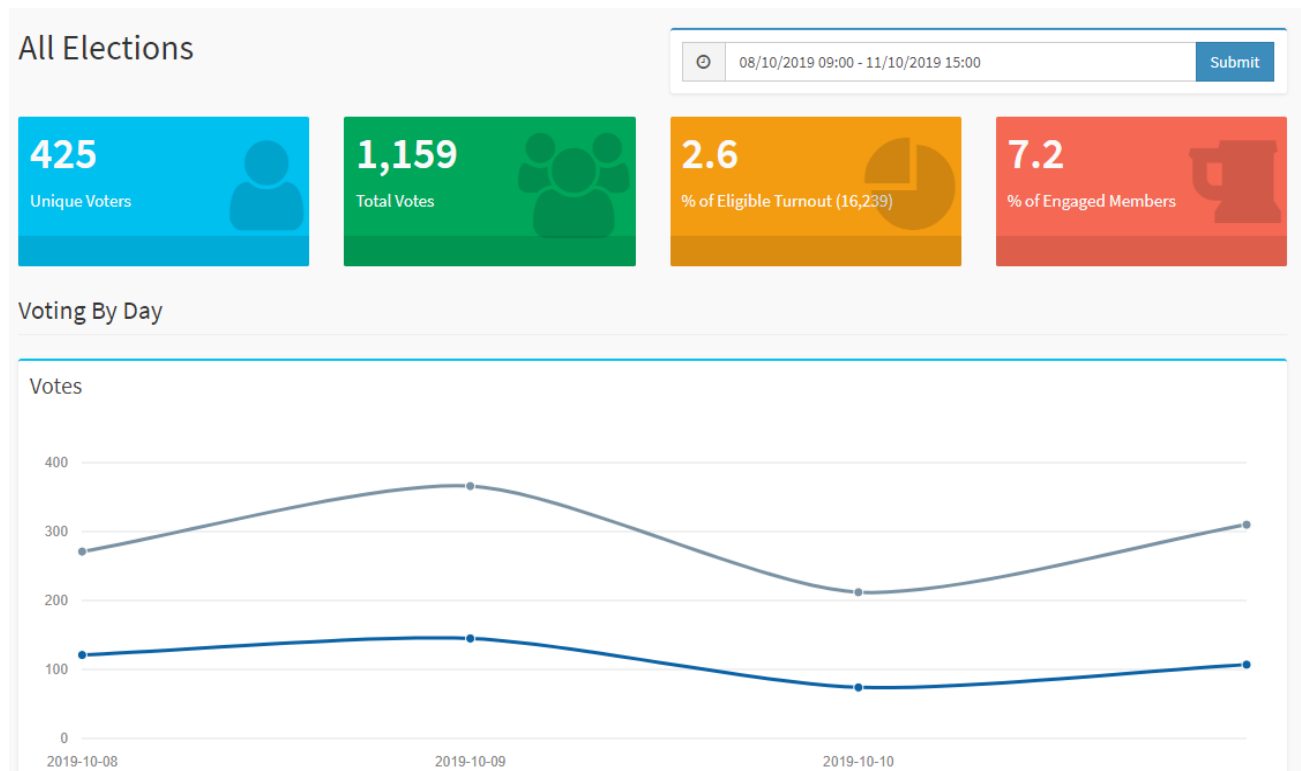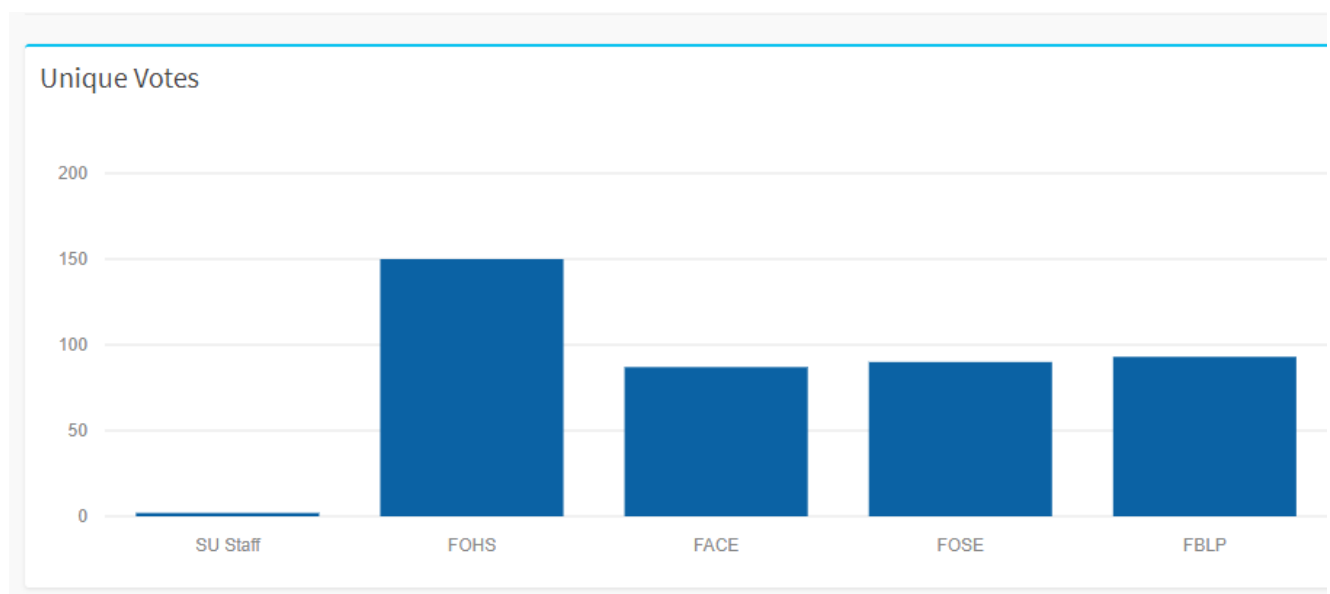
Table 3. Voter turnout

All Elections

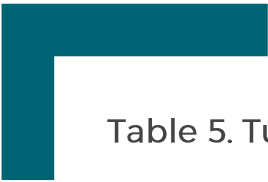08/10/2019 09:00 - 11/10/2019 15:00 | Submit

425	1,159	2.6	7.2
Unique Voters	Total Votes	% of Eligible Turnout (16,239)	% of Engaged Members

Voting By Day

Table 4. Turnout by Faculty

Unique Votes

Table 5. Turnout by Year of Study

Year of Study

Unique Votes

Year	N/A	0	1	2	3	4
Votes (approx.)	~2	~25	~145	~120	~118	~13
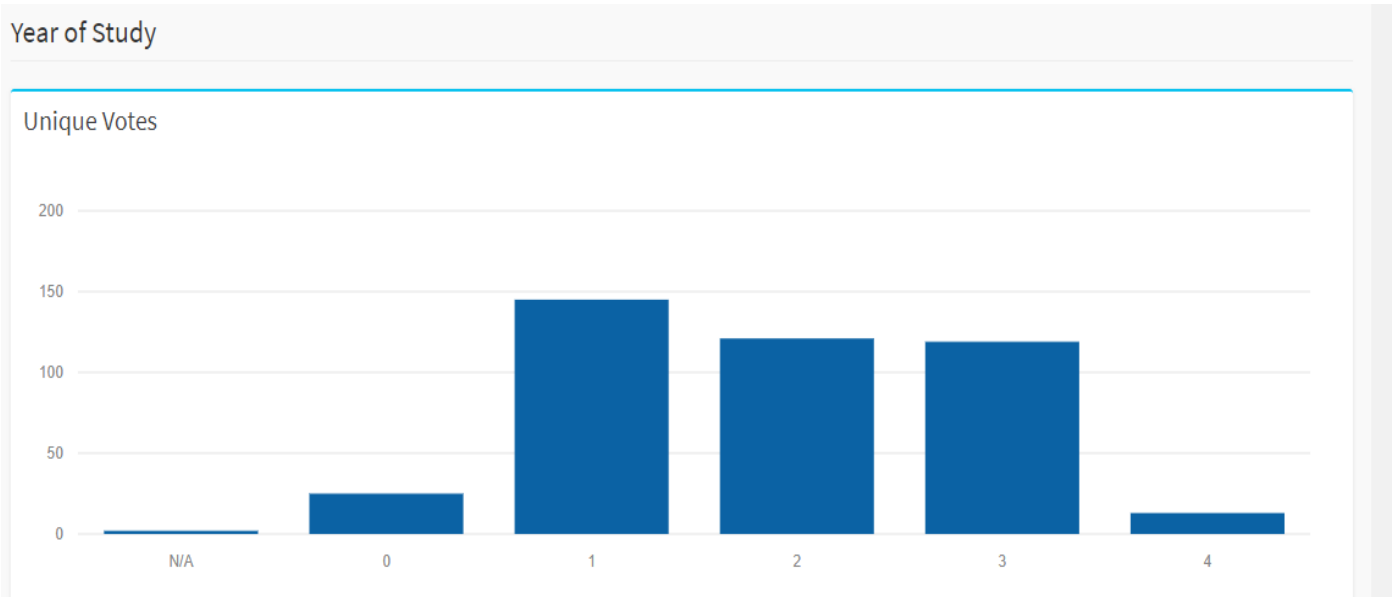
Table 6. Turnout by Level of Study

Type of Study

Unique Votes

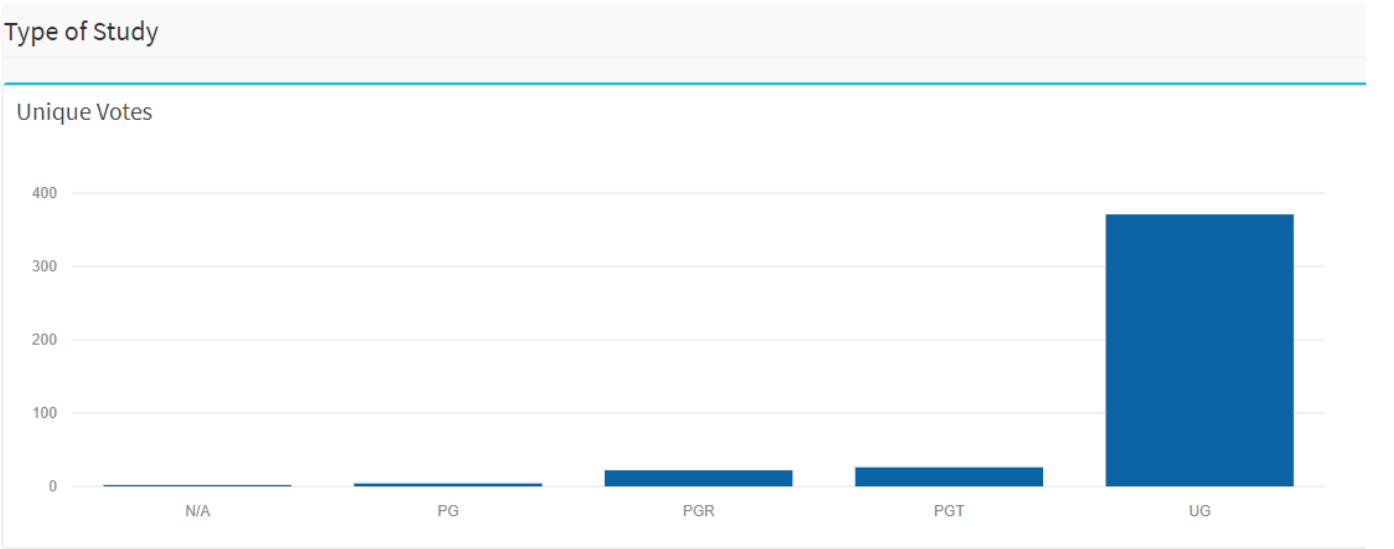| Type	N/A	PG	PGR	PGT	UG
Votes (approx.)	~1	~3	~20	~25	~370

Table 7. Turnout by Gender
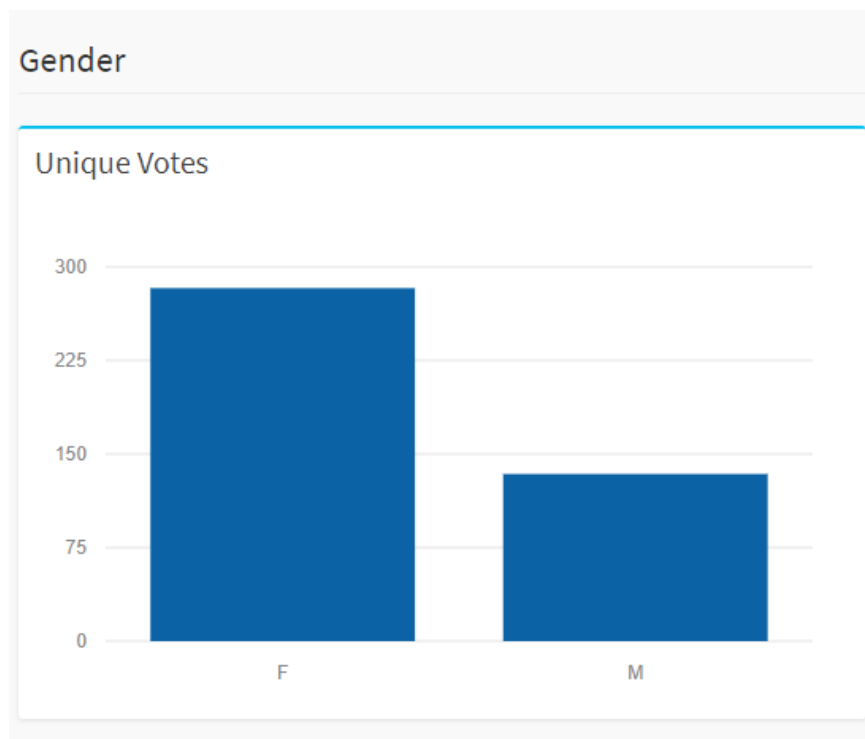
Table 7. Number of total votes for Part-time Officers

Position	Votes 2019	Votes 2018	Votes 2017
Postgraduate Research Students Officer	20	N/A	133
Mature Students Officer	47	16	N/A
Foundation Students Officer	23	N/A (new role 2019)	N/A (new role 2019)
Chair of RAG	215	N/A	383
Disabled Students Representative	48	N/A	53
Representative for women in sport	160	N/A (new role 2019)	N/A (new role 2019)
Councillor for Scrutiny (Sport)	246	N/A	N/A
Councillors for Scrutiny (Inclusivity & Diversity)	236	167	0

Results

The results for the by-election of part-time Officers are available on the Hull University Union Website.

Recommendations for 2020

- To continue to concentrate more on providing a quality experience for all by-election candidates, so they feel as valued as those who run in the spring elections.
- To research other students' unions' messaging and communications around the value of Part Time Officer roles, and develop more sustained comms around their purpose and remit, in order to garner a greater number of PTO candidates for roles in both the spring and autumn elections.
- To consider in consultation with AGDC whether 10 Councillors for Scrutiny, 2 for each zone, are required for effective scrutiny of the president team and zones. As there are frequently vacancies for these roles, this suggests there is not the level of demand to do this role that the number of positions require.
- To maintain the simplified process for course rep recruitment allowing students to sign up via a simple form on hulluniunion.com that opens during spring/summer 2019 and remains open until midway through Trimester 1.
- To review and evaluate the process for Course Rep Leader elections; there has been a significant amount of confusion and lack of candidates in this area
- Test out the updated Elections module on SUMS in January 2020 before the spring elections.

Nicole Steele
Student Voice Manager
October 2019