

# HUU Elections Report 2018

## Context

This report, and the recommendations included, have been developed using information drawn from SUMS voting data, complaint data, feedback provided through the candidate survey, social media marketing statistics and feedback from the debrief meeting of the Assistant Returning Officer and Marketing teams.

## Nomination Period

The notice of election was publicised on the [HUU website](#) on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Nominations were open online between 28<sup>th</sup> February-7<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Throughout the entire duration of the elections, students were kept informed through all-student emails, Social Media posts and posters around campus. The design and messaging of the marketing campaign was informed by student focus groups' feedback to try and ensure that it would appeal to a broad spectrum of students.

Information meetings were held before nominations opened on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February to inform interested candidates about the available roles, their duties and what campaigning would entail. These were attended by about 15 students in total, but as the content was shared through social media, email and in one-to-one meetings with interested students, this information reached approximately 30 students.

All interested students and candidates were provided with an online candidate handbook comprising more information about the roles, tips on how to run a successful campaign, and ideas about what previous Officers have achieved. The HUU elections website included a [hub for candidates](#) with detailed role descriptions for each position, the handbook, the election rules & regulations and useful candidate resources to provide more background information for candidates' manifestos.

**Table 1. Nominations Received**

Position	2018		2017	
	Full time Officer positions (5)	Part-time Officer positions (22)	Full-time Officer positions (5)	Part-time Officer positions (29)
<b>Nominations received</b>	19 (1 withdrawn)	7	19 (2 withdrawn)	16
<b>Contested positions</b>	5	1	5	2
<b>Uncontested positions</b>	0	5	0	10
<b>No nominations received</b>	0	16	0	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>35</b>	

Whilst the number of nominations for full time officer positions remained the same as last year, the nominations for part time roles experienced a significant drop. Year on year fewer candidates are running for part time officer roles at HUU; in 2016 23 nominations were received for a total of 32 positions, dropping to 16 nominations for 29 positions in 2017 and just 7 nominations for 22 positions this year. Much of the marketing this year focused on promoting the benefits of the full time roles with less of an emphasis on the part-time positions, therefore this is something which we can balance next year.

When asked whether they found the nominations process clear, candidates stated “yes” or “yes to an extent”, with the suggestion that providing previous examples of manifestos would be useful when candidates are writing their own.

## Campaigning and Budgets

Campaigning opened after the All Candidates Meeting on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March and ended with the close of voting on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 5pm.

All Student Officer candidates were entitled to a budget of £75 of which 100% were reimbursed by HUU. All other candidates were entitled to a budget of £15 with one reimbursement claim. This year, candidates were able to request their campaign budget in advance instead of waiting to submit expenses at the end of campaigning, to ensure that they were able to afford the costs of essentials such as covering the costs of food and bills. Two students made use of this offer.

The daily report by the Returning Officer Team detailing the submitted complaints is available [online](#). The External Returning Officer for this election was Lydia Blundell, Head of Voice, Insight and Advice at Huddersfield Students’ Union. Three formal complaints were received during the voting period, which resulted in two warnings being issued to candidates and an apology by HUU being issued on hullstudent.com and across social media channels.

## Support for Candidates

A Campaigns Workshop was held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January for any students considering running in the election and interested in finding out more about how to effectively run an election campaign. This was delivered by external facilitator Stephen Dowson of Stand & Be Counted. 9 students attended, and notes were distributed via the candidate Facebook page and by email and in face-to-face meetings with students meeting with the Assistant Returning Officer. Candidates who attended the workshop stated that they found it “very useful”, and several of those who did not attend suggested that more marketing of the event and timetabling it so that it was closer to the nomination period would be better.

All candidates were invited to the All Candidates Meeting on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March where they were briefed on the election rules and essential campaign tips. This meeting was mandatory for all Student Officer candidates and optional for all other candidates.

All Student Officer candidates were also required to attend one-to-one meetings with the Assistant Returning Officer to discuss their manifesto and campaign plans and discuss and sign the trustee declaration form before the close of nominations. All candidates were invited to drop by the Membership Services Area with any queries at any time during office hours throughout the elections period.

During campaigning, all candidates were able to access the former HullSTARS office as a space to leave any campaign materials or relax from campaigning. Snacks and bottled water were provided for candidates and their campaign teams. This was welcomed by candidates.

When asked whether candidates found the election rules and regulations clear, the majority stated “yes” or “yes to an extent”. However, it was notable that throughout the nomination and campaigning periods, there were numerous occasions when candidates sought the advice of the Returning Officer Team for clarification of the rules and regulations, and therefore for Elections 2019 we will address the language used in the rules to make them as clear and accessible as possible, and will test this with the student officer team and student focus groups well in advance of nominations opening.

Student Officer candidates engaged well in the opportunity to debate their manifestos in a public forum at Candidates’ Question Time, which was also streamed through Facebook Live, reaching a peak audience of approximately 2,000 for the Activities Officer debate. This year Question Time was hosted by Chris Awre of the University Library - someone independent of HUU to help ensure that the debate was facilitated fairly and transparently.

The majority of candidates were satisfied with the support they received during elections from the Returning Officer Team, and had some suggestions for how the information and training provided to candidates could be improved, particularly around more information about the different officer roles, detailed guidance about where to put posters across campus

Feedback from candidates included:

‘I really enjoyed the process, even if I was exhausted!!! Thank you for all the work that the returning officer team did, to ensure we were all happy!’

‘Even though the returning officer team were always on hand to answer any questions I had, I think HUU could have done more to improve the election experience. For most people, this is a massive thing to do and many of us do not have experience of campaigning before. I missed the campaigning workshop because this was put on too early, which I feel would have been useful for me.’

## Voting and Turnout

Voting opened online on Monday 12th March at 9am and closed on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm. All candidates had to stand against Re-Open Nominations (R.O.N.) and Single Transferable Vote (STV) was used to determine the winner.

In addition to the general elections marketing campaign, HUU engaged students in the importance of the elections by encouraging them to vote at voting booths specifically set up for this purpose in the Library and HUU from 11am-3pm every day during voting week and staffed by a mix of HUU student staff and permanent staff members.

**Table 2. Voter turnout**

Year	Voting period	Turnout (%)	Number of unique voters	Number of total votes cast
2018	12-16 March (5 days)	14.8	2,584	16,614
2017	20-24 March (5 days)	14.8	2,631	21,797
2016	29 Feb-4 March (5 days)	15.6	2,808	31,965
2015	24 Feb-5 March (10 days)	19.7	3,559	20,901
2014	28 Feb-6 March (7 days)	20.9	3,771	63,870

**Table 3. Number of total votes for Student Officer races**

Position	2018		2017	
	Number of votes for winning candidate	Number of votes for race	Number of votes for winning candidate	Number of votes for race
<b>President</b>	1455 (8.3%)	2224 (12.7%)	1349 (7.6%)	2257 (12.7%)
<b>Education Officer/ VP Education</b>	1271 (7.3%)	1990 (11.3%)	837 (4.7%)	1893 (10.7%)
<b>Activities Officer/ VP Activities</b>	560 (3.2%)	1925 (11%)	681 (3.8%)	1933 (10.9%)
<b>Sports Officer/ VP Sport</b>	765 (4.4%)	1893 (10.8%)	1036 (5.8%)	1766 (10%)
<b>Welfare &amp; Community Officer/ VP Welfare &amp; Community</b>	1037 (5.9%)	1974 (11.3%)	725 (4.1%)	1896 (10.7%)

Voter turnout maintained the same level as last year, which was particularly positive given the fact that there were fewer students on campus due to the voting and campaigning period coinciding with a full week of strike action by lecturers due to the UCU/UUK dispute over USS pensions.

There were fewer races available for students to vote in this year, in part due to a low number of candidates for part-time officer roles and also because there were no academic representative positions to vote for, course rep and subject reps having moved to a self-nomination only process, and faculty reps being appointed through an application and interview process. The impact of this was that an increased number of students voted in more races.

Again, anecdotal feedback from students who did not vote suggests that this is because they could not see the relevance of engaging in the voting process when they could not see the

impact that current elected representatives has made on their student experience. In addition, feedback from some candidates indicated that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst students about the election process itself, suggesting that HUU needs to be more effective at communicating with its members about representation not just in the immediate lead up to and during election periods, but throughout the whole year.

HUU continues work to address these challenges as part of the ongoing Governance Review to ensure that HUU's representational structures are effective, transparent and accessible to all students.

## Results and Feedback

The full results are available [online](#).

Results night took place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March from 7pm in HUU's Sanctuary Bar, 2 hours after voting had closed.

This year the event was hosted by someone independent of HUU, Stephen Dowson, to help ensure that the announcement of results was carried out in an impartial and celebratory manner, in recognition of the achievements of everyone who had been involved in the elections. The event was well attended in the bar and was also live streamed through Facebook Live and this reached approximately 1500 viewers.

Feedback on this year's results night format was overall very good – anecdotal evidence from social media and informal comments from students and staff suggested that people enjoyed the shorter length of the event and the focus on the outcome for each individual rather than the whole process.

All but one of the candidates who completed the candidate survey stated that they thought the length and format of the results night was appropriate, with one saying,

'Results night was very well done - I appreciated the quick pace of reading out results as it was very nerve-racking for candidates and any longer would have drawn out the process unnecessarily.'

One candidate suggested that the breaks scheduled into results night were unnecessary; historically HUU has scheduled breaks into results night due to the format having been more detailed and therefore lengthier

## Recommendations for 2019

This report, including the following recommendations, was presented at the meeting of HUU's Appointments and Governance Development Committee (AGDC) on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018. After each recommendation, it is noted whether or not it was approved by the committee and any further actions to be completed.

- To strengthen the working relationship with the University in the lead up to and during elections in order to ensure consistent communication to students. (*Approved*)
- To keep the budget of Student Officer candidates at £75 each with 100% of this budget being reimbursed to ensure that all Student Officer candidates can spend the same amount on their campaign regardless of their personal financial circumstances. To again offer this budget to all candidates as cash advance to ensure candidates do not have to

spend their monthly allowance on campaign material instead of food or other necessary items. *(Approved)*

- To keep the budget for part-time Officer candidates to £15 and reimburse 100% of that budget. *(Approved)*
- To consider reducing the intensity of the elections period by adding breaks into the timeline, e.g. between nominations closing and campaigning starting and between voting closing and results being announced. *(Not yet approved - Action: explore options for how this could work and circulate to AGDC for next meeting)*
- To rewrite the rules and regulations for HUU Elections so that they provide greater clarity for all interested students, and to go through them in greater detail at the all candidates meeting. *(Approved)*
- To start advertising and marketing of the elections in semester 1 with more information about the representative structure, process, timeline and available positions. At least one information meeting should be held before the Christmas break, and the campaign workshop should be held closer to nominations opening. *(Approved)*
- To include more targeted marketing at full time candidates who would be taking a sabbatical from their studies in order to take office rather than after graduation, to help aid officer retention and ongoing engagement with students. *(Approved)*
- To explore how to make elections material provided by HUU fully accessible for students with disabilities. *(Approved)*
- To schedule Question Time to take place before nominations open, to ensure this can inform all voters' decisions. *(Approved)*
- To share any Q & A's between candidates and the Returning Officer team to all candidates on an ongoing basis, to improve transparency of information for all. *(Approved)*
- To retain the room for candidates to provide a space for them to store materials and relax during campaigning. *(Approved)*
- To consider closing voting at 10pm each evening and reopen at 6am to improve candidate welfare and avoid unnecessarily extended campaign periods. *(Not approved – Action: Provide more information for candidates about numbers of members voting at different time periods so they can effectively campaign, but keep voting open overnight)*
- To include the Lawns and other halls of residences in the marketing campaign, especially when driving voter turnout. *(Approved)*

**Nicole Steele**

**Student Voice Manager**

**April 2018**

## Appendix

**Table 4. Voter Turnout by Faculty**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Turnout</b>
Faculty of Science and Engineering	882 (22.8%)
Faculty of Arts, Culture and Education	634 (14.2%)
Faculty of Business, Law and Politics	623 (15.6%)
Faculty of Health Sciences	442 (8.9%)
Non departmental/Central Administration	3 (50%)

**Table 5. Voter Turnout by Year of Study**

<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>Turnout</b>
1	843 (11.5%)
2	773 (16%)
3	756 (19.9%)
4	208 (19.4%)
5	3 (1.6%)
6	0
7	1 (8.3%)

**Table 6. Voter Turnout by Mode of Study**

<b>Mode of Study</b>	<b>Turnout</b>
Full-time	2548 (17.1%)
Part-time	36 (1.5%)

**Table 7. Voter Turnout by Type of Study**

<b>Type of Study</b>	<b>Turnout</b>
PGC	10 (2.6%)
PGR	62 (6.7%)
PGT	102 (7.1%)
UG	2410 (16.6%)

**Table 8. Voter turnout by Societies and Sports Clubs**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Percent Turnout</b>
Accounting	71.43
Afro-Caribbean Society	44.44
AfroStreet Dance	35.29

<b>Name</b>	<b>Percent Turnout</b>
Airsoft and Paintball	50.00
American Football	68.63
Amnesty International Society	63.64
Anime Society	36.36
Aquatic Science Society	20.00
Archaeology Society	20.00
Archery	42.22
Arts and Crafts Society	24.14
Asian	6.67
Athletics	52.94
Badminton	21.74
Barbershop and Acapella	80.00
Barrister Society	39.19
Baseball	60.71
Basketball Ladies	83.87
Basketball Mens	56.10
Big Band Society	37.04
Bioscience Society	50.00
Board Game Society	54.17
Boat Club	58.33
Book Society	57.14
Boxing	32.69
Canoe	62.50
Catholic Society	61.11
Cheerleading	74.36
Chemistry Society	57.69
Chinese Student Scholars Society	9.09
Clay Shooting	75.00
Computer & Gaming Society	34.92
Computer Science	50.00
Conservative Future Society	75.00
Cricket	55.88
Cricket Women	93.33
Crypto Society	25.00
Crystal Clear Society	90.70
Cycling	42.11
Dance Squad	34.18

<b>Name</b>	<b>Percent Turnout</b>
Dancesport	39.39
Darts Society	27.27
Debating Society	76.92
Doctor Who Society	69.57
Drag Art Appreciation	12.50
Drama Society	59.70
Duke of Edinburgh	47.06
English Society	72.22
Feminist Society	83.33
Fencing	31.71
Figure Skating	45.00
Film Society	33.33
Food and Dining	27.27
Football Ladies	51.72
Football Mens	28.13
Foundation On Christ Society	46.67
Friends of Palestine	33.33
GPS and Gospel Choir Society	33.33
Geography Society	35.00
Gilbert & Sullivan Society	33.33
Golf	40.00
HYMS Physician Associate	20.59
HYMS Sport	37.50
Harker Society	28.00
Harry Potter Society	58.33
Historical Battle Re-enactment Society	28.57
History Society	20.00
Hockey Ladies	88.24
Hockey Mens	87.50
Hong Kong Society	50.00
Horror Society	50.00
Ice Hockey	82.35
Islamic Society	6.82
Japanese Society	17.65
Jewish Society	66.67
Jujitsu	68.97
Karate	34.78

<b>Name</b>	<b>Percent Turnout</b>
Korean Culture	54.55
Kuwaiti Students	1.82
LINKS	70.83
Labour Club Society	65.28
Lacrosse Mens	61.76
Lacrosse Womens	70.97
Law Society	33.58
Liberal Democrats	83.33
MMA	27.27
Malaysian Student Assoc	13.33
Masonic Society	40.00
Mathematics	18.18
MedSoc	7.87
Mental Health Society	31.25
Mountaineering	47.67
Music Society	39.00
Netball League	71.67
Netball Squad	34.69
New Movement for Christ	22.22
Performing Arts Society	66.67
Photography Society	66.67
Physics Society	47.14
Pokemon Society	34.78
Pole Fitness	63.64
Politics Society	74.32
Pool & Snooker Society	27.03
Pre Medicine Application	63.64
Psychology Society	50.00
Public Speaking Society	31.25
Qatari Student Society	6.67
Raising And Giving	65.71
Real Ale Society	20.83
Riding	44.90
Rock Society	62.07
Rooted in Christ Society	23.81
Rugby League	46.34
Rugby Union Mens	64.47

<b>Name</b>	<b>Percent Turnout</b>
Rugby Union Womens	75.00
Sci-Fi Society	51.52
Scouts and Guides	31.58
Secularist,Atheist,Humanist Soc	60.00
Seventh-Day Adventist Students on Campus	18.75
Sexpression: UK Hull	20.69
Ski & Snowboarding	53.33
Social Work	5.36
Socialist	75.00
Squash	12.12
Student Action For Refugees	33.33
Sub Aqua	44.44
Surfing	65.52
Surgical Society	8.89
Swimming	68.97
Swing Dance Society	50.00
Table Tennis	17.65
Tamil Society	6.67
Tennis	14.71
Trampoline	68.18
Ultimate Frisbee	37.50
Unicef On Campus	40.00
Veg Society	50.00
Volleyball	22.73
War Games and Role Playing Society (WARPS)	41.54
War Studies	61.29
Water Polo	41.18
Wheelchair Basketball	42.86
Wilderness Medicine Society	7.41
Women Empowered Society	21.43
Yoga and Wellbeing	30.00
Zoology Society	54.17

