



# AUTUMN 2015 UNION ELECTIONS

*Be a rep – decide the reps – your voice at Birkbeck*

## NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

**birkbeck**  
students' union

### POSTS BEING ELECTED

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**Academic  
Representatives**

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**Union Councillors**

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**Representatives'  
and Campaigns  
Officers**

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**NUS Delegates  
and NUS London  
Area Delegates**

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Important deadlines  
Posts and descriptions

**How to stand or apply**

Rules of the election  
Key contacts

## **Welcome and Introductions**

First, thanks for picking up or downloading this pack – we hope it's the start of your journey into determining who represents you, who leads your students' union and, perhaps, the commencement of your time working for and serving the great student body that is at Birkbeck.

The Union relies on tens, hundreds of volunteers like you to speak up for students, to bring together students' views locally and also to energise them across the campus and further afield. The Union's greatest asset is its membership – you!

## **So what's on offer at this election?**

Similar to the majority of UK students' unions, Birkbeck Students' Union holds periodic elections to fill vacancies in the student representative framework and to choose who leads the Union for the next period of time. Differently, though, we also recognise that “standing for election” is not the only way students wish to engage with their Union or indeed is it entirely practical for some students due to their other commitments such as raising a family, their job or caring responsibilities.

Our approach is therefore to:

- 1. Directly elect the Union Council to ensure there is a democratic legitimacy to the Union's leadership and legislature;*
- 2. Recruit a large diverse body of student body representatives from each academic department and each programme and each year of each course to be the Academic Representatives and across the College; and*
- 3. Appoint by co-option some portfolio roles which assist your elected student leadership in realising their commitments to your and promoting the deepest engagement with the student body at large through the Academic Representatives, Clubs & Societies and Union Councillors.*

## **Right, ok, so what are the posts and how to I apply?**

It's best if we look at this in a simple table format, so you can see the categories of post and the names or titles of the posts. There is a separate document which details the job descriptions and duties on all of these posts – however, below, we have put a taster down, hopefully to whet your appetite!

Category of Posts	Post Name	Brief Information
<p><b>Portfolio Officers</b></p> <p>(some officers convene representatives of students or represent groups of student and some officers convene campaign work that is delegated to the by the Union Council)</p>	<p>I Anti-racism &amp; Anti-fascism Officer</p> <p>II Caring Responsibilities Officer</p> <p>III Employment Rights &amp; Trade Union Liaison Officer</p> <p>IV Entertainments Officer (also Convenor of the Summer Ball &amp; Entertainments Committee)</p> <p>V Environment &amp; Ethics Officer</p> <p>VI Global Citizenship Officer</p> <p>VII International Students Officer</p> <p>VIII Mature Students Officer</p> <p>IX Postgraduate Officer (also Convenor of the Graduate Students' Association)</p> <p>X RAG (Charity) Officer</p> <p>XI Stratford Officer (also Convenor of the USS Students' Association)</p> <p>XII Trans* Officer</p>	<p>All of these officers are elected by the whole student body at Birkbeck. Each officer will be supported by at least one 'sabbatical' officer (a current part-time paid elected senior officer) and is likely to have a committee of group of students to assist them in their work.</p> <p>Each is a voting member of the Union Council.</p> <p>In this category, you may only submit a nomination to stand for ONE of these posts.</p> <p>The term of office runs from the day of election until November 2016. Each office holder would need to volunteer around 20 hours each month, including meetings and administration.</p>
<p><b>Academic Representatives</b></p> <p>(At least one student to be recruited for each year of each programme or course currently being delivered at Birkbeck. Additionally each academic department will have one student elected to be the Departmental Representative)</p>	<p>XIII Applied Linguistics and Communication Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XIV Biological Sciences Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XV Central Collaborative Provision Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XVI Computer Science and Information Systems Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XVII Cultures and Languages Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XVIII Earth and Planetary Sciences Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XIX Economics, Mathematics and Statistics Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XX English and Humanities Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXI Film, Media and Cultural Studies Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXII Geography, Environment and Development Studies</p>	<p>The listing to the left is the departments where there are active programmes on which students are enrolled taking courses.</p> <p>To be an academic representative for your course, you simply need to complete an Application Form – this is different from an election nomination form.</p> <p>The two duties of these representatives are to raise issues of concern from students with the Union so this can be taken appropriately into the College structures, and to keep the local student body informed on local representation and issues brought up with local faculty. You would also be encouraged to support other course and class representatives where these structures are in place.</p> <p>Once all the applications are received, they will be sorted into departments (see left) – and the reps from within each department will be asked to agree who the Departmental Representative is – this is the person who co-ordinates and convenes the Academic Representatives in the department.</p>

	<p>Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXIII History of Art Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXIV History, Classics and Archaeology Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXV Law Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXVI Management Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXVII Organizational Psychology Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXVIII Philosophy Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXIX Politics Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXX Psychological Sciences Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXXI Psychosocial Studies Departmental Programme Representatives</p> <p>XXXII School of Arts (School Level)</p> <p>XXXIII School of Science (School Level) Programme Representatives</p>	<p>Each group of reps will be supported and trained – and will be invited to attend a number of meetings in the SU and College each term. You will also be listed in the SU website as a “programme representative” and your students will be able to find out about you.</p> <p>The term of office runs until you leave the College or you resign from office. We look for at least one rep for each year of each course – which means if there are two or three, that is just fine!</p> <p>Being an Academic Representative in this category does not block you from also standing to be another officer or representative in the Union – for instance, a Union Councillor or Portfolio Officer.</p> <p>To undertake this role, we estimate you would need to volunteer around 16 hours each term, which includes meetings and administration.</p>
<p><b>Union Councillors</b></p> <p>(Directly elected students, each School at the College gets at least 3 councillors, the number being proportionate to the student body size in each School).</p>	<p>XXXIV School of Arts Student Councillors</p> <p>XXXV School of Business, Economics and Informatics Student Councillor</p> <p>XXXVI School of Law Student Councillors</p> <p>XXXVII School of Science Student Councillors</p> <p>XXXVIII School of Social Science, History and Philosophy Student Councillors</p> <p>XXXIX Non School and Central Administered Student Councillors</p>	<p>All of the Councillors are elected by the electors whom they represent – namely, each School or student group elects its own set of Union Councillors.</p> <p>A D'Hondt allocation is performed in the electoral roll prior to the election:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 7 Councillors for Arts</li> <li>▪ 12 Councillors for Business, Economics &amp; Informatics</li> <li>▪ 5 Councillors for Law</li> <li>▪ 7 Councillors for Science</li> <li>▪ 9 Councillors for Social Science, History &amp; Philosophy</li> <li>▪ 3 Councillors for Central Administered or Non-School</li> </ul> <p>The role of a Councillor is set the agenda within the Union through the Council and its committee on realising the student voice, enhancing the work of the Union, holding the executive officers to accounts, approving policy statements and legislation on stances the Union takes and other functions as set down in the Bye-Laws.</p>

		<p>The full Council in plenary is scheduled to meet on the following evenings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday 30 November</li> <li>Wednesday 24 February</li> <li>Thursday 28 April</li> <li>Thursday 30 June</li> </ul> <p>Outside of these meetings, there are various forums, committees and working groups that meet – many with delegated responsibility from the Council to “do things” on its behalf between meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education &amp; Academic Affairs Committee</li> <li>Student Activities Committee</li> <li>Welfare &amp; Rights Committee</li> </ul> <p>And others, including already constituted committees that function such as the Executive Committee.</p> <p>To be a Union Councillor, we recommend you are able to volunteer around 10 hours each month, with a little more when the Council meets in plenary or work on committees.</p>
<b>NUS Delegates</b>  (Three delegates will be elected to attend NUS National Conference in April 2016 and five NUS London Area delegates will be elected to attend NUS London meetings)	XL NUS National Delegates (x3) XLI NUS London Area Delegates (x5)	
<b>Group Convenors and Officers</b>  (A number of groups or committees of the Council will have their principal officers recruited from the student body, with the Union Council being the electing body)	<b>A: Executive Sub-Committees:</b>  XLII Chair of Academic Societies Guild XLIII Chair of Arts Board XLIV Chair of Athletics Clubs Committee XLV Chair of Community Action & Campaigns Committee XLVI Chair of Media Group XLVII Chair of Social & Cultural Societies Group  <b>B: Summer Ball &amp; Entertainments Committee:</b>  XLVIII Treasurer & Sponsorship Secretary	<p>For this year only as it is the first year, we are looking to recruit students who are interested in being the convenors and chair of the six society and student activity groups listed to the left. In the last couple of years, the Union has had an increase in numbers of societies and demand from students for more society activity – looking at our resources, the Executive has determined that a way to assure members lead and we serve our societies well, students will be appointed to serve as the chair of sub-committees that manage the budgets, administration and governance of societies.</p> <p>Similarly, we are looking to co-opt members to serve on the Summer Ball and Entertainments Committee in various</p>

	<p>XLIX Social Secretary (Intercollegiate)</p> <p>L Social Secretary (on campus)</p> <p>LI Social Secretary (off campus)</p> <p>LII General Committee Members (x4)</p>	<p>roles – so if you can bring some of your passion and expertise to these roles, please do apply!</p> <p>All of these appointments and co-options will be made by the Executive Committee and ratified by the Union Council on 30 November.</p> <p>Those posts listed in Part A will become voting members of the Union Council, if they are not already by virtue of another election. Those listed in Part B will be entitled to agree four of their number to become voting members of the Union Council in accordance with standing orders.</p> <p>We estimate that Part A appointments will need to volunteer around 20 hours a month, whilst those in Part B will be more seasonal, though averaging around 12 hours each month.</p>
<p><b>Students' Associations</b></p> <p>(currently there are two newly created student associations – one for students based at Stratford Campus and the other being for 'graduate' students)</p>	<p><b>C: Graduate Students' Association:</b></p> <p>LIII Deputy Convenor</p> <p>LIV Academic Board Research Representative</p> <p>LV Social Secretary</p> <p>LVI General Committee Members (x3)</p> <p><b>D: USS Students' Association:</b></p> <p>LVII Deputy Convenor</p> <p>LVIII Social Secretary</p> <p>LIX First Year Student Reserved Committee Members (x2)</p> <p>LX General Committee Members (x2)</p>	<p>Both of these Associations are committees of the Union Council responsible for the representation and social support of the students within their membership.</p> <p>The GSA is convened by the Postgraduate Officer (see above) and the USSSA is convened by the Stratford Officer (see above). Each of these SAs will be entitled to appoint four voting members from within the membership to the Union Council.</p> <p>We anticipate that Association committee members would need to volunteer around 20 hours a term, including meetings and administration to fulfil their work.</p> <p>These posts in both C and D will be elected by the students of the relevant constituency. Candidates must come from these constituencies.</p>

If you are interested in one or more of the posts above, you will need to complete and return a nomination form/application form no later than the deadline (see below). Applications are acceptable by email, provided that the original is supplied to the Union before the election is returned.



## Deadlines and Timetable for the Elections

The rules specify that certain time must elapse between points in the election cycle, such as nominations must be open for at least 7 days; when the electoral roll is “closed” and how long the voting period is available. The time table below, along with what must happen or any actions you need to take, complies with the rules – you are urged to ensure that you meet the deadlines below.

If there is a good reason why you are not able to meet a deadline, you must set out your reasoning and provide supporting evidence. This will be considered by the Returning Officer – no other Union officials or staff may rule on this.

Date or deadline	What	More details
10 a.m. Monday 2 November 2015	Call for nominations and applications is made	<p>This is the formal opening of the call for nominations, and during this period the Union will proactively advertise the various opportunities to participate in the elections and the posts that are available to the student body.</p> <p>The Union will organize at least one open meeting to enable to students to find out more from Union officials.</p>
2 p.m. Friday 13 November 2015	Close of nominations and applications	<p>No more nominations or applications will be accepted after this time.</p> <p>All prospective candidates MUST have filed their nomination papers fully.</p>
6 p.m. Friday 13 November 2015	Provisional Candidates published online	<p>Prospective candidates and their nominators will be published online for all posts being elected by secret ballot of the student body.</p> <p>Applications for Academic Representatives and posts being co-opted will follow over the weekend.</p>
2 p.m. Monday 16 November 2015	Final deadline for submission of election statements / manifestos	<p>These are only accepted by email and must be text only. For Portfolio Officers the word limit is 400, for all other posts it is 240 words.</p>
5 p.m. Monday 16 November 2015	Deadline for motions to Council	<p>Advance notice as some posts will be elected to serve on the Council</p>
9 p.m Monday 16 November 2015	Hustings and Candidates Questions	
10 a.m. Tuesday 17 November 2015	Voting opens online at <a href="http://www.birkbeckunion.org">www.birkbeckunion.org</a>	

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5 p.m. Monday 23 November 2015	Deadline for reports and amendments to motions to Council	Advance notice as some posts will be elected to serve on the Council
5 p.m. Thursday 26 November 2015	Voting closes. Deadline for election complaints.	
9 p.m. Thursday 26 November 2015	Election results announced.	Subject to any complaints not being resolved to enable the election being returned.
Evening of Monday 30 November 2015	Council meeting (full plenary)	All newly elected and current members expect to attend the first full plenary of the academic year.

### **Candidates Question Time and Hustings**

On the evening of Monday 16 November, there will be the opportunity for the candidates standing for the Portfolio Officer and NUS Delegates to meet voters, make an election statement and to answer voters' questions. Due to the likely numbers of candidates and the time available, there will not be the opportunity for candidates standing as Union Councilors to make statement, but they are encouraged to attend and meet each other and the voters who attend.

More information about the hustings will be uploaded in the Hustings Information document.

### **Campaigning and Getting the Vote Out**

Voting in this election is by secret ballot held online through the Union's website, on a secure server. Once a vote is cast, it cannot be changed. Candidates and their supporters are urged to ensure that they have a visible and positive campaign that attracts and encourages students to participate in the election – with the growth of social media and particularly Twitter and Facebook, we recognize that a lot of campaigning and interaction with voters will take place on the internet.

Candidates and their supporters are strongly advised that Union and College policies – notably the Dignity at Work & Study Policy and the Code of Student Discipline both extend to social media, and especially when on "union business" such as campaigning in an election.

More information about regulations on campaigning during the polling period is contained in the Polling and Campaigning Regulations document.

### **Supervisory Authority and Complaints or Disputes**

The Returning Officer is the supervisory authority over all elections in the Union, and they are responsible for ensuring compliance with rules, setting out a fair election timetable, approving the nomination form, appointing the chairperson of the hustings and of course handling and disputes and complaints that come in.

The Returning Officer cannot be a student or staff member of the Union, and is appointed by the Trustees for their independence and their experience in handling a variety of matters relating to



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elections and students' unions. From time to time, the Returning Officer may refer disputes or complaints for determination or resolution to the Court, which is a non-executive committee of the Trustees that forms small panels or hearing committees to resolve cases put before them.

A pool of Court members is determined prior to the election, and those who are also students are prohibited from supporting, nominating or commenting on any candidate or candidate's campaign.

If you wish to raise a complaint about the conduct of an election or conduct of a candidate, you should, in the first instance, set this out in writing and email it to [complaints@birkbeckunion.org](mailto:complaints@birkbeckunion.org)

The progression of complaints and handling of disputes follows the Complaints & Disputes Regulations.

The Returning Officer and the Court have ruled in the past that they are not the appropriate body to determine who wins an election, and rightly that should rest with the electorate. They strictly only progress disputes and complaints that are non-vexatious and not academic.

### **Nominations and Applications Process**

Nomination forms completed fully are required for all posts that are elected by the student body at large:

- Portfolio Officers
- Union Councillors
- NUS Delegates
- Graduate Students' Association
- USS Students' Association

Each nomination form will require the name and signature (and other credentials) of at least five enrolled students at Birkbeck (who have not opted-out of the Union).

For the posts that are co-opted or recruited, you need to simply complete the Application Form, and email this in. You do not need any supporting nominations on your form:

- Department and Programme Reps
- Summer Ball & Entertainments Committee
- Chair of Academic Societies Guild
- Chair of Arts Board
- Chair of Athletics Clubs Committee
- Chair of Community Action & Campaigns Committee
- Chair of Media Group
- Chair of Social & Cultural Societies Group

**And finally a word...**

If you are not convinced to put your name forward to be a rep or an elected officer, please do encourage others to consider it. In the end, the quality of your collective voice is decided by you, so please cast a vote regardless if you stand or not.

All the best – and happy election season! Until next term now when we will be electing the main sabbatical executive officers and trustees to lead the union for 2016-17.